

THE MESSENGER

Monthly Publication, Swedenborgian Church of North America

February 1998

Cambridge Swedenborgians Support Tibetan Protest of China

Eugene Taylor

On November 1, 1997, thousands of people thronged around the Swedenborg Chapel in Cambridge, Massachusetts, including hundreds of Tibetans, to protest the visit of China's new president, Jiang Zemin. Prominent among the crowds were members of the Cambridge New Church Women's Alliance—Betty Wiberg, Elizabeth Wisdom, and Harriet Whitehead—the Cambridge Society's Social Action Committee, led by Bill Shakalis and Amy Reichart; Chapel minister, F. Bob Tafel and his wife Gretchen; Council president Lars Wiberg; and stalwarts of the congregation, Bob and Polly Erickson, along with various members of the Swedenborg Society at Harvard-Radcliffe associated with the Harvard-Radcliffe United Ministries, such as Harvard Divinity student, Sarah Buteaux.



Tibetan Monk on the front lawn of the Swedenborg Chapel.

Since 1993 the Cambridge Swedenborg Society has been a principal sponsor of the Tibet-US Resettlement Project, the Tibetan Community Assistance Project, and The Tibetan Association of Boston. In gratitude, officers and families of the Tibetan Community of Boston introduced members of the Cambridge Church Council to His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, winner of the Nobel Peace prize, on his visit to the US two years ago. At that time, Lars Wiberg, Ray Guiu, Bob and Polly Erickson, and Ethel Rice presented books on Swedenborg to the Dalai Lama. The spiritual leader of the Tibetan people reciprocated by presenting the Society with a signed copy of his recent autobiography. Forty years ago the Tibetan people were invaded by the Chinese communists, who have since embarked upon a systematic program to destroy traditional Tibetan culture. Thousands of Buddhist temples were

destroyed; monks and nuns have been killed and tortured; many now languish in Chinese prisons or forced labor camps, where they work providing cheap goods to American companies; and Tibetan women are subject to forced abortions followed by sterilization. In addition, Han Chinese now outnumber ethnic Tibetans, making Tibetans a minority in their own country. Worst of all, the Chinese have made Tibet the largest dumping ground for radioactive waste in the world, and ringed the Himalayas with intercontinental ballistic missiles, aimed at the west.

Today, 116,000 Tibetans, led by the Dalai Lama and the democratically elected Tibetan Government-in-Exile, live mainly in Northern India. As a result of the US Immigration Act of 1990, some four to five thousand Tibetans have been allowed to settle in the US and become citizens—making it the largest refugee community of Tibetans outside India. The Tibet-US Resettlement Project, made up of American friends of Tibetans, has helped create 21 different cluster sites around the US, where Tibetan communities can continue their cultural practices, while learning the democratic and western way of life. In Cambridge, the Swedenborg Chapel is the home of the Boston cluster site.

Thus, when the new president of China came to lecture at Harvard on November 1, the Tibetans were strategically placed on the grounds of the Swedenborg Chapel, right across from the front door of the Memorial Hall where he was speaking. Thousands of protesters lined up behind police barricades, while police on horseback patrolled the perimeters and Secret Service agents milled around waiting for the arrival of the Chinese president. The Tibetans were out in full force and clearly visible to all. Posters of tortured monks and nuns were displayed; signs reading "Free Tibet," and long banners decorated the front lawn of the Chapel.

(Continued on page 19)

In This Issue

- Swedenborg Meets the Beguines
- New Church of Southwest Florida Update
- The Wedding Ministry at Wayfarers Chapel
- Holy Toll Calls
- Pastoral Care Coalition Launched

MIDWINTER MUSINGS

In this issue, we are once again expressing our gratitude to the members and friends who paid for subscriptions or donated any amount at all to *The Messenger*.

This started me thinking about the huge number of appeals we all receive each year; the closer to the holidays the more they pour in. So many are worthy causes that we feel we should support in some way, but we can't lend our financial support to everything, so, if you're like me, you pick and choose, give a little here, more there, reluctantly pitch many in the trash.

One aspect of these appeals that has bothered me is the amount of the suggested donation, which usually hovers around \$25. I have in the past felt dismayed that I can't contribute the suggested amounts to some of the causes I feel especially moved to support.

As I pondered all of this, and the amount of money that must be spent each year to raise funds for various organizations, and the strategies employed by fundraisers to get people to donate, I realized that very likely many people like myself, if they feel they can't give the suggested amount, have succumbed to a sort of frustrated exasperation and ignored the appeal altogether. Or they put it in a pile of things to be gone over later, and eventually feeling overwhelmed with obligations, sweep the whole pile into the trash.

At some point I decided it was better to give a little bit to let them know I'm sympathetic to the cause, and pay no attention to the amount of the suggested donation. I have no problem sending a check for \$5.00 or even \$3.00, figuring it covers the cost of the mailing to me. And if everybody they mailed to who felt moved to register their support sent in a tiny contribution instead of chucking the request in the wastebasket, the organizations would be in pretty good shape. I would hope that the organizations might also feel better knowing that many hands and hearts were out there participating in the support, no matter how small the offering.

I suspect there may be a number of people who feel embarrassed that they can't stretch their budget to give \$10

or more, so they don't give anything at all. I encourage anyone who feels that way to take a different perspective, whether you're thinking of showing support for *The Messenger* or any other deserving cause. Every little bit helps more than you know.



It was interesting to read about the new National Interfaith Coalition for Spiritual Healthcare and Counseling launching a major national effort to promote quality pastoral care and counseling throughout the U.S. (p. 25)

When Ted and I lived in LaPorte, Indiana, he helped out periodically in a pastoral care/chaplaincy capacity at the local hospital, spending time with any patients or families who needed to talk or simply had need of a comforting presence. Most of the medical staff were cooperative and supportive of the chaplaincy program, recognizing it as an aid to patients and families healing and well-being; some others regarded it as unnecessary and expendable. And some of the patients regarded any clergy person with suspicion.

The little time I've spent in hospitals has been more often as a close family member of the patient than as a patient, but I vividly recall my feelings of vulnerability, anxiety and fear that accompanied each visit. In either role, the experience of a comforting, healing spiritual presence, someone listening and interested in my well-being without being part of the problem, would have been an enormous help. But it wasn't offered, and it didn't occur to me to ask.

With no understanding back then of what good clinical pastoral counseling can provide, I think I harbored some vague assumption that you asked for such help only if you were dying, and then you were likely to be lectured about the precarious state of your soul.

Despite widespread concrete evidence that a spiritual dimension is vital to healing, much of the general public and many professional healthcare providers need to be educated in this area. Hopefully the Coalition will be working to accomplish this.

Patte LeVan ❖

NCCC Professional Staff Opening

The National Council of the Churches of Christ has announced a professional staff opening for Director, Ministries in Christian Education. The person in this position would be responsible to Deputy General Secretary for the National Ministries Unit. The starting salary range is \$47,010 - \$58,760.

Ministries in Christian Education is a cluster of Program Ministries within the National Ministries Unit (NMU) of the NCCC. It is the arena in the NCCC in which the communions work to develop cooperative Christian Education and congregational ministries.

Deadline for accepting applications is February 13, 1998. Persons wishing to apply should submit a resume and any other supporting materials they feel may be helpful in evaluating their suitability for this position. Address any initial inquiries to: The National Council of Churches, Office of Human Resources, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 650, New York, NY 10115-0050. ❖

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Cambridge Swedenborgians Support Tibetan Protest of China

(Continued from page 17)

Most prominent was a giant full-color picture of the Dalai Lama, painted by congregation artist, Betty Wiberg, which had been mounted over the front archway of the church. A spot-light behind the picture dramatically highlighted the figure at night.



