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# THE MESSENGER

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## Swedenborg Meets the New Age

Wilma Wake

Many people realize that the New Age is not "new." It has roots that go back far into history. What is less often understood, however, is that one of the roots of New Age ideas is Emanuel Swedenborg!

There are various ways that Swedenborg is a root of the New Age. His ideas became an influence on many movements after him, including Transcendentalism, Spiritualism, and New Thought. Swedenborgians have been involved in all of these movements and many others that impacted the New Age, such as Theosophy and Christian Science, and humanistic psychology.

After Swedenborg's death, many of his followers became caught up in Mesmerism or animal magnetism. This was a form of healing that initially involved using magnets and later was done with hands.



Mesmerism was controversial among Swedenborgians. That controversy intensified as many of the people attracted to Mesmerism were drawn to Spiritualism. Many Swedenborgians were intrigued by attempts to communicate with loved ones on the "other side." Other Swedenborgians felt that this activity violated the warnings of Swedenborg about spirit communication.

This was a controversial issue among Swedenborgians through much of the last century. The old, yellowed pages of the *Messenger* from that period sizzle with arguments on the topic. A number of Swedenborgians were involved in the spiritualist movement and had an impact on it.

There were strong remnants of the Spiritualist movement, with many

people involved in a number of movements in this century which eventually came together as the New Age. These movements included Theosophy, Christian Science, and New Thought.

If Swedenborg were to show up today and encounter New Age concepts,

  
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would he recognize any of his own influence? It is, of course, hard to clearly identify the "New Age" since it is a conglomeration of a variety of movements. But in terms of its common threads, Swedenborg would recognize some of them and certainly disown others. He would identify with the tendency of the New Age to honor a variety of spiritual paths.

Swedenborg would honor the emphasis on living a spiritual life and the belief in angels and an afterlife. He would be concerned with a tendency to contact spirits, however, warning of

the dangers of this. He might observe that sometimes New Agers get too focused "within" and lose track of what he calls "uses" and "charity."

I think we Swedenborgians have a great deal to contribute to New Age discussions because of the depth and richness of Swedenborg's writings. Our theology has had a historical interweaving with these modern spiritualities and some theological impact on them. I think we Swedenborgians can contribute much to the current movement by speaking out more on what we have to offer.

*Wilma Wake, Ph.D., is associate professor of practical theology at the Swedenborg School of Religion. Her book on Swedenborgians and the New Age will be released by J. Appleseed in 1999.*

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# October Potpurri

An urgent bulletin from the Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake showed up on my e-mail as we were going to press. It seems we came close to losing the esteemed author and SSR professor as the result of a recent CATastrophe.

Dr. Wake writes:

*It is so humiliating to have reached this point in my career after being on top of the world only two weeks ago. I was at the Portland (Maine) church service on August 23rd, and a cat walked in the front door to worship with us. Eli Dale said it was not surprising that this cat, who had never been there before, should show up that day. "Cats follow Wilma," she told the congregation. She told them about your editorial (April 1997) that mentioned your consulting me about family cat dynamics. I was so proud that my reputation as a cat family therapist had reached Portland.*

*That pride was my downfall. Just one week later, on a quiet Sunday afternoon, the true dynamics in my own family emerged. Marty, my 26-pound black cat, once again threatened Samantha (Cat). I went to comfort Samantha. Then, as I walked away, Marty lashed out at my leg with his paw, claws extended. Not a big deal, I thought. I realize now that I was deep in the denial of the battered cat owner. For Marty had been swiping at me all summer for paying too much attention to Samantha, and I hadn't taken proper heed.*

*So I woke up Monday morning with a big welt and a fever. Not a big deal, thought the me in denial. A few vitamins will take care of this. By afternoon the fever was almost 102 and red lines were moving out from the welt. Oh, oh. I called my doc and we decided I should visit the ER room. I ended up with five visits over the next two days as they tried different IV antibiotics. My fever went away, but the welt grew. I woke up Wednesday with a six-inch red line up my leg. This time, I packed a bag before leaving for the ER and, as I*

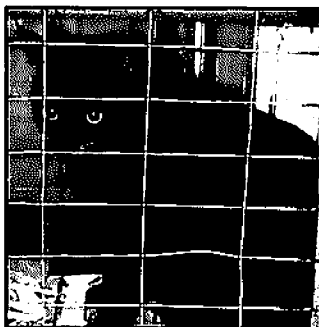
*suspected, they wouldn't let me go home. I was hospitalized as they*

*switched to a yet stronger antibiotic and more frequent IVs. I think they were starting to worry that they could lose me. But I knew they wouldn't. I could not possibly leave the world from a cat scratch, and have my death certificate say, "KILLED BY HER OWN CAT." The humiliation would be with me for eternity.*

