

# The Messenger

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE  
GENERAL CONVENTION OF SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCHES

November 1984



## The Art of Aging

## SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS OF AGING

It is a genuine pleasure to bring out an issue of *The Messenger* devoted to the aging process. Two reasons stand out for increasing our understanding of and commitment to those "aging" in the Swedenborgian Church. One is that, demographically, we Swedenborgians are top-heavy in the post-retirement category. A second reason is that we are all "aging!"

Our society's make-up is undergoing rapid change. By the year 2000 we are expected to have more people in their retirement years than teenagers in America. Furthermore, the "65 and over" population segment is growing at twice the rate of the U.S. population as a whole.

No matter what the implications are sociologically, these trends underscore that this stage of life is taking on a greater importance for all of us. As the percentage of Americans experiencing these latter years increases, will our ability to make the best use of them also increase? In the firm belief that the latter stage of life is intrinsically valid, necessary and good, this month's *Messenger* attempts to broaden our spiritual perspective on the experience of "being elderly."

With the advent of Developmental Psychology in Western thought, it is increasingly realized that the final stage of worldly life involves the crucial task of integrating one's life experience. A gradual process which takes years, integration includes coming to terms with one's life failures and successes, with disappointments and satisfactions, with the losses of diminished physical agility and of loved ones. As integration moves forward successfully, the person emerges with a refined (though perhaps very simple) philosophy of life. This collective wisdom of our Church's elderly is very much part of the heart of our Church and one of our most precious treasures.

Philip M. Alden, Rev. David Johnson, Elizabeth Johnson and Dr. Perry Martin each bring a particularly useful background to their articles on the aging process. Each writer possesses a long and illustrious history in the Swedenborgian Church, so it is inevitable that the Swedenborgian perspective will shine through the lines of these articles, at times explicitly, at times through inference. I wish to thank each of them for their willingness to contribute to this special issue of *The Messenger*.

My thanks go also to Rev. Eric Allison, of Kitchener, Ontario, for his interesting comparison of Thanksgiving traditions around the world. Val Brugler has designed and laid out the cover artwork for both the October and November *Messengers*.

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Jim Lawrence, Editor

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# THANKSGIVING REFLECTION

*A visit to the site of the Pilgrims' departure—Plymouth, England*

By Eric Allison

Thanksgiving has always been a very special time for me. I have often thought that being truly thankful may be the beginning of faith. In my travels to other countries I was surprised to learn that the seasonal celebration of Thanksgiving is not something that is limited to the U.S. Many countries held a "Festival of Harvest" centuries before North America was settled. The story of the Pilgrims' first Thanksgiving (which historians say is not true) is unique to the U.S., but Thanksgiving is not. Being a U.S. citizen living in Canada, I have sometimes enjoyed two Thanksgivings in one year. The Canadian version is held during the first weekend in October, the end of harvest. Even though the Pilgrim story is not on the minds of Canadians, an abiding sense of thankfulness for the fruits of the field as gifts from God is strong here.

I still, however, have an appreciation for Thanksgiving American-style, so I was very keen on seeing the "Mayflower Steps" while passing through Plymouth, England this past summer. The following is an excerpt from my journal describing my pilgrimage to the site from which the Mayflower departed for the New World in 1620:

... "That's where it all began for your lot," said the ferryman in a friendly way. Following his excellent directions we made our way down the narrow streets to a parking lot overlooking the dock from which the Mayflower had set sail. The area was so crowded that finding a parking space seemed to have been an act of Divine intervention.

Before descending an ancient stairway to the dock, we looked down upon a scene which Monty Python could not have made more bizarre. A competition of sorts was in progress on the dock. "Canned" music of various marches and calypsos blared, as local dancing and marching groups of pre-teen girls in sequined outfits boldly, shyly, clumsily and occasionally gracefully, moved in time to the music.

Crowds of unattentive people quaffed beer, ice cream, pizza, popcorn, pastries, cockles, mussels, the inevitable fish and chips and any other food fit for the indiscriminate palate that eats only while walking. Cars were honking their way through the crowd, ships moved in and out of the harbor, and a team of soldiers responding to shouted orders were rappelling down a fortress wall. It was, indeed, quite a sight to see, but it most definitely was not a vision calling forth the Mecca-like inspiration I anticipated.

Despite the carnival atmosphere, I was able to see past my own disappointment and find a lesson. We, of this era, like any other era, may in some providential way be guided to contribute something which others may refer to and for which to be thankful. But few of any era seem to grasp that a beginning, no matter how profound, is just a beginning—a moment in time, a wink in the eye of history, and perhaps not even a wink in the eye of the Divine. Those who try to hold on to that moment and make it more than a stepping stone toward something else will be passed by. They will leave nothing of genuine value, merely words on a plaque obscured by the dangling legs of someone who couldn't care less.

For this American it was quite a revelation to see that the plaque which marked the Mayflower's departure was only one of many on the same wall which marked the colonization of other far-off places that have also grown and prospered.

We North Americans have countless blessings to be thankful for, much from the labors of those before us. We risk a danger of complacent pride in not what we have done, but in what we have because of what others have done. Thankfulness is more than appreciation of what we have: it is seeing what we have as a stepping stone toward something greater. True thankfulness lies only in the heart that seeks to serve God by doing what has yet to be done.

*Rev. Eric J.N. Allison is co-pastor of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario. When not pursuing his many interests domestically, Eric can usually be found (or not found) roaming some distant land.*

# BOOK REVIEW

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EMANUEL SWEDENBORG—*The Universal Human and Soul-Body Interaction*, edited and translated by George F. Dole, introduction by Stephen Larsen, preface by Robert H. Kirven. A volume in the series "The Classics of Western Spirituality." New York, Ramsey, Toronto: The Paulist Press, 1984.

English-speaking Swedenborgians worldwide are greatly indebted to Dr. George F. Dole for the appearance of this volume in this prestigious series—now numbering more than forty volumes—being produced by the topnotch liberal Catholic publishing house, Paulist Press. As noted on the back cover of the paperback edition (it is available in hardcover as well), "In one series, the original writings of the universally acknowledged teachers of the Catholic, Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, Islamic and Native American traditions have been critically selected, translated and introduced by internationally recognized scholars and spiritual leaders."

Of the series Huston Smith writes, "Precisely the dimension of our heritage that most needs to be recovered. . . I cannot imagine a more timely publishing venture."

When Dr. Dole first saw the prospectus on the series, he took the initiative to write to the Paulist Press, enterprisingly calling to their attention the surprising omission of Swedenborg from the list of proposed authors. At the same time he briefly noted his own credentials and offered to translate and edit a volume on Swedenborg if they so desired.

The response to his bold communication was positive and cordial, and negotiations were begun which has resulted in the now available handsome volume.

The text here presented under the title of *The Universal Human* is a fresh translation of the very extensive series of interchapter articles in the *Arcana Coelestia* starting at n. 2987 and concluding with n. 5726. This material has traditionally been identified by the Latin title *Maximus Homo* or by the ambiguous English name, "The Doctrine of the Grand Man." The new "title" strikes me as a very great improvement and one which I hope will be widely accepted.