Betty and Brenda Wiberg in front of Betty's Banner of the Dalai Lama.

Both Tibetans and Swedenborgians were everywhere, and the protest was gauged a raging success when Dean Archie Epps of Harvard had to come over across the barricades with two policemen and ask the protesters to quiet down.

Following the event, members of the Coalition for Freedom and Human Rights in Asia sent a letter of appreciation to the congregation, praising Swedenborgians for their humanity and generosity of spirit. The coalition was made up of The Joint Commission for Protestating Jiang Zemin's Visit to Harvard; The Taiwanese Association of America; China; Long March for Democracy; Macao Chinese Club; Association of Overseas Hong Kong Chinese for Democracy and Human Rights; Amnesty International; The Kennedy School Alliance for Freedom and Democracy; The Tibetan Community Assistance Project; Students for a Free Tibet/Harvard Divinity School Chapter; and Students for a Free Tibet/Harvard-Radcliffe Chapter. In the letter, Cambridge Swedenborgians were praised for "giving voice to many hundreds of millions who are silenced by the repressive policies of the Chinese government. "Please know," the Coalition wrote, "that the solidarity and compassion we have found within the walls of your Church will continue to inspire our work for social justice everywhere."



Rev. F. Bob Tafel and Lama Nawang Jardan.

Eugene Taylor, Ph.D., is vice-president of the Cambridge Society's church council, and author of *A Psychology of Spiritual Healing*, a current offering of the Swedenborg Foundation. ❖

LETTERS

A Psychology of Spiritual Healing Explained

Dear Patte LeVan, Editor:

I am extraordinarily grateful to David Eller and Mary Lou Bertucci of the Swedenborg Foundation for the fine work they did on my recent book (and special thanks to the Rev. Jim Lawrence for all his work behind the scenes); and thank you for the opportunity to add just a note to the recent review that appeared in *The Messenger*. While I was delighted at all the reviewer said, even where she took me to task, I just wanted to give readers my own take as the author on the same work.

A Psychology of Spiritual Healing is dedicated to various pioneers in the new field of mind-body medicine because the book attempts to address the question of what we need to know to harness the patient's beliefs for healing. The answer I offer is to abandon a normative psychology of the object in favor of the transcendent psychology of the subject. This means looking for a phenomenological, existential, intuitive, and dynamic psychology of inner experience that the individual has constructed to understand reality, rather than treating the patient's beliefs as mere cognitive thought processes to be measured.

The basic premise of the work is that individuals who have experienced an opening of the internal doors of perception and committed themselves to a lifelong journey of interior exploration have constructed a sophisticated but idiosyncratic psychological language of inner experience. The function of this language is to navigate the interior domains of consciousness they have experienced, as well as to continually explore new states. In certain instances, this interior psychology may be much more sophisticated than most of the outward, cognitive forms of language found in traditional cultural institutions to which the person might be affiliated. But while it is well developed, it is also usually quite idiosyncratic to the person.

A reconstruction of this interior language leads us to the symbols of a person's personal destiny—numinous images held deep within the subconscious of a mythic and visionary nature, which form the core of the person's world view, and which relate directly to their highest ideals of self-actualization. To harness these symbols within the healing process brings an altogether new condition to the definition of wellness. The end result for the questioning and searching individual is a higher level of awareness with regard to life meaning, which can be harnessed for physical and psychological healing. However, while they are the source of the will to live against all odds; and they give us purpose and something higher to strive for, as Swedenborg well knew, the true function of possessing these symbols is spiritual preparation for the hour of one's death.

Eugene Taylor, Ph.D.
Cambridge, Massachusetts ❖

Swedenborg Meets the Beguines

Wilma Wake

Few people today have heard of the Beguines, a group of women Christian mystics during the twelfth century. Yet they have had a profound impact on the development of Christian mysticism.

They wrote books, essays, and poetry which circulated for a few hundred years, influencing many well-known mystics such as Jan van Ruysbroeck [1293–1381] and Meister Eckhart [1260?–1327 or 1328]. Yet they were virtually forgot-

ten by the 1500s. Little was heard of them until one of their members, Hadewijch of Brabant, was rediscovered in

1838. Many Beguines are now being revived by modern students of mysticism. To appreciate their burgeoning popularity, try typing the word “Beguines” on a web search engine to see how many web sites are devoted to them!

The Beguines were a spontaneous movement of spiritual women around 1170. Lambert le Begue, a priest in Belgium, encouraged women who wanted to live religiously to develop their own structures, and their name may have come from him. Converts of that time had become limited to the wealthy who could afford a hefty dowry. Women were expected to either marry or take religious vows to the church. The Beguines, however, did neither. They formed their own communities without formal relationship to the church.

A great many Beguine communities grew throughout the Netherlands, northern France, the Rhineland area of Germany, and Switzerland. They flourished until the 1300s when the church worked hard to stamp them out.

All the Beguine groups were autonomous and self-governing. In early ones, the women lived in their own homes, although later some groups built their own structures in order to live to-

gether. They valued poverty and chastity but did not take vows. They practiced communal worship, but their focus was working within the larger societies to improve the lot of the poor and sick. They were not cloistered, but rather were very active in the world.

Although many of these women produced classic works of Christian mysticism, they were often viewed as heretics in their time. Their best-known members include Hadewijch of Brabant, Mechtild of Magdeburg, and Marguerite Porete.

Although many of these women produced classic works of Christian mysticism, they were often viewed as heretics in their time... as was Swedenborg.

The twelfth century was the time of the troubadours. They were courtly male poets and musicians who wandered the countryside dedicated to a particular noble lady.

Usually she was married, and the troubadour worshipped her at a respectful distance—much as a religious man might worship the virgin Mary. Many of these romantic concepts and images made their way into Beguine writings, as they wrote of the deep love for the Divine. Bridal Mysticism or Love Mysticism flourished with the writings of the Beguines. They sought union between the soul and God, whom they sometimes called Divine Love.

John Giles Milhaven, a professor of religious studies at Brown University, argues that the Beguines sound very modern to our ears. He points out that most of Christian history has been very dualistic about spirituality and the physical. But some of these medieval women mystics—especially Hadewijch—saw the two as intertwined.

This is one of the ways in which I see some similarity between Swedenborg and the Beguine mystics who preceded him. He refused to see a world in which the physical and spiritual were separate. Rather, he viewed reality holistically. He wrote of the intertwining of *esse* [being] and *existere* [form]. [*Divine Love and Wisdom* #14–16.]. He said: “There can be no soul apart from its body, nor body

apart from its soul. . . . that a soul can exist apart from a body, and can think and be wise, is an error springing from fallacies . . .” [DLW #14].

Another way in which the Beguines were like Swedenborg is that they were active in their communities. Theirs was not a cloistered, monastic spirituality. It was one that believed in the value of life in community and in the power of service. The Rev. Dr. Ted Klein’s upcoming book, *The Power of Service*, will give much detail about how Swedenborg saw social activism as central to spirituality.¹ The Beguines did, too. They also considered many of the church’s teachings to be rigid, as did Swedenborg. And Swedenborg, as well as many of the Beguines, was at times accused of heresy.