*Lots of people sent prayers, and I rallied my body through visualization. By Thursday morning, the line was gone, the welt was fading, and I was sent home Thursday afternoon.*

*My vet wants to de-claw Marty, so he goes in Tuesday morning. But how can I deal with my ruined reputation? I have tried to convince the world that I am the best Swedenborgian cat family therapist available. And now the world knows the truth: there is domestic violence in my own family. I am a battered cat owner. My perpetrator is my own feline son, Marty, who has to be de-clawed so that he doesn't try to murder me again.*

*Do you or Messenger readers know of any good support groups for battered cat owners? There must be a good 12-Step program somewhere. And then I need a good program for feline domestic violence perpetrators, namely Marty. We are a family in trouble. At last our terrible secret has come to light and we can reach out for help. As soon as Marty is de-clawed, I will start reading to him from Swedenborg on regeneration. (If I try reading Swedenborg to him now, I will be murdered for sure). But during his recovery time from his de-clawing operation, the words of Swedenborg will surely sound comforting and give him new hope for a renewed life as a gentle, regenerating pudgy tat.*



Dear Dr. Wake:

You are to be lauded for the courage you've displayed in confessing your family problems. Far from ruining your reputation, your honesty and true humility should serve as an example to all Swedenborgian cat owners. You and Marty and your other cat family members will surely emerge from this struggle spiritually stronger for facing your pain and learning to exercise "tough love." I want to also commend you for not over-reacting and seeking a lobotomy for the perpetrator in addition to de-clawing. It is important for you to have faith that his Higher Power is working to help him on his regenerative path, while you are taking measures to protect the rest of the family from further harm.

Although I don't at present know of any 12-Step programs for Battered Cat Owners or Feline Perpetrators, perhaps one of our readers might, or perhaps we could get together and start one. Good luck, and keep us posted on your progress!

Patte LeVan



## THE MESSENGER

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Editor's Note: The following was given as an invocation at the Swedenborg Foundation Board meeting May 17, 1998, West Chester, Pennsylvania.

# The New Age

William R. Woofenden

Dear Lord and Savior, our eternal friend, without a sense of your nearness a great desolation comes into our hearts, as if we were lonely exiles in an eternity of time and space. Help us to know you, not only in the broadening purposes of history, but also—and much more—in our quiet times of worship; not only in the vast and awesome forces of the world, but also in our routine lives, at work in our commonplace days. Let it be that a knowledge of who and what you are may bring us freedom, forgiveness, and a high and fearless faith.

And we pray not only for faith and forgiveness, but also for cleansing—cleansing from the pettiness of our lives, from our vanity, from the sins that stain and distort our souls. Cleanse us, O Lord, of the things for which we can never forgive ourselves, those pages of our life, perhaps opened by a chance wind of memory, uncovering some old, long-disregarded, shabby hour.

This we ask in your name, O Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As a memorandum at the end of the book *True Christian Religion* Swedenborg wrote in part: "After this book was finished, the Lord called together his twelve disciples; and the next day he sent them forth into the whole spiritual world to preach the gospel that the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns...It was foretold in these words of the Lord: "He shall send his angels, and they shall gather together his elect from one end of the heavens to the other (Matthew 24:31)." [n. 791]

In this way, Swedenborg linked an apocalyptic prophecy in the Gospel

with the beginning of a new church era, a beginning which he states first occurred in the spiritual world about the year 1770. This was followed shortly by the beginning of a new church organization in this world some 17 years later—the first New Church society having been set up in London in 1787. Both these events, in turn, are identified by many Swedenborgians as direct results of the Lord's promised Second Coming.

At this point I would like to broaden the definition of the word "church" with the help of Swedenborg, since the Swedenborg Foundation, by express definition, is not a "church."

## **The vision which is slowly forming in the world of the possibility of a new and higher type of humanity will become a full reality when through this new revelation, the true nature of God becomes more widely known.**

In *Arcana Coelestia*, n. 29, we read the following:

The kingdom of God is like a man casting seed into the ground, and sleeping and rising night and day, and the seed sprouts and springs up, he knows not how; for the earth bears fruit of itself, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear (Mark 4:26-28).

By the "kingdom of God," in the universal sense, is meant the universal heaven; in a sense less universal, the true church of the Lord; and in a particular sense, everyone who is of true faith, or who is regenerate by a life of faith. Wherefore such a person is also

called "heaven," because heaven is in him; and likewise the "kingdom of God," because the kingdom of God is in him, as the Lord himself teaches in Luke:

Jesus was asked by the Pharisees, When is the kingdom of God coming? He answered them and said, The kingdom of God is not coming with observation; nor will people say, Behold, here it is! Or, Behold, there! For behold, the kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:20-21).