What is not noted in the Foreword is that although this material has previously been extracted and published separately in both German and French, this, so far as I can determine, is the first time it has been separately published in English. The text occupies 155 pages of the volume. The other work of Swedenborg in this book, *Soul-Body Interaction*, is a revision of Dr. Dole's translation which was earlier published in *Studia Swedenborgiana*, the occasional journal of the Swedenborg School of Religion.

The brief Preface by Dr. Robert Kirven, president of SSR, sets the work in perspective, and the extensive Introduction by Dr. Stephen Larsen does an excellent job of showing how deserving Swedenborg is of a place in this series of Classics of Western Spirituality.

The Dole translation reads smoothly and has a fine contemporary tone to it. Contrast, for example, this extract from the first paragraph with the wording in the American Standard Edition of the *Arcana*. The older version reads, "Few know what representations and correspondences are. . . (concluding:) They are called correspondences because they correspond, and representations because they represent." The new version reads, "What are 'representations' and 'correspondences'? . . . They are called correspondences because they are completely responsive, and representations because they portray." The old version never made any sense to me. The new one helps me begin to get a perspective on the subject. I hope other readers, new and old, will feel the same way.

The transitions from one article to the next—separated by whole chapters of Scripture exegesis in the original—are skillfully done and read on with no sense of any break in the thought train, the only in-

dication being the gaps in paragraph numbers.

It is difficult to illustrate how superior this version is from earlier ones unless sentences which presumably are rendering the same Latin text are placed side by side. For instance, n. 3633 in the older version begins, "All spirits and angels appear to themselves as men; of such a face and such a body, with organs and members; and this for the reason that their inmost conspires to such a form; just as the primitive of man, which is from the soul of the parent, endeavors toward formation of the whole man in the ovum and the womb . . ."

The new version reads, "All spirits and angels look like people to themselves, with normal faces and bodies, organs and limbs. This is because their inmost being tends toward this form. In the same way, the most rudimentary form of an individual, which comes from the parents' soul, strives to form a complete person in the ovum and in the womb . . ." Clarifying changes of this sort are typical of this translation.

The other that I discovered is on p.103, line 3, which should read "because they have not known what the inner person is and what the outer, and that the inner person is in the spiritual . . ."

I do have a few quarrels with word choices. For instance, on p. 46, n.3221, the second sentence reads, "Affirmations of truth are pictured by clouds that are bright and rising, denials by clouds that are dense and lowering." The last word purports to translate *descendentes*, i.e., descending. But "lowering" is the spelling of two quite different English words (pronounced differently), one of which means dark or threatening—which is not what Swedenborg means here, but *is* what he means in the next sentence, which is appropriately translated there as "clouds that are gloomy and black."

Having said quite a few nice things, let me now assume the "typical" role of the reviewer and be negatively critical for awhile. Both Drs. Larsen and Dole—one might almost say in good Swedenborgian tradition—show a degree of carelessness about dates.\* The Foreword (by Dole) states that the *Arcana* was published "between 1747 and 1753." (Actually it was

1749-56.) This modest error, unfortunately, is repeated on the back cover of the paperback by the publisher. Larsen says (on p.18) that Swedenborg published the writings anonymously for fifteen years. Actually it was nineteen. A more distressing slip is the reference on p. 17 to Swedenborg's early essay on "the aphorisms of *Mimus* and Seneca." *Mimus* then gets dutifully entered in the Index to Introduction as a proper name, even though the Latin word is not a proper name but a sort of courtesy title bestowed on Publilius Syrus (i.e., "the Syrian"), a Latin writer of mimes, in which purportedly he acted with great success.

In the text to "The Universal Human" there are at least two unfortunate omissions by homoeoteleuton (or homoeoteleutic errors, if you prefer!). In these the typesetter's eye apparently skipped from one phrase on one line to the same phrase on the next line. The first is on p. 47, line 17, which reads "only of the kinds of things that are proper to heaven's light . . ." It *should* read "only of the kinds of things that are proper to the light of the world, but not of the kinds of things that are proper to heaven's light . . ."

It is an exciting prospect to think of the possibly far-reaching new audience for Swedenborg this book affords, as this series is finding a place in university and seminary libraries (and probably public libraries) all over the world, a vast potential new readership that we can only conjecture about at this time. New Church book rooms all over the world will surely want to stock this volume in good supply as soon as possible.

William Ross Woofenden  
Sharon, Massachusetts

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\*In the first edition of *Conjugal Love* Swedenborg appended to the volume a list of works previously published, and gave several wrong publication dates, including the inclusive dates of the *Arcana*.

# WOMEN COMMUNICATING

Edited by

Annella Smith and Bertha Berran



## THINK ON THESE THINGS

*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*  
Matthew 16:26

### THANK GOD FOR THE TOUGH TIMES TOO!

How easy it is to sit back at Thanksgiving time and number off all the good things we have to be thankful for . . . but what about the not so good things that have happened . . . can we be thankful for them too? Does spiritual progress necessarily mean worldly success?

Perhaps we should think hard and thank God for some of the tough times because we actually learn some hard lessons through them. How do we actually learn humility if it's not being number two or three instead of number one? And how do we learn to be patient and meek if we don't give up wanting to do "our thing our way" sometimes? And painful though it may be there are times our heart just has to break rather than give in to a selfish desire. Ceasing to do evil is the first step in charity. Only through being "despised, rejected, sorrowful, and acquainted with grief" can we hope to be compassionate to others . . . not just sympathetic.

Looking back over the summer, did we learn through the Olympics what it means just to win or did we learn it is important too, just to take part? What it means to be a part of the struggle . . . especially for the good . . . and not just our own good—our own security and prestige—but for a deeper good . . . a bigger understanding . . . a country good—liberty and justice for all . . . patience and goodness . . . These are the lessons to be learned . . . the hard way . . . this is what the struggle and sacrifice are for . . . the hours and years of hard work . . . aches and pains . . . this is what "Going for the Gold" is all about and why we should be thankful "for the tough times too!"

Carole Rienstra  
Religious Chairperson

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## EPISTLE FROM TOKYO

Thank you very much for your letter asking me to write about my work in Japan. My activities for the past year may be roughly categorized into four parts:

- 1) Finding an apartment (which was difficult in Tokyo), moving into it, getting settled, and re-adjusting to the "new" environment.
- 2) Beginning my ministry, primarily by working with my father Rev. Shiro Torita, in preaching, giving classes (currently I am using Dr. Harvey's *The Holy Center*) leading singing practice and translating New Church materials into Japanese.
- 3) Looking for side jobs and currently tutoring and teaching English part time (including reaching English songs) which gives me just about my apartment rent. Since working full

time is much busier in Japan than in America and is not compatible with ministry, my financial situation has been the major problem.

4) Getting to know people—community people, professional people, Swedenborgians nation-wide. Meeting women has been especially meaningful.

Most of my father's congregation is elderly and young people do not attend regularly, or, if they come they tend to be quiet in the discussions after church services. Since July I have been enjoying having young people come to my place to discuss and ask questions after church, having lunch or a cup of tea. Also some of the community women started to come to ask me about religious matters. So I seem to be making progress little by little toward my original goal of emphasis on young people and women in my ministry.