There were, of course, some distinct differences. The Beguines were all women [although there were some male counterparts called Beghards]. They lived in different centuries from Swedenborg. The Beguines were a part of the courtly love of their tie and of the bridal mysticism in the Christian tradition, which is not true of Swedenborg.

But, overall, the Beguines have left us an inspiring spirituality with beautiful poetry and prose about their love of God. Just as Swedenborg’s writings have deep dimensions of relevance for the present, so do the Beguines. Some groups of women today are trying to form modern Beguine communities to practice an active group spirituality outside of a formal church relationship. As a Swedenborgian, I find much in the Beguines’ writings that rings true for me and inspires me in my love of the Divine.

¹ *The Power of Service* is soon to be published by J. Appleseed.

Sources:

Bonnie Duncan, “The Beguines,” web site <http://www.millersv.edu/~english/homepage/duncan/medfem/porete2.html>

Elizabeth T. Knuth, “The Beguines,” web site <http://www.users.csbsju.edu/~eknuth/xpax/beguines.html>

J. Giles Milhaven, *Hadewijch and Her Sisters: Other Ways of Loving and Knowing*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1933. ❖



THE NEW CHURCH OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA AFLOAT DESPITE WEATHER



Our treasurer, Chuck Pack, and members Mary and Peter Cartwright.

It seems like yesterday that a small group of people got together here in the Fort Myers area and dreamed of birthing a brand new Swedenborgian congregation – “a church that would have everything we’ve always imagined and prayed a church should have.” We wove this dream into a seven-year plan of action as requested by the Ministries Support Unit (MINSU). This plan was then recommended to General Council by MINSU and approved as part of the denomination’s 1997 budget. At the urging of the Rev. Eric Allison, church growth consultant, MINSU made one major change to the New Church of Southwest Florida’s outreach plans and budget: It proposed and included money for “The Phone’s For You” program, an intensive phone campaign to reach the unchurched in the area. This method has been used successfully by other denominations to plant new churches. Because this church had already started, the phone campaign would be used to augment our outreach into the community.

Wasting no time, the church held its inaugural service on January 5, 1997. Its outreach and ministry into

the community have continued, with the result of reaching our first year goals of twenty members, starting a Sunday school (the big surprise being that the adult class averages double digit figures), and getting our endowment funds going.

Beginning October 13, 1997, we started phoning hundreds of people near the church location to identify those without a church home. “The Phone’s For You” program is based on the law of large numbers. To maximize the number of calls made, Eric Allison solicited Swedenborgians around the denomination to help in this momentous task. Our preliminary tabulation indicates nearly 17,500 calls were made by the group here and upwards of 700 by others around the U.S. and Canada.

Three separate mailings were sent to prospects who said they were not active in a local church and gave permission



L-R: Members Paul and Ruth Lindstrom talking with Linda and Ben Feldman (recently transplanted from St. Louis) and Peter Cartwright.

for our mailings. Approximately 650 formal invitations were mailed the week of December 7, followed by personal phone calls inviting each person to “Celebration Sunday” on December 14.

We knew it would turn out that some of these people did in fact have a church home. Some others, we knew, would be short-term visitors. We also knew that, because of our tourist/retirement economy, many full-time residents work on weekends. All of these factors might reduce the atten-

dance. What we did not plan on was that we would have the worst rainfall in at least 50 years for the area for this time of year. In spite of the weather, Celebration Sunday drew 26 visitors who had never been here before, 29 members and friends, and seven associated with the musicians who provided special music that Sunday.

In one sense the work here is just beginning. We have much follow-up on our phone campaign to do. We hope some of those who work on weekends will at-

tend our Wednesday evening Bible study. Those who did not attend Celebration Sunday will be invited to other



Teacher Joyce Fekete with Sunday school pupil, Amber Archer, junior member.

(Continued on page 22)

THE NEW CHURCH OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA AFLOAT DESPITE WEATHER

(Continued from page 21)

programs and services, such as the Christmas Eve candle-light service and evening workshops later in the year.

The New Church of Southwest Florida thus starts its second-year plan for growth with a jump start from "The Phone's For You." This program generated a good bit of interest here. Its effect will be cumulative, and felt for months to come. Our seven-year plan calls for the addition of twenty new members each year. Stewardship remains on track, as we accept pledging here as the efficient way of setting a yearly budget and raising funds to support it. We continue to promote endowment fund giving. This effort is paying off, as we have raised more than \$10,000 so far. We also plan to out-grow our current facilities within a few years. This means new facilities must be located. We have already started that search. We will also have to find new monies for that purpose.

The New Church of Southwest Florida is proud of the start we have made and thanks the denomination for its support in this new endeavor. Starting a new church congregation is not something we in the Swedenborgian Church are used to. We are learning as we go, and want to extend a special "thank you" to Eric Allison for all his help and support along the way. The members and friends of

this church extend a hearty "Happy New Year" to all our sister churches and invite members and friends around the country to stop in and visit us when you are in Florida.

Church Office:
(941) 463-5030
FAX: (941) 765-8483
Pager: (941) 999-1113

—Rev. Dick and
Linda Tafel ❖



Member Clyde Curry, church photographer, with president, Sandy Schofield.



Above: Guest trio from nearby mobile home park.



BOOK REVIEW

TEMPLE OF WISDOM

(Continued from Back Page)

person's coming of age. The quest goes deeper than the search for the scepter as Brandun, Kempe and Larke each journey forth to forge an identity, to find a place in the world, to find and fight for values, and to discover the power to act for the good of one's self and others. The young heroes begin with one goal in mind and they have many questions. They return with many answers to their questions about purpose and faith and they learn to see life from the perspective of process rather than the simple achievement of any single goal.

Prayer and trust in God are portrayed as central to this maturation process, in a way that is believable and empowering. Brandun, Kempe, and Larke find a growing ability to trust God and to use their power of choice. Their encounters with the forces of evil are particularly powerful in the way they show the difference between real and infernal freedoms. It is an important lesson for all young people that the free choice of evil actually leads to an enslavement by that evil. It is a lesson told through experiences that most children be able to relate to. This story addresses the beginnings of the process of maturation and many of the eternal questions asked by all ages. Who is God? Who am I? What is my place in this life? What is beyond this life? This novel is a good starting place for theological discussions of these questions with both children and youth. Through the journey and the journeys, the dreams, and the dreamers, Karin Alfelt Childs helps us to climb closer to the Temple of Wisdom in ourselves.

Susannah Currie is a student at the Swedenborg School of Religion, and a member of the Swedenborgian Church in Portland, Maine.

The Temple of Wisdom is available from Fountain Publishing, P.O. Box 80011, Rochester, MI 48308-0011. (\$5.95 plus \$2.25 for mailing.) ❖

[Editor's Note: The following article on the wedding ministry at Wayfarers Chapel seems appropriate to publish in the month associated with Valentine's Day. We also thought *Messenger* readers and other folks involved in wedding ministries throughout the denomination would be interested in a description of how our largest and most successful wedding ministry is conducted on a daily basis. In addition to weddings and other special services and events, a complete Sunday worship service is held weekly at 10 a.m., with the Revs. Marlene Laughlin or Ted LeVan officiating. The Rev. Ted LeVan also conducts a mid-week Bible study class every other Wednesday.]

The Wedding Ministry at Wayfarers Chapel

Ted LeVan

Unlike most of our Swedenborgian ministries, much of a minister's time at the Chapel is devoted to weddings and the minister's conference with the couple prior to their wedding ceremony.