For the future, I have a vision for a New Age Center (a holistic/pastoral counseling and educational center), and I had fliers made for that purpose. But to be realistic, I am starting it in my apartment.

My goal for my second year is that I will be able to work on these two issues to move in more positive directions. I would like to ask you to remember me in your prayers.

*Rev. Kei Torita*

Japan

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## ALLIANCE OF NEW CHURCH WOMEN COMMUNICATING

When I think about us, women grouped under the heading of "New Church" and "Swedenborgian," I wonder why we belong. Is it habit or tradition or is there some special meaning in it for us? One member has expressed it, "They know what I know." The knowing of those spiritual lessons we get from Swedenborg's writings concerning the presence of the spiritual life, the reality of heaven or hell, if we choose it, and the necessity of being in freedom to choose (freedom from fear, usually.) We know about the life of regeneration, that spiritual growth occurs when we do good because we love to do it. We know also something about the principle of Conjugal Love.

As a loving person I have serious questions about our understanding of that principle, and how we have tried to apply it to "acceptable" forms of love. Does this give any others of you some cause for thought? Would you like to discuss it in these pages?

At the annual convention for Swedenborgian Churches this summer one member said she wishes there was time for us to discuss current issues from our feminine and Swedenborgian viewpoints. We can ask for such time at next year's convention, and you can ask for time at your Association meetings. For instance the proposed legislation on abortion speaks directly to the feminine condition, and to that fundamental prerequisite for regeneration, the freedom to choose. Whether right or wrong, there is a lot involved. One question keeps surfacing for me: do the Right to Life people work as diligently against capital punishment?

We can communicate in many ways. Our Round Robin letters join several groups of members. When I was Mite Box chair, some of you revealed your frustration at being isolated members. If you are one of those who would like to correspond with another member on a more personal level, or if you are not isolated and would like to write to someone else, please let me know. Also we would like to have names and addresses of any who no longer have an active group but who would like to keep in touch.

Most important of all, if you have an idea you'd like to share or discuss, and don't want to write a whole article, write a letter to Annella, our editor, from which she can quote, or write just a few lines as thoughts along the way. These can be valuable paths to sharing. Please Communicate!

With love,

*Marge Ball*

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Let me echo our president's last sentence. PLEASE COMMUNICATE. Anything you wish to share in this column would be greatly appreciated. Write to: Annella Smith, P.O. Box 3396, North Shore, CA 92254-0968

# SWEDENBORGIAN WELLNESS

Dorothy Clayton Travers

P.P.Quimby, the founder of the New Thought movement, wrote, "Health is a spiritual possession." Isn't that an interesting idea? Health of the body and mind is predicated upon flooding the body with Divine Love energies and tapping into that Divine Wisdom which guides us in our choices of activities, including food and drink. We should easily see that energy coming from Sugar Smacks, with 55.8% sugar, is not the same as that which comes from Grape Nuts, which contains 7% sugar. We are informed enough about the problems of high blood sugars to read labels and avoid an excess of sugar in the diet, even though we go around thinking like saints.

Frankly, I haven't met anyone who walks on water, yet, and I don't expect to in this life-time. So I have to presume that while health is a spiritual possession, it takes a great deal of right decision-making on many different levels. If you set high blood sugar levels in the morning, the body insists on replenishing that level during the day with additional sugar. This is called an addiction. A level has to be maintained or the body starts giving forth with expressions of displeasure (which are often called symptoms.) The great American habit is to get a caffeine drink in the middle of the morning to support both the sugar needs and the caffeine addiction.

When the mid-day meal is topped off with a sweet or dessert, the cycle repeats around 4 p.m. (one of the famous 'low' periods of the day and we give in to our addictions with another 'fix' as soon as we can. Sometimes in the late afternoon alcohol becomes the substitute and after dinner there often comes a sluggishness for which we prescribe an additional sugar drop. If we decide to eat another dessert, we can bring on a pattern of insomnia. Or, in many cases we rouse from sleep during the period of circadian cycling occurring approximately between 3:30 and 4 a.m. The adrenals are starting to get prepared for the new day.

How much sugar does the average

American eat? One hundred years ago sugar consumption per person was 35 lbs. per year. In 1978 the figure topped 125 lbs. per year. Most of these are empty calories since sugar no longer has the minerals it used to have before the refining process.

Are you surprised that in January the New England Journal of Medicine published an article that stated that the disruption in sugar metabolism may be responsible for a variety of birth defects that include major malfunctions of the brain and the spinal cord?

But we can't stop there. Look at the role of sugar behind the criminal activities of today. A recent study of juveniles in the correctional system of Georgia showed that some of those currently incarcerated for committing crimes out of anger and irritability were accustomed to eating 400 lbs. of sugar per year! The relationship between sugar and the criminal mind has been documented for more than 40 years but what is being done to incorporate this knowledge into the psychological counseling, the institutional food or the teaching of those in prisons?

Recently, as I have been reading more and more about child abuse, I have been wondering if this is still another symptom of a society out of control because of sugar consumption. Does the man who beats up his wife get enraged because he is out of control emotionally in correlation to being out of balance physically?

If we accept the teachings of Swedenborg that the mind affects the body, can we also accept that the body affects the mind? Chemicals are produced in the brain according to the climate of manufacture in the surrounding tissues. If you think in these terms, it is impossible to separate the mind from the body, just as it is impossible to separate the spirit from the mind or the body.

The holistic practitioner has to look at the total entity. The individual cannot be divided, like Gaul, into three parts. For there is not only a unity of self; there is also the holographic connection with the All.

That which separates keeps us from knowing ourselves and knowing our connection with the Divine Love and Wisdom inflowing from God.

Our beautiful, efficient energy vehicles we call the human bodies (really a potentialized mass of energy) are the vehicles to be used while on this planet. They are made of the materials of the earth. The clean distilled water, pure air and minerals are in balance. Our minds, operating from the highest levels of consciousness, encourage cleanliness in the body and give us the wisdom to understand the signals and signs of imbalance in the body. But our true spiritual nature is the overseer. The influx of love and truth, helping us know ourselves and heal ourselves for health, is a spiritual possession.



## 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.

## ASTERISK

In his latest "Religion in America" survey, George Gallup reports that 12% of the U.S. population are "highly spiritually committed." This figure rises to 23% for people 65 and over—and the poll shows that these highly committed individuals are more satisfied with their lot in life than those who are less spiritually committed.

## DELEGATION TO VISIT SOVIET UNION

An official delegation of American church leaders will meet with church leaders in the Soviet Union, continuing a nearly 30-year history of relationships between Soviet churches and the (U.S.) National Council of Churches. Discussion on theological and churchly issues and celebration of the continuing contacts will characterize the Oct. 11-24 visit.

Central on the delegation's agenda will be discussion of "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry," the breakthrough 1982 document prepared under the auspices of the World Council of Churches which reflects a convergence on these three key elements in Christian church life.

"We go to cultivate and maintain our relationship as churches that are part of the one body of Christ," said Dr. Claire Randall, NCCC general secretary who with Bishop Philip Cousin, the Council's president, will head the delegation. "We will have discussions on church issues. We will learn from them and be renewed and enriched by their example of faith and witness under a totalitarian government."