In a typical week, I will have between six and eight weddings and three or four conferences. A few years ago, this would be true only in the summer, but now it is becoming a year-round schedule. During one week last October, I had thirteen weddings, eight wedding conferences, a baptismal conference, a memorial conference, a memorial service, a photo shoot, and four meetings with members of the staff.

Added to this are the many changes that must be made as couples alter their plans. In one recent week, there were three wedding cancellations, and one wedding conference cancellation. During another week, I had five changes in one day.

All this activity calls for close cooperation and clear communication among all staff members to keep a serious mistake from happening. Whether it is a wedding, memorial service, or baptism—or a conference for one of these—it is a very important event for the people who have come to us for our services.

Key to our successful wedding ministry are the wedding directors. When a wedding is booked and locked in with an initial contribution, a wedding director is assigned to help the couple with a planning conference, a rehearsal, and the wedding itself. Depending on what days and times the couple is available, they may wind up working with three different wedding directors. But because these



Wayfarers Chapel, Watercolor by Manon Washburn

directors work so well together, and write clear and accurate instructions for each other which reflect the needs and wishes of the couple, our weddings usually proceed very smoothly. Happiness prevails, and the couples let us know how pleased they are with the careful planning and execution. Even if the couple is nervous—and certainly this is not unusual—they find it reassuring that the wedding directors are calm and focused.

Another important part is played by our gate attendants. Because we are open to wayfarers and visitors of all kinds nearly every day of the year, we need to be gracious and tactful in requesting that our visitors not interfere with the weddings. This can

be a challenge! Our wedding directors, and even our organist, have helped out with this, especially when the photographers and videographers are trying to take pictures of the wedding party on Chapel grounds and would like our visitors to step out of camera view for a few moments.

The Chapel is also blessed with the professional musical talents of the Waring family: Wendy, the Chapel organist, her husband Geoffrey, a fine trumpeter and guitarist, and their son Michael, a stunning singer whose boy-soprano voice is in transition. Michael currently acts as liturgist and in other capacities as the need arises.

A number of couples who come to us to be married at the Chapel are already married! They were either married in Japan just before they crossed the Pacific, or they were married with a quick service in Las Vegas. For the Japanese couples, it is part of a careful plan. For the domestic couples, it is often the result of an impulsive decision that they later regret, whereupon they decide to get "properly" married at the Chapel in front of their family and friends.

Because we are now doing more weddings than the Rev. Marlene Laughlin and I alone can handle, we have on call four visiting ministers. These include a Swedenborgian minister—the Rev. Harvey Tafel; a Presbyterian minister; a minister from a denomination that is very close to our theology; and a minister from a conservative denomination who visits orphanages in Romania and brings back children for adoption here.

(Continued on page 24)

Most of the couples are pleased with the service that we mail to them in advance, and they do not ask for any changes. Some couples, however, like to personalize their service; others want either a very traditional service, a modern service, or an ecumenical service. Marlene and I make all these options available, and discuss them with the couple during their minister's conference with us.

Another important service we offer is a three-and-a-half hour marriage workshop once a month which Marlene, who is a trained counselor, conducts. Its purpose is to offer techniques for dealing with differences, and to emphasize the need for the couple to keep their communication process open. We encourage every couple with a command of English to attend one of these workshops.

Five years after a couple is married at the Chapel, we invite them to renew their marriage vows on "Marriage Renewal Sunday," a once-a-year event. I think there are a number of reasons why the Chapel is so successful:

The economic recovery, while slower to take hold here in California than in the rest of the country, is finally being felt in the past year, and we are receiving more inquiries and reservations.

Our buildings, grounds, gardens, and of course our setting by the sea, are especially attractive, and our wedding ministry pays for their upkeep so that we need not charge the wayfaring public for walking our grounds and experiencing the beauty of the Chapel—which they do by the thousands.

We have an excellent program of public relations which includes publicity in our local papers, special programs such as lectures and concerts, bus tours—and the publicity we get when Japanese film stars are married at the Chapel—which contin-



The Revs. Marlene Laughlin and Ted LeVan share a quiet moment on Chapel grounds before Thanksgiving.

ues to happen now and again.

All these aspects are what puts the Chapel's name before people so that they think of us when they start planning where they would like to have their wedding. But the main thing is that when they make that first call to the Chapel, or drop in to see us, they are all greeted in a warm, friendly and professional manner. They understand immediately that we are not going to give them a hassle over their religious beliefs—or lack thereof—and no lecture about what their behavior should be. They're assured that we will give them time and attention because we recognize that their wedding is one of the most important events in their lives.

We have an unusually good staff, and it is a pleasure for all of us who come in contact with these couples to share in their joy.

DOCTRINE ON THE HALF SHELL

The Future

Paul Zacharias

In the past year or two there has been a rapidly growing interest in all things millennium. The media bombards us with horrific prophecies of doom, or glowing new visions of Eden regained, as the year 2000 approaches. This tidal wave of interest will undoubtedly be whipped into a tsunamic frenzy over the next two years. Well, it *will* be kind of neat to be around (the good Lord willing) when the year 2000 checks in. An event that happens only once every thousand years is definitely an occasion for celebration.

Will there really be any dramatic change in world affairs or conditions on January 1, 2000, or January 1, 2001? My guess is that our personal and world situations will continue to unfold pretty much as they did in the weeks and months leading up to the millennium. But it is a great watershed in our history, symbolically speaking, and I hope we can capitalize on that aspect of it.

We do love to wonder about, and anticipate, the future. Isn't this one of our favorite pastimes? But here is what Swedenborg tells us about the future:

"I have spoken with the angels about the memory of past things, and the consequent anxiety about future things; and I have been instructed that the more interior and perfect the angels are, so much less do they care about past things, or about future things. Indeed, from this comes their happiness and peace. This is what is meant in the Bible by the Israelites receiving manna daily . . . and by the daily bread in the Lord's Prayer; and also by the command that we are not to be anxious about what we should eat or drink or wear. Yet, although angels do not care about past things, and are not anxious about future things, still they have a perfect recollection of past things, and a perfect

(Continued on page 25)





The annual convention will be held from June 24 through 28, 1998, at the Life Enrichment Center of the Methodist Church in Leesburg, Florida. Leesburg is about one hour by car from the Orlando airport. The Council of Ministers meeting and the EdSU pre-convention workshop will begin on Sunday, June 21. The Methodist retreat center is in a lovely area, surrounded by lakes (wildlife is abundant, including alligators and snakes). The buildings are all air-conditioned. Each bedroom, whether double or single, has its own bath. There are no elevators but those with physical limitations can request rooms on the first floor of the two-story buildings. The site is flat and bedrooms are close to meeting, eating and display areas. There will be no golfcarts (no drivers). It will rain.

We are trying something a little different this year. Although we did not receive an invitation from a local group in time to make the necessary advance preparations, we did not want to cancel the 1998 convention. We decided to hold the convention at a retreat center rather than a college campus and scale back on the activities offered. No official local host will be responsible for convention planning and staffing. The Southeast Association will help where they are able but services will be less comprehensive than in other years. We will have a skeleton staff and will depend heavily on the retreat center's own staff for help with rooms, linens, keys, etc. Activities which require heavy use of volunteers will be curtailed or eliminated. However, if you feel you could volunteer your time, especially for children's programming, all offers will be gratefully accepted! There will be a space on the registration form for volunteers to sign up.

Each attendee must register and pay in full in advance. There will be no provision for late, surprise arrivals! We must have an accurate count several weeks before convention to secure the bedrooms necessary for our group.