"The NCCC's relationships with churches in the Soviet Union recently have been objects of criticism, largely because there is so little understanding in the United States of church life in the Soviet Union," she continued.

"We are fully aware of the difficulties of religious life in that country," she said. "Contact and support are very important for churches that function under atheistic governments. When there are two superpowers and they are in constant tension, it is extremely important that the churches reach across to each other as a sign of our God-given oneness and perhaps as a witness to our nations to find ways to talk together."



Some of you may not have received your October *Messenger* due to a computer label "glitch." If you will send word to Editor Jim Lawrence (address inside front cover), one will be sent to you. Sorry! We're working on it!

# IN THE AFTERNOON OF LIFE

By Perry Martin

Whatever else happens, every year December 23 keeps coming back. My mother's birthday. My mother would have been 96 this year. She was 59 when she died, five days before her 60th birthday. She seemed pretty old to me—her life spent. And now, here I am, getting closer and closer to 59 and not feeling old at all.

There is one thing I notice, though. I have accumulated a lot of years of learning. At Christmastime, I watched my 22-month old grandson learning new words: pine cone—now—GrandPerry—*touchdown!* I could almost see the wheels turning behind those bright little eyes as each new word registered meaning. Bow is busy learning basics, and at the same time he has enough self-knowledge to limit the bombardment of stimulation as he declares, "No more presents!"

I have been learning for 56 years longer than Bow, maybe learning more and more about less and less. Still it's fun. With a *Messenger* assignment nearing its deadline, I open my new Christmas book on writing to see what I can learn. In the very first chapter, the author suggests a technique she calls clustering. I write the central word of my theme on a blank sheet. Leaving my left-brain critic outside the door, I let my associations flow, moving sometimes from one to another, sometimes returning to my central word and starting off in another direction. Try it yourself before you read on.



Put the word "aging" in the center of a blank sheet of paper, circle it, and then write down any words that come to you, circling each one and connecting it to the one before or back to the center. Soon you will have a pattern that offers you countless clues to your feelings about the aging process.

You will find my cluster on page 249.

Aging is often viewed negatively in our society. I am afraid of getting old, immobilized, senile and even more afraid of loss—losing those I care about. My best friend from early high school and college years was killed last month in a car accident. That could happen to anybody; it does happen to lots of people. But Betsy was my girlish friend—vital, naive, funny—and she's gone.

Yes, I have lots of fears. What surprised me about my cluster was the explosion of positive feelings about aging. I am remembering my 50th birthday: my children were pretty well grown up, I was newly launched on a career, and I saw myself beginning the afternoon of life. My morning work was done. It seemed, in retrospect, very hard work. The afternoon stretched ahead to do as I pleased, to concentrate on my creative work, to have time to play with my friends, to take care of myself and to keep on learning and letting go of the responsibilities which I no longer must shoulder. "... a time to discover inner richness, for self-development and spiritual growth," wrote author Gay Gaer Luce.

As I look at my cluster, I see the possibility of being more free to become truly myself. There is time to choose, to focus on what is most important (which may be at that moment the unimportant,) without the many intrusive demands to which, in my earlier years, I would not or could not say no. Choice brings responsibility. If I have not done what I wanted to do today, I can't cite the household chores I used to have, the chauffeuring and the shopping, the committees or the phone calls. Nobody else to blame. I am weeding out the shoulds and have to's and the can'ts. The obligations. A woman told me she "had" to go to the hospital to visit a sick friend. I don't like hospitals much at all; I don't like being with sick people. When I go to visit a sick friend, it is because I *want* to.

Back to the cluster. How can I deal with death and loss? My friend Betsy is suddenly gone, and I find myself filled with regret that I had not seen her for many years. I

wish I had kept in closer touch—what was her life like these last few years? Was she ready to die? I wish I had let her know that she was important to me, that I would miss her lively, funny bubbly self. I wish . . . perhaps she knows. Perhaps I can still tell her. But I could have given her some joy to let her know before she died.

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross says that there are no mistakes—only opportunities for learning. So I say to my biking friend, “I’ve had fun today. I always feel good when I’ve been with you.” I am starting to overcome my natural embarrassment and let people know I care about them. I hug my daughter-in-law goodbye and tell her I love her.

I know also that I need to take time to mourn each loss. Swedenborgians often gloss over the grief of death with quick assurance of life everlasting. Our loss is a sharp pain that leaves emptiness in its wake. Loneliness is long. Let me learn to allow myself my need to grieve. I hear the beginning of Brahms’ Requiem: *Blessed are they that mourn. Who goeth forth and weepeth and beareth precious seed shall doubtless return with rejoicing and bring his sheaves with him.*

My other great fear of aging has to do with my body and my mind. I am aware that when I work hard I get tired. Since I fell flat on my face on the tennis court, I run with more caution. Pain in my joints is not severe, but scary. Does old age inevitably mean immobility? I don’t know—I’ll tell you in another 20 years. But I see my mother-in-law on a bowling team and taking swimming lessons and looking after other senior citizens. I remember the wonderful old black lady who cleaned my house when it was full of babies. I said to her one day, “Rachel, you must be tired. Don’t scrub the kitchen floor today.” “I don’t have much time left to work,” she said, “and I want to do all the work I can.” The next summer when we returned to Maine, she had finished her work.

Our bodies and our minds are the instruments we have to work with in this world. We Swedenborgians like to say that we are a spirit, clothed with a body, like a hand in a glove. But there is more to it: in this life we live through our bodies. If we

are to touch another soul we must use our hands or our eyes, our words, or something physical to get the message across. Some few of us may be able to do it with our minds alone, but even these rare occasions are enhanced by some kind of corroboration.

I want to keep my instrument in tune as best I can. Unused muscles atrophy. Untapped creativity brings forth no fruit. Gay Gaer Luce started an exercise class for older folk, who as they learned to focus their minds in meditation and imagery and to stretch and flex their muscles, were astonished at their increased mobility and mental acuity, diminished depression and enhanced self-confidence. I asked a young woman trained in Traeger body therapy if most of her clients were younger than I. She said, no, at least half were over 60. These older people are finding that as they release their stiffness and holding patterns, their natural spontaneity of feelings, sexuality and creativity flow more freely.

So I do not have to grow old perfectly either. I face the years ahead with fear of loss and immobility, with hope and excitement of being more fully who I am, and with considerable relief that I do not have to carry everyone else’s needs, hopes and expectations on my aging shoulders. And now that I’m done with my clustering, I want to go on to the next chapter of my book.



Dr. Martin currently teaches Pastoral Theology at the Swedenborg School of Religion, engages in a counseling practice at the Tressler Center, Wilmington, Delaware, and avidly pursues tennis, pottery and writing.

# A NEW IMAGE OF AGING

By Elizabeth L. Johnson

As a child growing up in Philadelphia, I spent a good deal of time with my grandparents. They lived next door in a typical big city neighborhood of row houses. I moved back and forth between their house and my own with ease. I learned about old people from them and the picture I formed stayed with me and influenced my thinking for many years.