We recommend that those attending convention arrive by car. We will not have the staff to provide pickups at the Orlando airport. We will arrange for some pickups by commercial transportation services at peak travel times (Sunday afternoon and Wednesday afternoon) available to a limited number of people by advance arrangements with Central Office. We will also arrange for buses to take folks back to the airport at several scheduled times on Sunday, June 28. A fee will be charged for any airport transportation to cover the cost. Rental cars can often be a good bargain in Florida, especially in the summer. You may be able to coordinate your travel with a friend and share a car or a taxi. Taxis from the airport could cost around \$40 or more one way, although some shuttle vans may be less, depending on availability. There is plenty of parking at the Leesburg Retreat Center and hookups for recreational vehicles, if you wish. If you are planning a vacation to the theme parks (Disneyworld, etc.), you will need a car for the 65 mile trip to that area of Florida. ❖



See YOU At The Convention!

Doctrine on the Half Shell ~The Future

(Continued from page 24)

view of future things, because in all their present there is both the past and the future."

—Arcana Coelestia 2943

The angels are completely content to know that their past and future are fully contained in their present, thus they are able to live in the Eternal Now. What a wonderful lesson to learn. Listen to your angel!

In AC 5178 he notes, almost in passing,

"As undue solicitude about future things is that which causes anxieties with human beings, and as such spirits appear in the region of the stomach, this is the reason why anxieties about the future affect the stomach more than the rest of the viscera."

As good an explanation of stomach ulcers as I've ever read! He goes on to say that when we stop worrying about the future, the region of the stomach becomes lighter and more comfortable. Many alternative medicine adherents would agree with this.

In many places Swedenborg insists that we must provide adequately for ourselves and our family, both in the present and for the future. There is nothing wrong with having sufficient insurance, and making proper plans for our retirement years. But he does make clear that undue concern about the future acts like a thick blanket that obscures the influx of light and goodness from the Lord.

"As to what is eternal, the angels have no idea of past and future things, for both past and future things are in their present."

The Rev. Paul Zacharias is a retired Swedenborgian minister living in Kitchener, Ontario.



Pastoral Care Coalition to Launch Major National Effort

A Coalition composed of 33 national pastoral care associations and faith groups, named the National Interfaith Coalition for Spiritual Healthcare and Counseling, is launching a major national effort to promote quality pastoral care and counseling throughout the United States.

This will be a continuing effort to build relations with the federal and state governments, faith groups and their congregations, citizens' associations representing various interests, the public at large, and the media, to make quality pastoral care and counseling available to all Americans who desire to have it. A national office and state coordinating committee in each state and the District of Columbia are being established to spearhead this effort.

A number of notable figures have joined the Coalition as members of its National Advisory Committee. Among them are: Herbert Benson, M.D., president of Harvard Medical School's Mind/Body Institute; Dr. Robert Schuller of the Crystal Cathedral; Mrs. Norman Vincent Peale; John M. Templeton, Jr., M.D., president of the John Templeton Foundation; U.S. Senator Tom Harkin (D., Iowa); U.S. Representative Edward Whitfield (R., KY); Dr. Gordon Sommers, immediate past president, National Council of Churches; Bishop Roy Winbush, chairman, Congress of National Black Churches; Raul Yzaguirre, president, National council of La Raza; Bishop Joe Pennel, United Methodist Church; Sister Teresa Stanley, general superior, Incarnate Word Generalate; Dr. Martin Seligman, president-elect, American Psychological Association; Dr. Elbert Cole, National Council on Aging; Beatrice Braun, M.D., AARP board member, Harvey Sloane, M.D., commissioner of public health of the District of Columbia; Admiral Frank Young, M.D., former FDA commissioner, and others.

Ms. Rosemary Marmouget, president of the Coalition, has urged the

support of individual members of the pastoral care and counseling associations and faith groups to develop a strong effort in behalf of the pastoral care community.

She stated, "We are already seeing the downsizing of pastoral care and elimination of positions in a number of states as the beginning of a dangerous trend. It is now imperative that we unite.

"We have been encouraged with the response thus far. However, we need the help and support of our members, individually and collectively, if we are to mount an effort with a compelling voice to advocate quality pastoral care in our nation."

Coalition Executive Director, Caesar A. Giolito, said, "The hundreds of pastoral care practitioners I have talked to are enthusiastic about this opportunity to work together in furthering pastoral healthcare and counseling. We are also witnessing in our society a profound need for the spiritual dimension."

The founding organizations of this Coalition are the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC), the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC), and the College of Chaplains (COC).

The purpose of this Coalition, as quoted in its statement of purpose, it to "... promote the role of qualified pastoral care and counseling and make it accessible to the vast numbers of people in our nation who have the need and desire to integrate the spiritual dimension into their mental and physical healing."

The Coalition also advocates the training and certification of highly qualified practitioners, facilitating access to these specialized services through a wider spectrum of the health care delivery system as well as through other community auspices, and the advancement of research for the spiritual dimension in healthcare and counseling.

General Colin L. Powell, USA (Ret.)

stated, "I applaud the initiative of the new Coalition for Spiritual Healthcare and Counseling."

John M. Templeton, Jr., M.D., president of the Templeton Foundation, stated, "I think the mission of the Coalition to demonstrate the impact of spiritual orientation in physical and mental healing, and the importance of a spiritual framework in healing many of the nation's social ills, such as substance abuse, violence and suicide, is of vital importance."

Dr. Melba Chavez, administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, said, "I commend you for your efforts in this critically important endeavor. I welcome the Coalition's leadership."

These are but a few of the comments received from a wide segment of national leaders regarding the founding of the National Interfaith Coalition.

The Coalition is establishing state coordinating committees in every state of the union and the District of Columbia. These committees, which are composed of Coalition association and faith group representatives, will provide grassroots support directed to state legislatures and members of Congress, and will develop ongoing contacts with the media.

The national office will develop networking with large citizens associations such as the AARP, and provider associations such as behavioral health and medical specialty societies, and provide federal lobbying, national media relations, and informational support and coordination for the state coordinating committees.

Reprinted from the December 1997 *ACPE News*, a publication of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc.

Submitted by the Rev. Susan Turley, director, Swedenborgian Church of Living Waters, (Living Waters HIV Ministry) San Francisco. The Rev. Ms. Turley is in the Clinical Pastoral Program at St. Mary's Medical Center training to be a CPE supervisor.



Thank You

The Messenger and the Communications Support Unit wish to thank these individuals and groups for subscriptions and donations to *The Messenger* from October 31, 1996 through December 31, 1997. We are most grateful for your support in defraying the production cost of *The Messenger*, as well as your enthusiastic response to building up the *Messenger* Endowment Fund, which will someday allow *The Messenger* to become self-supporting. We hope no contributor has been omitted from this list, but if you were, please let us know.