As I saw it old men don't work and are always around the house; eventually they become forgetful and childish. Old women are always sitting in a chair and looking out the window. I must have been pretty young when I began visiting next door and they were not very old, but I cannot recall any other picture of my grandparents' personalities and behavioral norms.

*As I saw it, old men don't work and are always around the house; eventually they become forgetful and childish. Old women are always sitting in a chair and looking out the window.*

Now I am a grandmother myself and my perceptions about old people and my own aging process are radically different! Now I know that all old women do not sit in rocking chairs, and all old men do not become senile. I now know it is possible to have a rich life of growth and fulfillment in later years.

The tremendous changes which have occurred in the world during the last fifty years, the explosion of knowledge in science, medicine and education have produced a startling change in society. More of us are living longer: there are more old people in the world today than ever before. By the turn of the century half the population in the United States will be over the age of 50!

The stupendous changes in our culture that this fact implies is mind-boggling. Can we face the challenge of our changing age population? Can we plan for an older generation which will be healthy and productive, still contributing to society from the depths of their experience and wisdom?

Since 1975 I have been studying and working to help bring about the conditions which facilitate the development of a new

image of aging in our society. We are surrounded by messages on TV, radio and in print suggesting strongly that to be young is the ultimate experience. We are exhorted to use a product or engage in some activity which will restore youth or retard aging. Old people are presented as being in need of help, or cantankerous or comical. The real tragedy is that so many older people accept this image.

Until recently very little information was available about healthy aging. Most of the studies have been done on the 10% of the older population who are in poor health, or who live in poverty. During the last ten years, however, some very exciting facts have emerged from innovative programs opening the way for new paths. For in-

stance, older people are perfectly capable of continuing to learn new ideas and skills. Many chronic ailments can be controlled or reversed through diet and lifestyle. If we help people to be healthier and keep their minds active and searching, how will this mix with the needs of a radically changing population ratio? Will it not compound the problem by keeping people in the work force and crowding out younger workers? It will only if we do not fundamentally change our image of the place of old people in society.

I believe there is a purpose for old age, a purpose of which we have largely been unaware, but which other more primitive societies recognized. Our later years can be a time of spiritual growth, of inner richness, of fulfillment and preparation for the final transition to the spiritual world.

But looking inward is only half the experience. We can also find a way to share our expanding awareness with others—the wisdom of the elders flowing out to children and adults alike. The inner life joins with concern for the outer world.

This is my own personal goal, and I know it is not easy. As I feel the change in

my body that aging brings, I experience the pain of loss of a slim waistline, muscular agility and keen hearing. I must make decisions concerning lifestyle and diet, make time for a program of exercise to improve my health. I must discipline myself to set priorities, to learn to be conscious of my spiritual self and its needs, for it is all too easy to drift along from day to day.

Last, it is essential that I make plans to reach out to others and become involved in creating a community awareness of the changes now happening and the possibilities for new horizons of service elders can achieve. Robert Browning's words:

"Grow old along with me  
The best is yet to be  
The last of life

For which the first was made"  
need not be heard with bitterness and disbelief, but with joyous affirmation!



*Elizabeth L. Johnson, after 32 years as a minister's wife and mother of six children, went back to school in 1972 to earn a degree in human services, with emphasis on gerontology. Subsequently she worked for the Area Agency on Aging and helped to produce a weekly half-hour television show by and for older people. She has recently retired as director of an educational program for seniors, sponsored by a local community college.*



## PACIFIC COAST ASSOCIATION MEETING

The Pacific Coast Association held another happy meeting August 31 to September 2, hosted Friday evening and Saturday by the El Cerrito parish, and Sunday by the San Francisco parish. The ladies of the El Cerrito parish provided three excellent meals Friday evening and Saturday, and the San Francisco parish provided lunch on Sunday after the church service, which nearly filled the house of worship. Sermon was by Mr. Eldon Smith, lay leader from San Diego.

On Friday evening the Association board met from 7:30 until 11:30. In addition to the budget, which had been prepared by the treasurer to cover usual expenses, items were added for a Spiritual Growth project proposed by Rev. Horand Gutfeldt, involving himself and an assistant visiting each society. Also, a sum for use in the Cluster Ministry in Southern California was proposed. This program plans to share the three ministers now at Wayfarers' Chapel with the three Southern California societies, all presently without ministers.

The Saturday forenoon business meeting opened with a procession to the open Word on a table at the west end of the church. Rev. Gutfeldt had opened the Word to Numbers 6:24-25, the blessing of Aaron to the Israelites. He asked all present to go to the table and lay a finger on that verse, and return with words of love to each other.

Elections resulted in a new secretary and two new board members. Retiring secretary Alice Van Boven was made secretary emeritus, with voting privileges at all future board meetings. She was given a plaque commemorating her thirty-one years of service as secretary of the Association. New secretary is Annella (Mrs. Eldon) Smith, and new board members are Rev. Paul Martin Grumman of Seattle and Phyllis Bosley of San Francisco. They replace Nancy Freestone of San Francisco and Rev. Andre Diaconoff, recently deceased. Holdovers on the Board include Cassius Ball as Vice President and Chair of the Board, Dr. Carl Lundberg as treasurer and Rev. Dr. Horand Gutfeldt as Presiding Minister.

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# EACH DAY A NEW BEGINNING

By David P. Johnson

What is the process of aging? That partly depends on what you mean! If the question pertains to the body, that is the business of geriatrics. If the question applies to what I experience, especially with regard to how I experience life at seventy-one, then I have something to say.

Most significantly, I don't think of myself any differently than I did ten years ago, twenty years ago, thirty years ago. I am Dave Johnson, who happens to have had the joy of experiencing seventy-one years of life. Many years ago I said, "I have difficulty understanding how anyone can be bored with life! There are so many things I would like to do, learn and experience, there just will never be enough time in a lifetime." My personal conviction is that this is a significant aspect in making life in later years a continuously exciting experience.

Consequently my life and interests have expanded in these later years. Day by day I think of nothing but their ongoing growth and expansion. This does not mean that I do not accept some of the physical changes that take place. But it does mean that I learn to flow with them as I enjoy whatever I undertake.

There is no doubt in my mind that my outlook on life at seventy-one has been deeply influenced by my Swedenborgian background. (This is not implying that the religious orientation of others is any less helpful to them.) In the first place my belief in life after death leaves me with no fear of death, even though I want to live as long as reasonably possible. Another strong dynamic is the concept of regeneration, which I understand to be a process of current and eternal growth and development of my spirit. This I experience in more finite form in my daily confrontations with "life." All of this finds its foundation in my faith in the Lord.

Of the latter I want to share a very significant experience. In my search for the meaning of my faith, in looking deeply into those nooks and crannies of myself that I'd rather not see or acknowledge, what had

been an intellectual understanding of my faith became a dynamic, moving experience. I found I could place my faith and trust in God and his outreaching love and wisdom and allow them to guide my life. I could and can give many reasons to affirm the existence of God and all that pertains to Him. Yet, there came a time when as I knelt at the altar at the beginning of a service to ask in silent prayer for His guidance, I found I had nothing to say. It puzzled and disturbed me. My conduct of the service and my messages, however, were more vital than ever before. How could this be? Gradually I became aware of a deep inner knowing that "GOD IS." Nothing more need be said! This simple abiding sense of His presence has remained with me, though consciously only from time to time.

Therefore, I live life with joy and satisfaction, pursuing an *active* retirement. I do crazy things like buying and learning to use a computer (on which the draft of this article was written and edited.) Our local grandchildren enjoy the fun and teaching assets of the computer. Four years ago we built a greenhouse and solarium dining area. We had the shell built and I became plumber, electrician and carpenter. Besides our own pleasure, we supply birthday plants for the "Foster Grandparents," family and friends. Gradually, we've expanded our stereo system and often enjoy our records in the evening.

It is a joy to still be active in Convention, serving on the General Council, Chairing the Presidential Search Committee of the Swedenborg School of Religion and providing contact work for the Committee on Admission to the Ministry. Now Pastor Emeritus of the Seattle "Fellowship," I fill in when the Pastor, Paul Martin Grumman, is away. Another great pleasure is continuing six to eight hours of Pastoral Counseling each week.

Together Elizabeth and I enjoy travel free from responsibilities. We have been to Hawaii several times. We have visited Fiji, Australia, and travel in the United States

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*Grow old along with me!  
The best is yet to be,  
The last of life, for which the first was made.*

By Philip M. Alden

When Robert Browning penned these lines, some 120 years ago, he was no doubt speaking from personal experience. And it seems right that our older, or Senior Years, should be the best or at least good years. They are our final years of preparation for graduation into life in the Spiritual World where we will begin to "grow young" again.

At the same time I would be less than candid if I did not recognize that for many the later years can often be both painful and difficult, particularly if we are not blessed with good health. But even in situations of this kind contentment can come from the knowledge that we are loved and cared for by others who are able to be more active than we. And for those who are able I am convinced that there are things we can do which will help to make these senior years better than they might otherwise have been. It is in this belief and because they seem to have worked for me that I agreed to write this article and share my thoughts and experiences with you.

### **Be Prepared**

For many of us one of the first milestones along the path of growing older is the day we first decide that the time has come to think about retirement—a period when we will have more "elective time." Time to do more of the things we want to do, as compared with things we have to do. At least a year ahead is none too soon to think about retirement. It may well involve a move to a new location, making new friends and even a basic change in our life style.

We should also seriously consider what we want to do with all the new free time which will then be at our disposal. For some retirement may be a difficult and even traumatic experience but it can be made easier if we plan ahead. As one who is rapidly approaching his 85th birthday I hope that some of the suggestions to follow may be helpful.

### **Work to Keep Fit**

Certainly, feeling well and healthy is an important factor in the enjoyment of our daily life. We need to take care of our physical bodies since they are the only ones we will have in this world. Our bodies may be likened to a machine, which with proper maintenance will have a longer life and fewer problems. A favorite poet, Lewis Carroll, must have been thinking about the importance of regular exercise when he wrote:

"You are old, Father William,  
the young man said,  
And your hair has become  
very white:  
And yet you incessantly stand  
on your head—  
Do you think at your age it is  
right?"

We do not need to emulate Father William but exercise is important. It may be in sports—golf, tennis, bowling, or if you prefer, just plain walking. One good rule is—don't ride when you can walk. Some may prefer to join a health club which offers gymnastic equipment and often a swimming pool. Other important health factors include:

1. Watch your weight. It is not a bad idea to check in each morning. If the scales show that you are up a pound or two, count your calories until you return to "fighting trim."
2. Stop Smoking!
3. See your doctor regularly to check your heart, blood pressure, cholesterol, triglycerides, etc.
4. Good nutrition is important. Both the American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society have excellent literature on the subject.
5. Try not to worry. Remember—most of the things you worried about yesterday didn't happen today.
6. Perhaps most important of all—be for-

tunate enough to have a loving wife (or husband) to take good care of you.

### Have a Hobby

If you have had a hobby before retirement it is great to have more time to enjoy it. If your work has been all-absorbing, I strongly recommend that you find a new interest. The field is almost as broad as your imagination. Here are just a few suggestions: travel, gardening, photography, bird watching, collecting—stamps, coins, antiques, dolls, autographs, etc., music, history, reading, writing, or anything else that appeals to you.

### Be a Volunteer

One of the more serious problems which may face us in our older years is "being bored"—not having enough to do. For many, having a hobby may be sufficient, but if this does not completely solve the problem, it can be readily cured by involvement in some worthwhile program or activity. If you look around, you will find that there are innumerable agencies and organizations which are looking for volunteers and which will welcome any time and talent you are willing to share with them. Just a few of them are: health and welfare agencies—United Way, Heart and Cancer Societies, Association for the Blind, hospitals, nursing homes, churches, Boy and Girl Scouts, the community or county "Office on Aging," day care centers, VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance), Salvation Army, Help for the Handicapped.

If I were to try to write a brief prescription for happiness in these "best years of our life" it would be:

Keep well, keep busy and do not really retire until for health, or other adequate reasons, it becomes necessary that you do so.



*Mr. Alden, for many years President of the Swedenborg Foundation, is busily retired in Lititz, PA.*

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and Canada to be with children, grandchildren and friends.

There seems to be no limit to the satisfaction of enjoying these years. Each day is a new beginning. We have served our church, our countries (Canada and the United States,) our communities and our family well over the years. Perfectly? Of course not. But isn't that what regeneration is all about? Now is the time to move at our own pace, to experience the fullness of the present moments as they arise from the richness of the past.



*David Johnson, ordained in 1943, was pastor of the church in Kitchener, Ontario, on the "Team Ministry" in Bellevue, Washington, on many boards and committees. Now Pastor Emeritus of the Seattle congregation, continuing part time pastoral counseling, he enjoys an active retirement with his wife Elizabeth.*



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The Saturday noon luncheon was for all present, and was followed by the Alliance Meeting. Then a symposium was led by four persons. In the evening an original one-act play was presented. It had been written by Elizabeth Gutfeldt and Rianne Bowell. Rianne was the actress, and the voice heard in the background came from Ted Gutfeldt.

Although this meeting was a smaller one than usual, with only 29 voting members present, it was a happy meeting.

Alice Van Boven  
Secretary Emeritus



# 1984 WRITERS' WORKSHOP BEARS FRUIT

By Ethelwyn Worden

The closing day of Convention found several people bound not for home but for the Fryeburg New Church Assembly in nearby Fryeburg, Maine. There they spent four days in either "rest and relaxation" or in the Writers' Workshop sponsored by Convention's Department of Communication (formerly Publication).

Twelve participants in the workshop met Sunday evening with Mark Sullivan, of the Planning Office for the State of Maine. He was a veritable last-minute replacement for an ailing Dr. Vivian Blevins, whose materials he used and enlarged on. Mark was "found" by Carol Lawson, who had known him as an excellent writer and public relations person for the National Wildlife Federation, and was able to come on several days' notice, having received Dr. Blevins' packet of workshop materials in time to study them.