Alliance of New Church Women	Donna Humes Westminster, Colorado	The New York Association New York, New York	Elizabeth R. Shesler Thomaston, Maine
Mr. & Mrs. Alfred Bentley Riverside, California	Helen Jackson Brockton, Mass.	Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Pangaro Center Harbor, New Hampshire	Jane Siebert Pretty Prairie, Kansas
Mrs. Roger E. Blackmer E. Holden, Maine	Dr. & Mrs. Pierce Johnson Claremont, California	Jimmy Parham Asheville, North Carolina	Norman Slown Brandon, Florida
Jane Burton Midland Park, New Jersey	David Keating Coopersburg, Pennsylvania	Mrs. Frederick G. Perry Jackson, New Hampshire	Marcia Smith Spokane, Washington
Eugene Carlson Knoxville, Iowa	David King Bartlesville, Oklahoma	Stella Podmore Edmonton, Alberta	Meredith Swanson E. Bridgewater, Mass.
Claire S. Gabrielle Chaulin La Baule, France	Mrs. G.E. Kline West Covina, California	Dr. William B. Radcliffe Mitchellville, Maryland	Pat Tukos LaPorte, Indiana
James Colligan New York, New York	Mollie Koch LaPorte, Indiana	Leon Rhodes Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania	Janet Vernon Orient, Washington
Mary Crenshaw Detroit, Michigan	Dr. Fred Laitner E. Lansing, Michigan	Margaret Ris Lexington, Mass.	Martha Reed Vinograd Oxford, Mississippi
Eli Dale Portland, Maine	Brian Lauthen Iowa City, Iowa	John Samuelson Plainview, New York	Ruth Wagoner Washington, DC
Arnolda Derksen Sarnia, Ontario, Canada	Howard Lawrence Venice, Florida	Penny Scheffer Olympia, Washington	Wayfarers Chapel Palos Verdes, California
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Fryeburg New Church Fryeburg, Maine	Mrs. Howard McCarthy Chesterfield, Missouri	Paula Shanks Oxford, Mississippi	Mr. & Mrs. Ray Wong San Francisco, California
Mr. & Mrs. Rafael Guiu E. Bridgewater, Mass.	John McLevige Machesney Park, Illinois	Lois Sharpsteen Huntington Valley, Pennsylvania	Nancy Wood Valparaiso, Indiana
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John Harrington Jamaica Plain, Mass.			Lynn Zimmerman Surry, New Hampshire

We also want to thank Gordon Kuphal and our 31 faithful subscribers in Great Britain!

A Different Kind of Steeple Chase

Larry Conant

Most of *The Messenger* readers are aware of cellular phones; however, they may not be aware of changes in the portable phone industry and how these changes provide an income potential for churches. The big change is to provide digital phone signals instead of the normal (analog) phone signals provided by cellular phones. Digital signals are used by computers, CD's and other technologies to produce a clearer signal. These clearer signals also improve mobile phone conversations and allow the transmission of computer data over mobile phones.

The Bridgewater Society has recently completed negotiations with Sprint PCS to rebuild its steeple which was lost in the 1994 fire. In exchange for rebuilding our steeple, Sprint PCS will install an antenna for this digital phone network. Sprint and other telecommunications companies are actively setting up networks of transmission sites throughout the country. They need to have a wide range of geographic coverage to attract customers. The technology itself is currently rather limited. Each antenna can transmit and receive over a two mile radius from the antenna and each antenna can handle only 30 calls. This means a vast network must be installed quickly to provide coverage for these digital mobile phone signals. Companies like Sprint are spending billions of dollars to set up this network. It is this need for sites that offer an income potential opportunity for churches.

Antennas, in general, are ugly. People don't want them in their town. As one alternative to the usual ugly steel towers, Sprint and other telecommunications companies have designs to conceal the antennas inside of church steeples. The result is that a church with a steeple the right height in the right location can earn a monthly

lease fee from the telecommunications carrier. The telecommunications company gets a site for their network and the church gets monthly income. In general, these leases are worth \$1,000 to \$2,000 per month per antenna. The value of the site varies depending on height, location, and competing high structures. Alternative structures to church steeples are smoke stacks, water towers, and grain silos.

In the case of Bridgewater, we had several advantages. Our steeple was tall, at 100 feet. Sprint would be building a new structure rather than the more expensive route of trying to modify an existing structure. Our steeple was essentially a free-standing structure beside the church, rather than a steeple that extended from the roof ridge that would require extensive modifications to meet building codes and support the transmitting equipment. Most importantly, we were in the right location. Because of the height, we can actually locate a second antenna in the proposed steeple. Sprint has offered to find a company for the second antenna. If successful, this would provide the Bridgewater Society with an immediate source of income.

The best way for churches to find out about antenna needs in their community is to contact the local town hall or building inspector. The Bridgewater building inspector gets one request per month for a new antenna location.

The Bridgewater negotiations with Sprint took over one year to complete. A lot of this time was due to Sprint finalizing the geometry of the rest of the network grid. Other telecommunications companies have different network sites, so if your church isn't right for one company, it may still be right for another. If any reader would like further information, call the Bridgewater church at (508) 697-3068.

Larry Conant is the moderator of the Bridgewater Swedenborgian Church, Bridgewater, Massachusetts. ❖

Holy Toll Calls

Lee Woofenden

Talk about press coverage! The Bridgewater, Massachusetts New Jerusalem Church just hit the front page of the *Wall Street Journal*!

The article, titled, "Holy Toll Calls: Telecom Companies Now Turn to Heaven," by Jon Auerbach, appeared on the front page of the *WSJ* for Tuesday, December 23. Its subject is telecommunications companies housing digital mobile phone antennas in church steeples.

The Bridgewater church is now concluding a deal with Sprint Spectrum LP to reconstruct its steeple in return for placing an antenna inside. Sprint referred Jon Auerbach to us, and we kept up contact with him for over a month, leading up to the front page article.

Our first appearance in the article is in rebuttal to a minister who objects to churches renting space in their steeples to telecom companies, saying these churches are "selling out." The article continues:

Not so, replies the Rev. Lee Woofenden of the New Jerusalem Church in Bridgewater Mass., who recently signed a deal with Sprint PCS, the digital wireless operation of Sprint Communications Co. The minister says that "Jesus talked a lot about money," and adds, "Doing business in this world is part of religion."

The piece concludes with extensive mention of our church, including a great closing reference to Swedenborg.

In Bridgewater, the steeple atop the New Jerusalem Church since 1871 was destroyed by fire three years ago. When charity golf tournaments and bake sales failed to raise the \$150,000 needed to build a new spire, the church started thinking wireless.

Blessed by Preservationists

Realizing there were other potential sites in town to house antennae . . . the pastor, Mr. Woofenden, went on the offensive.

(Continued on page 29)

Holy Toll Calls

(Continued from page 28)

He called Sprint PCS and offered antenna rights in exchange for a new steeple.

Sprint PCS eventually signed on. So did town officials, who at a recent meeting offered hearty congratulations to Sprint and Mr. Woofenden for their creative partnership. Construction of the new steeple is to begin early next year.

But Mr. Woofenden and his Swedenborgian church are now negotiating with Bell Atlantic Corp's wireless division, hoping to raise the \$60,000 needed to fix a treasured E. & G.G. Hook pipe organ.

More than two hundred years ago, Mr. Woofenden says, Emanuel Swedenborg, the Swedish scientist, mystic and religious philosopher, spoke of a world "where people can communicate over vast distances instantaneously. 'Sprint PCS in the steeple is, in a way, the fulfillment of prophecy.

Although Sprint did consider the Congregational church across Bridgewater center and came to us instead, it is our hope that other churches in Bridgewater will be able to make similar arrangements for their steeples. Our steeple can hold a maximum of two antennas due to the limitations of height and vertical separation required between antennas. There are a number of other companies seeking antenna sites in Bridgewater, and we certainly hope that our friends at the nearby Congregational and Unitarian churches will be able to attract other companies for their steeples. We are offering to share our experience with them to help them in this.

The town of Bridgewater was enthusiastic about the project from the beginning. In fact, they were the ones who originally referred Sprint to us, starting the whole chain of events that is leading to this exciting new development in the life of our church.