Content of the workshop was in three parts following the introductory session. Dealing almost entirely with public relations aspects of writing, participants found themselves learning how to gather information for, and write, a news release or short public service announcement for radio; how to put together information for a pamphlet and to lay it out, ready for printing; and the same for a brochure (a larger pamphlet, usually stapled, with pictures included). Each session included a "how-to" discussion first, followed by time to practice and put together material. At the end of each session all gathered together to go over their creations and to discuss them, or to improve them.

An open discussion one morning, to which everyone was invited, resulted in a flock of ideas being exchanged in the area of public relations for the General Convention nationally, and for local churches and associations on their own or with national (Central Office) support. At the wrap-up session on Wednesday, workshop participants re-evaluated what they had learned, and "blue-skied" about how their new

knowledge could best help their local churches and groups.

Leader Sullivan writes, "I thought it was especially valuable to hear the participants' perspectives on how the Convention might better support local efforts. I would strongly advise that you give additional attention to many of the ideas that were discussed, especially in the provision of articles which congregations might include as features or columns in local newsletters (or newspapers), and of additional printed materials which the Convention might produce for use by local churches to convey your message to both the media and the general public. I also urge that you give more consideration to the potential which short radio and television public service announcements offer for increasing public awareness of both the church and the message of Emanuel Swedenborg."

Mark Sullivan also urged "that future training sessions include more examples of successful communications programs developed by local churches, especially newsletters."

The participants in this first such workshop felt unanimously that they had gained more than they expected. Since then, several have already been using their heightened abilities in doing "P.R." for their local churches, both for in-house church newsletters and for the public in general. The Central Office would like to see copies of news releases and newsletters which these twelve, and others as well, have prepared for their churches' programs, with an ulterior motive in mind: we hope to begin a bi-monthly newsletter from Central Office in which we share each other's news, projects and ideas. Through copies of the above-mentioned articles we can gather such news, since they will elaborate more on projects and such than is normal in a church bulletin.

The Department of Communication is planning another workshop for the post-

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# LETTERS

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Dear Editor,

Since 1757, when an ultimate judgment occurred in the World of Spirits, according to Emanuel Swedenborg, human civilization has been undergoing some tremendous changes which seem to support the Swedish seer's claims that a New Age is at hand. Consider the following:

1. Since that fateful year of 1757, monarchistic governments have diminished dramatically. Grand monarchies have disappeared in India, China, Russia, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Hungary, Vietnam, Portugal, Brazil, and, for all practical purposes, England.

2. Democratic governments, ruled more nearly by the spiritual principle of freedom, have had an impressive history in North America, Europe, and Israel.

3. Chattel-slavery has been vanquished from many parts of the world, since 1757. Today chattel-slavery exists in Africa and Mauritania, as well as in many other parts of the world, in one form or another, but the cause of freedom and dignity has been advanced remarkably.

4. Since 1757, knowledge of the Bible has vastly increased. Education and the belief that individuals must know God for themselves has begun to permeate most of the world's culture.

5. Our communications capability has entered into areas undreamed of in 1757, but they underscore the dawning of a New Age. Television, radio and computers help us to spread ideas and information to a degree almost unimaginable, whether those ideas be for good or for evil, for capitalism or socialism, for freedom or for totalitarianism.

6. Since 1757 there have been violent intellectual revolutions in virtually every part of the world—in India's Hindus, China's and Japan's Buddhists, Turkey's and Egypt's and Iran's Moslems, as well as in the minds of Africa's Christians and Moslems. Both Protestantism and Roman Catholicism are nearly unrecognizable from the 18th century reality. The new force of Communism and Marxism has entered and taken root in much of the world's thinking.

I feel that the New Church and New Age which Swedenborg heralded is visible in the explosion of new directions inherent in the above-mentioned historical trends. He wasn't just talking about a particular church in Bryn Athyn, Boston, London or Sweden. He was looking toward a spreading of the New Age of the type existing, for example, in the mind of Rev. Thomas Hartley, who was an Anglican clergyman and arguably Swedenborg's best friend in his last years.

If Swedenborg considered a member of the clergy in the Church of England to be a member of the New Church, then who are we to say that those who wear the vestments of religious denominations around the world cannot also be "Swedenborgian"?

We should look thoughtfully at the historical developments since 1757. The New Church must be all around us. How are we to identify it?

Charles E. Witzell  
Valley Cottage, NY

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Convention period of June 30 through about July 3, 1985 at Almont New Church Assembly, and a tentative mini-course on writing (the creative aspects) during Convention itself. You might like to keep these in mind as you plan your summer, and as the Department's own plans are firmed up by Spring.

Building on the recent workshop, the Central Office will use many of the ideas gleaned from the workshop, and will include public relations methods and suggestions for materials in our newsletter. We will also be glad to offer assistance to any church in starting or improving your own newsletters or bulletins, developing news releases and radio spots, and so on. And we mostly hope you will share *your* news with us, so we can pass it along.

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# REVISED STANDARD VERSION BIBLE WIDELY ACCEPTED; NEW 1990 REVISION PLANNED

One Sunday more than 30 years ago, in 1952, a Rocky Mount, N.C., pastor stepped to his church's pulpit, blowtorch in hand, and set fire to a copy of the just-published Revised Standard Version (RSV) Bible, declaring it to be "modernistic," yea, even a work of Satan.

The Rev. Luther Hux, pastor of Rocky Mount Baptist Church, found the book surprisingly hard to burn — "just like the devil," he commented, according to an eyewitness report. But he succeeded finally in reducing the Bible to a heap of ashes and fragments, which he scooped up, put in a tin and shipped to Dr. Luther Weigle, then chairing the RSV Bible Committee.

That tin of ashes, one element of the RSV committee's archives, has become a sort of "traveling trophy" for the committee's chairperson. Dr. Herbert G. May inherited it from Dr. Weigle, and now Dr. Bruce Metzger of Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J., chairs the RSV committee and is keeper of the tin.

Since those early stormy days — when there also appeared pamphlets denouncing "The New Blasphemous Bible" and Senator Joseph McCarthy's investigative committee charged that several members of the RSV committee were communists — the Revised Standard Version has won exceptionally widespread acceptance among Protestant, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians.

Copyrighted by the National Council of Churches' Division of Education and Ministry, more than 34.5 million copies of the RSV Bible have been sold in the United States, with substantial overseas markets as well. Most of the NCCC's 31 member church bodies have endorsed the RSV, and many scholars affirm that the RSV Bible has been established as the best all-around standard translation, capturing in contemporary English much of the beauty of the King James Version and demonstrating great accuracy and fidelity to the early Hebrew and Greek manuscripts.

While the King James Version of 1611 "probably still remains the most widely disseminated version of the English Bible, the Revised Standard Version remains the most widely used modern speech translation of the Holy Scriptures," even with today's proliferation of Bible versions, Metzger said.

The RSV Bible currently is available from six publishers in numerous editions. The RSV text is widely used in church study and worship materials and has served as the basis for projects as diverse as the Reader's Digest Condensed Bible and "An Inclusive Language Lectionary," also a DEM project.

Now the Revised Standard Version Bible is being updated, with publication slated for 1990. The current RSV Bible's Old Testament was completed in 1952, and its New Testament was last updated in 1971. The Deuterocanonical (Apocryphal) books, accepted by Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches and available in certain special editions of the RSV Bible, were completed in 1957. Among features of the 1990 version will be use of "you" instead of "thee" and "thou" to address God, and use of inclusive rather than masculine-oriented language for people where the original text allows.

Why revise the Revised Standard Version? The answer to that question lies in the impact of continuing discovery of ancient manuscripts and other archaeological finds which help to shed light on the meanings of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words. Further, the English language keeps changing, and revisions seek to eliminate archaisms and capture still more faithfully the nuances of ancient texts in contemporary English.

"There is no end to the discovery of ancient manuscripts," said Metzger, who was drawn to biblical translation as a way to combine his interests in Christian ministry and in linguistics. "For example, since publication of the RSV in 1952, copies in Greek of the gospels of John and Luke a full century older than any we'd previously known have turned up." Discovery of the

Dead Sea Scrolls also has provided Bible scholars a wealth of new resources for their work on the Old Testament.

"Scholars are constantly attempting to learn more about the exact meaning of certain ancient Hebrew and Greek terms and expressions," he continued. Many words occur only once in the Hebrew Bible and in no other literature. One such word is "pim" (1 Samuel 13:21), taken by translators of the King James Version to mean "a file," used by blacksmiths to sharpen tools.

"During the 20th century, however, archaeologists discovered in Palestine ancient sets of weights used for business transactions each bearing a Hebrew word. One of these, weighing almost two and two-thirds ounces, is marked 'pim,' and so now we know that this was the amount the blacksmith charged for sharpening various tools," Metzger said.

This illustrates just one of the many problems facing translators. Translators also must struggle with which surviving Hebrew and Greek texts should be the basis of the English rendering and with how to punctuate texts, since in antiquity it was customary to write Hebrew and Greek manuscripts with few, if any, marks of punctuation, he said.

Further challenges facing the translator include stylistic problems which arise because the Bible is used not only for ceremonial reading aloud but also for detailed study, and must be accessible to readers of all ages and degrees of intelligence and education without sacrificing accuracy in matter or manner, Metzger said.

Metzger explained several changes planned for the 1990 RSV Bible, including the elimination of "thee" and "thou" and correction of the King James Version's "over-masculinization" of personal pronouns for people.

"A growing number of churches today address God as 'you,'" Metzger said. "In the Hebrew and Greek texts the same form of the second person pronoun is used in talking to God and to people. The King James Version uses 'thee' and 'thou' for both people and God.

"The RSV committee earlier this century decided to use 'you' in addressing people, but did not feel at that time that it would

be right to make a sudden shift with regard to the prayer language of people. That introduced a distinction not present in the Hebrew or Greek," an inconsistency which will no longer exist in the 1990 version, he said.

"Overmasculinization" of personal pronouns, Metzger said, is the use of the word "man" or "men" where it is lacking in the original text or where the original text permits a more generic rendering, such as "one" or "people."

"In 1946, when the New Testament was first published in the Revised Standard Version, some changes already were made to correct that," he said. "For example, Revelation 3:20 in the King James Version reads, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.'"

"The Greek text here does not use the word 'man,' and the RSV already correctly uses the word 'anyone,' so that the passage reads, 'if anyone hears my voice,'" Metzger said. However, while earlier RSV work gave only sporadic attention to masculine-oriented language, preparation of the 1990 RSV Bible is giving this more sustained attention, making changes in language about people as permitted by the original texts.

Language about God and Jesus will not be changed, however.

## NEW PAMPHLETS OUT

Two new pamphlets by Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey have just been released by the Department of Communication. Entitled "Steps to Spiritual Growth" and "Prayer and Sacraments," these two new works explore age-old topics in spirituality from a New Age perspective. Also just released is the second edition (and third printing) of the popular 32 page pamphlet, "The Story of Swedenborg and the Swedenborgian Church." In a handy format and readable style, this pamphlet provides an overview of Swedenborg's life and the history to date of the Swedenborgian Church in North America. It is excellent for new inquirers. All three are available from the Central Office, 48 Sargent St., Newton, MA 02158

# CHURCH RECORDS

## Births

*Joseph*—Sarah Elizabeth Joseph was born to Dee Franklin Joseph and Robin Farnham Joseph, of the SNAP Society, on June 21, 1984.

## Baptisms

*Leffering*—Corrie Diane, daughter of John and Shirley Ann Leffering, was baptized into the Christian faith on September 9, 1984, at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, the Rev. Paul B. Zacharias officiating.

*Miller*—Amy Carolyn, daughter of Kevin and Mary Miller, was baptized into the Christian faith on September 9, 1984 at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, the Rev. Paul B. Zacharias officiating.

## Marriages

*Crawford-Jantzi*—Mark Crawford and Karen Jantzi were united in marriage at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, on September 15, 1984, the Rev. Paul B. Zacharias officiating.

*Sittler-Schneider*—Steve Sittler and Pamela Schneider were united in marriage at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, on September 22, 1984, the Revs. Eric Allison and Paul B. Zacharias officiating.

## Anniversaries

*Tafel*—Rev. Richard H. Tafel and Corinne B. Tafel celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary, October 26, 1984 at the Philadelphia Church. Rev. Tafel is Pastor Emeritus of the Philadelphia Society and editor of *Our Daily Bread* for the past 35 years. Mrs. Tafel has served on numerous committees and Boards, and is currently representing the Swedenborg Publishing Association on the Board of Commu-

tions, as well as serving on the Nominating Committee.

*Nielsen*—Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Nielsen, long-time members of the Urbana Society, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 24, 1984, at the Urbana United Methodist Church.

## Deaths

*Pruitt*—Priscilla Webster Johnson Pruitt, life-long member of the Providence, Rhode Island Church, passed into the spiritual realm on June 7, 1984 in Rumford, R.I. Resurrection services were held in Rumford, the Revs. Steven See and Ann E. Geer, the deceased's niece, officiating.



# LIFE CARE CENTER SURVEY

## *A Survey for The Department of Communication of The General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches*

Since Convention's membership is comprised of a large number of elderly persons, it is hoped that it can be determined to what extent there could be an interest in life care residency.

Please give this matter your thoughtful consideration and we urge you to complete this form.

SHOULD THERE BE A SWEDENBORGIAN LIFE CARE CENTER? \_\_\_\_\_

WHERE DO YOU THINK IT SHOULD BE LOCATED:

An urban area ☐

A suburban area ☐

The country ☐

Warm climate ☐

Seasonal climate ☐

WHAT AMENITIES AND SERVICES SHOULD BE AVAILABLE:

Medical services nearby ☐

Nurse in residence ☐

Scheduled local transportation ☐

Daily meals: One ☐ Two ☐ Three ☐

Recreation:

Type of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

WHAT WOULD YOU CONSIDER THE ESSENTIALS OF A SWEDENBORGIAN LIFE CARE CENTER?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN SUCH A CENTER? IF SO APPROXIMATELY WHEN?

\_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please respond to:

Virginia Branston  
4 Peter Cooper Road  
New York, NY 10010

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in the United States of America  
*The Messenger*  
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