Lee Woofenden is pastor of the Bridgewater Swedenborgian Church in Bridgewater, Mass. ❖

Swedenborg Sightings

Glenyce Eckerlsley's book *Out of the Blue* has been published. The book opens with a quotation from *Arcana Caelestia*. Chapters begin with quotes from Shakespeare, Einstein, Blake, Swedenborg. Page 38 seems to allude to *Chrysalis*.

A new major book about Lincoln has recently been published. Page 348 refers to Lincoln's military advisor, Ethan Allen Hitchcock (grandson of Ethan Allen). Hitchcock was "more interested in Swedenborg than in strategy" and retired from active duty in 1855 "to devote his time to religious and philosophical investigations."

At Thanksgiving time an ecumenical service was held in a magnificent hall in western Pennsylvania. It was opened by a catholic priest, and the readings were by Lutheran, Presbyterian and Methodist ministers. As a Swedenborgian, I was invited to give the sermon (having been active in that part of the country in years gone by).

A local newspaper of the area, the *Valley News Dispatch* had a column which began as follows:

What do Helen Keller, Johnny Appleseed and Abraham Lincoln have in common? A Swedenborg connection is made with mention of "good news right fresh from heaven."

A lawyer in Pittsburgh has been studying Judge John Young, who is said to have supplied Johnny Appleseed with books from Swedenborg's writings. This gentleman (born in 1762) was a master of seven languages and a remarkable leader "long remembered as a Christian, a philanthropist, and a patriot." "The religious opinions of Judge Young were in consonance with the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg. In common with many who have studied the teachings of Swedenborg, he saw in him a great teacher." Young is quoted as saying that liberty "ought to be under the guidance of sound reason, and regulated by Divine Revelation, the fountains of all wisdom and intelligence—the light and life of men." (*History of Westmoreland Country*)

Some are familiar with the book *Beyond Death's Door*, written by a professor at Brigham Young University. It has scores of quotations from *Heaven and Hell*. Well, there are a couple of men who have now undertaken a serious study of Swedenborg. Their intention of sharing their findings with other Mormons is an example of the unexpected ways in which the work of spreading the good news can be carried forward.

Scientist to Visit USA in 1998

The magazine *Science* (August 15, 1997) has a piece called "Science and God: A Warming Trend?" Physicist Charles Townes says, "The more we know about the cosmos and evolutionary biology, the more they seem inexplicable without some aspect of (intelligent) design." Biologist Francis Collins says "When something new is revealed about the human genome, I experience a feeling of awe at the realization that humanity now knows something only God knew before." One scientist who says this sort of thing is Robert Selvendran. He is quoted in the book *Scientists Who Believe*. He contends that science is essentially "a religious activity which plays its own special role in unfolding the nature and purpose of God."

He continues to read Swedenborg's writings with great interest and affection. He told me on the phone last week that he hopes to visit the USA in 1998. My guess is that he is not one to become a traditional type Swedenborgian, but that he just might put us to shame a little and stir us to more enthusiasm about the things in the writings.

—Don Rose

The Rev. Don Rose is assistant to the pastor of the Bryn Athyn Society, editor of *New Church Life*, and longtime member of the Swedenborg Foundation Board. ❖

Update on California Table Grape Boycott



News from Arturo Rodriquez, president of United Farm Workers of America (AFL-CIO), is that while our boycott of California table grapes continues on the non-contract growers, consumers may now enjoy grapes from Nash de Camp, with whom the UFW has signed a contract. These grapes should be on sale yearly from July through November or December, but we must ask the produce department at our local store whether they carry them.

Workers at Nash de Camp won their first wage increases in five years. They also have medical and pension plans, vacation, and holidays. Workers also get a grievance procedure and protection from the deadly pesticides used in grape fields. They're also assured some job security. The contract is good for two years and covers 240 workers.

(Editor's note: It occurs to me to wonder who is protecting the *consumer* from the deadly pesticides used on grape fields? My personal solution is to buy organic grapes from local organic farmers). ❖

Teens at Halloween Retreat Get Swedenborg 101

Swedenborg 101 was the topic at a teens retreat held October 31 through November 2 at Blairhaven Conference & Retreat Center in South Duxbury, Massachusetts. Sponsored by the Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church Youth League, the retreat, priced at a nominal \$25, drew approximately eleven area teens. Among those attending were Myrrh and Jason Woofenden, Emily Woofenden, Jason Petticone, Becky and Ben Phinney, Kaitlin and Mandy Cozar, Mike Stroh, and several attendees' friends. The presenting staff were the Revs. George Dole and Lee Woofenden, Bridgewater church; Sarah Buteux, Andrew Dole, and Amy Reichart from the Cambridge church; and Adam Seward from the Swedenborg School of Religion.

Swedenborg 101 was a topic chosen to help teens answer intelligently when their friends ask, "What does your church believe?" Basics were covered, such as: Who was Swedenborg? What does our church teach about God? The Bible? Living a spiritual life?

A spring retreat is planned for April. ❖



Water from a Rock



Back row L-R: Bob Delisle, Shelley Dolley, Kurt Fekete, Jenn Tafel, Kevin Baxter, Alison Lane, Becky Shelley, Betsy Lau, Marcus Moore, Jon Huffman. Front row L-R: Michelle Huffman, Fawn Lange, Missy Sommer, Heather Fyk, Arianne Halle, Katie Shelley and a reclined Natalie Nagel.

Also in attendance but not pictured: Rev. Renee Billings, Beth DeLisle, and Lori Patana.

The 1997 Transitions Retreat was held at the Almont Retreat Center over Halloween weekend. Our theme was Refreshing Insights: Water from a Rock. The retreat was facilitated by the Rev. Renee Billings, with 20 young adults attending.

We drew upon the story in Exodus, Chapter 17 – God giving Moses the power to miraculously extract water from a rock at Horeb for the thirsty and weary children of Israel. We "tapped into the rock" of knowledge together to discover what actually helps us in times of spiritual thirst and struggle. We shared the ideas, facts, and bits of understanding we have encountered in our personal quests that have helped us through tough times. This sharing provided well-tested anchors for times of rough seas.

More playful times included a Halloween masquerade party, clay sculpture, and late-night singing.

Together, through games, group discussions, and creative art work, we developed guiding and supportive spiritual truths to take back home with us. We departed on Sunday afternoon, tired yet reenergized with new concrete tools to help us on our spiritual journey. (We want to credit Grant Schnarr's *Return to the Promised Land*, published by the Swedenborg Foundation, for our theme topic and discussion inspiration).

Kurt Fekete

Transitions Coordinator ❖

BAPTISMS

Fabis—Benjamin Sebastian Fabis, son of Sue Fabis, was baptized into the Christian faith August 23, 1997, at the LaPorte New Church in LaPorte, Indiana, the Rev. Eric Hoffman officiating.

Freeman—Charles Freeman was baptized into the Christian faith September 6, 1997, at Indiana Dunes State Park in Chesterton, Indiana, the Rev. Eric Hoffman officiating. This event was the finale of a camping retreat of the LaPorte New Church.

BAPTISMS AND CONFIRMATION

Forrest—Jamie Forrest was baptized into the Christian faith and confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church October 5, 1997, at the LaPorte New Church, the Rev. Eric Hoffman officiating.

CONFIRMATION

Freeman—Charles and Judy Freeman were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church December 7, 1997, at the LaPorte New Church in LaPorte, Indiana, the Rev. Eric Hoffman officiating.

MARRIAGE

LaFevers and Rienstra—Diane LaFevers and the Rev. David Rienstra wish to share with you the joy of their beginning a new life together. They were united in marriage November 22, 1997, at the Church of the Open Word in St. Louis, Missouri, the Rev. Richard H. Tafel, Jr., officiating.

Penabaker and Tourangeau—Barbara Penabaker and James Tourangeau were united in marriage August 9, 1997, at the Almont Retreat Center Chapel, Almont, Michigan, the Rev. Renee Billings officiating.

DEATHS

Bowyer—Isabel Scott Rumely Bowyer, 83, entered the spiritual world August 23, 1997, at Muscatine (Iowa) General Hospital. She had been a recent resident of the Lutheran Homes in Muscatine. A service of remembrance was held October 12, 1997, at the LaPorte New Church, Indiana, the Rev. Eric Hoffman officiating. Mrs. Bowyer had been a longtime member and trustee of the LaPorte New Church (Indiana) in the 1950s. She was a member of one of the oldest families in LaPorte and was the granddaughter of Judge John B. Niles, one of the original founders of

the LaPorte church. She is survived by two daughters, Cassandra Bowyer Simpson and Christabel Bowyer, a son, William, and two grandsons, Scott Simpson and Ian Bowyer.

Schulte—Bernard Charles Schulte, 82, husband of Sylvia Schulte, longtime member of the Swedenborgian Church in Norway, Iowa, entered the spiritual world December 7, 1997. A funeral service was conducted at St. Michael's Catholic Church December 13, 1997, the Rev. Walter Kleinfehn officiating. Bernie is survived by his wife, one daughter, three sons, and 17 grandchildren.

ADDRESS CORRECTION

Edmund and June Swiger
8830 Breezewood Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15237-4127

(We were sorry to learn that the Swigers had a major fire in April, but they were able to return to their rebuilt home in September. The above is actually their original address. The one listed in the current *Journal* was only temporary, and needs to be corrected).

IMPORTANT CHURCH CALENDAR DATES

- Jan. 14-16 Exec. Com. Council of Ministers
Leesburg, FL
- Jan. 15-16 Communications Support Unit (COMSU)
Temenos
West Chester, PA
- Jan. 17-18 SSR Field Education Training
Leesburg, FL
- Mar. 13-15 Education Support Unit
Newton, MA
- Apr. 1-3 Committee on Admission to the Ministry
SSR
- Apr. 17-19 Ministries Support Unit
Newton, MA
- Apr. 25-26 Retirement Committee
Newton, MA
- Apr. 24-26 SSR Board
SSR
- Apr. 26-27 East Coast Peer Supervision Training
Blairhaven, MA
- May 1-2 Wayfarers Chapel Board
Wayfarers Chapel
- May 2 Investment Committee
Temenos, West Chester, PA
- June 5-6 Urbana Trustees
- June 24-28 Convention 1998
Leesburg, FL

Most Various, Mischievous God,

I thank you for sun and warmth and blue skies

And for wind and cloud and rain.

I thank you for the perfect fit, for elegance and grace

And for cups that spill and laces that come undone.

I thank you for the umpteen unexpected daily gifts: gifts of insight, gifts of understanding, gifts of love.

—And for the umpteen daily mishaps: the missed connections, the miscues, the misunderstandings, the mistakes.

I thank you, Joker-God, for me! For me and my family, me and my friends! Graceful-stumbling, foolish-wise, selfless-selfish, frazzled-calm.

Let me taste today: some of your broad perspective, some of your patience, some of your playful humor, some of your serene joy.

For in all that comes You teach, You tease, You love. Thank you, God.

Amen

Jonathan Mitchell

(The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Mitchell is minister to the Washington, D.C. Swedenborgian Church).

Reprinted from the Swedenborg School of Religion *A Book of Prayers*, January 1997.

CORRECTION

The memorial to the late Rev. Gertrude Tremblay published in the December 1997 *Messenger* was erroneously attributed to Gertrude's sister, Louise Woofenden. Although Louise supplied information, it was in fact written by Gerry O'Neil, a nephew of the Rev. Paul Tremblay, with contributions from the Rev. Hank and Maria Korsten.

TEMPLE OF WISDOM

Reviewed by Susannah Currie

Emanuel Swedenborg was born January 29, 1688, in Stockholm, Sweden. Although he never intended a church denomination to be founded or named after him, a society was formed in London 15 years after his death. This 1787 organization eventually spawned the present General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. As a result of Swedenborg's own spiritual questionings and insights, we as a church today exist to encourage that same spirit of inquiry and personal growth, to respect differences in views, and to accept others who may have different traditions. Swedenborg shared in his theological writings a view of God as infinitely loving and at the very center of our beings, a view of life as a spiritual birthing as we participate in our own creation, and a view of Scripture as a story of inner-life stages as we learn and grow. Swedenborg would conclude, "All religion relates to life, and the life of religion is to do good." He also felt that the sincerest form of worship is a useful life.

Temple of Wisdom, by Karin Alfelt Childs, is a fantasy-adventure for young readers. As a children's novel, it is light reading. However, if read as an allegorical tale, it introduces many Swedenborgian concepts in the context of a story most children will enjoy. The setting is a land reminiscent of Arthurian England, but is only vaguely described. It is populated with archetypal friends and foes for three young protagonists coming of age in a land in medieval times. They begin a journey, which is also a passage to adulthood, commanded by the dying king of the land, to determine the next rightful heir. The king, the uncle of two cousins, Brandun and Kempe, sends them to find a golden scepter which can only be found in the Temple of Wisdom in the Jahaziel Mountains. Being sent together, Kempe, the 16-year-old, and Brandun, his 13-year-old cousin, struggle between competing and cooperating with each other and those they meet. The third youth, a girl name Larke, joins them and participates in all the trials and challenges, physical, psychological and spiritual, that beset them on their journey to the Jahaziel Mountains.

They journey to the Jahaziel Mountains to find the Temple of Wisdom which holds the golden scepter that will determine the next legitimate heir. It is in their travels through these mountains that the youths find, through those they meet and through their own struggles, a clarity of mind, heart and spirit that helps them see the

truth, about themselves, their foes and each other. Karin Alfelt Childs states that "the scenes in the Jahaziel Mountains were inspired by descriptions in *True Christian Religion*, by Emanuel Swedenborg." These scenes are reminiscent of descriptions of the communities of heaven and hell in Swedenborg's inter-chapter material in *Arcana Coelestia*. Childs' descriptions of the spiritual states of those obsessed by greed, darkness, worldly knowledge, and hostility are vividly embodied in the inhabitants of the villages on the route to the Jahaziel Mountains. How the young protagonists deal with these communities portrays the process of their growth and change and their increasing abilities to put their trust in God's guidance.

Larke's premonitory dream alerts her that Brandun and Kempe are friends who can help her escape an unwanted fate. On their journey, all the young people experience dreams and visions that bring alive the reality of the spiritual world. Just as Emanuel Swedenborg's dreams, documented in *Journal of Dreams*, were a prelude to his mystical experiences in the spiritual world, the dreams in *Temple of Wisdom* play an important part in presaging the reality of the Temple which exists deep in the mountains. Through these dreams, the continuing connection with loved ones in the spiritual world is affirmed and the guidance of angels is given to each of the young people.

This book is a lyrical tale of spiritual growth, with an especially strong emphasis on the young



(Continued inside on page 22)

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