No one is unaware of the fact that great changes are going on in the world around us. But very few relate these to the state of the church in the world. Yet the Bible consistently presents the state of the church during any dispensation as the paramount issue of that era. Whether the church stands true or becomes faithless, the spiritual fortunes of the times are bound up with that state.

Many people have lost faith in their church. Many no longer believe the old teachings of their church. This is as true of ministers as it is of lay people. Many—clergy and laity alike—do not know what to believe. These facts, however, should not really depress us. For one thing, they are foretold in the Bible. While it is true that the Christian church in its beginnings was united, and formed the most beautiful and influential fellowship on earth, in time it became divided and was broken up into many conflicting and warring factions. As little as a century ago, each branch of the church had its own system of "truth" and seemed to be satisfied with it—even though it overlapped only very slightly with the faith systems of other denominations. Each church had its own message and preached it. But today there are few who even believe these doctrinal structures.

This is the actual crisis confronting the world today. There seems to be no widespread sure knowledge of or belief in basic Christian teachings. Even such fundamental tenets of the church as the

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## The New "Age"

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incarnation, the oneness of God in Christ, and the immortality of the human soul are being widely challenged or denied. This is the true world's crisis. Such things as the unrest caused by our awareness that terrifying nuclear armaments still remain intact on our planet as constant threats is merely symptomatic of a deeper underlying *spiritual* disorder in the world.

The source of all life—natural and spiritual—is our connection with the spiritual world. And when this connection is frayed, or corroded, or near the point of being broken altogether, almost cutting off the flow of light and love from heaven into human minds and hearts, it is not surprising that life here is being thrown into confusion. The disorders around us in the external world are simply the effects of this internal disorder. A new spirit of truth and love must come into the minds and hearts of the people of the earth. A new knowledge of the Lord, and a new awareness and experience of his presence and power are necessary to the life of this new age.

As we sit here together around this table, we do well to remind ourselves of the staggering responsibility we as a board have, to do all in our power to share the spiritual truth we fully believe is embedded in the writings of Swedenborg. Along with that responsibility, however, is the astonishing fact that, although we are avowedly not a church, as publishers of these inspired works, we have an unparalleled opportunity to be agents of the Lord in sharing this body of truth with everyone in the world who has an unquenched thirst for knowledge of the true meaning of life and loving intent of the Lord; namely, to bring everyone in creation into an awareness of the fact that the ancient promise of a second coming of the Lord has been fulfilled and that we are now truly living in a new age.

The vision which is slowly forming in the world of the possibility of a new and higher type of humanity will become a full reality when, through this

new revelation, the true nature of God becomes more widely known. As long as there is no knowledge of God—or a false idea of the nature of God—people are thrown back on their own meager mental and spiritual resources, cutting themselves off from, rather than connecting themselves firmly to, the source of all enlightenment and power.

But even a true knowledge of the nature of God cannot, of course, perform its intended functions in isolation. In addition to a basic knowledge of God, there needs to be an understanding faith in a future life; for this, too, is one of the fundamental teachings of the Word of God. If there is disbelief or doubt here, the underlying conditions of civilization are altered, its values and standards are changed, and this world—and not God and the spiritual world—becomes of primary importance in human hearts and minds.

When the Lord walked on this earth among people, it was all too true that "the world did not recognize him." [John 1:10] It is not strange, therefore, that in this new age the world should for a time be unaware of his second coming in a new revelation of truth. But we should never doubt that a new day is dawning and is slowly and surely brightening, through those who have learned and are learning of the true nature of God, and are gradually understanding and trying to keep his precepts.

All who do know these things should see and be able to declare that we are indeed in the beginning of a new age, an age created not by ourselves but by the Lord, whose infinite love and wisdom are ceaselessly at work for human happiness and peace.

We believe with all our heart that the New Church—in its several present forms and in forms to come that we cannot possibly foresee at this time—is intended by the Lord to be the church of the new age.

Through those who do acknowledge the Lord in his second coming and who unite to learn and do his will, he is present among all the people of the world with power to establish his kingdom and to fulfill his promises.



## BOOK REVIEW

### The Power of Service



by J. Theodore Klein  
J. Appleseed Co.,  
San Francisco 1998,  
\$9.00

Reviewed by  
William Shakalis

"The object of religion is life, and the life of religion is to do good." This simple statement by Emanuel Swedenborg, upon whose teachings we base our church, sums up the principles by which we act and live our religion. The 'embodiment' of charity, through love of the Lord, is personal growth in love, wisdom and uses. Yet how do we apply this general principle to social questions? How are we to live these principles in the new twenty-first century?

The Rev. Ted Klein's new book, *The Power of Service*, invites us to apply our religious values to social issues, social concerns, and "the neighbor," moving beyond a solely individually-focused regeneration and into the outer social realms of social action.

Klein begins the book with his own personal story—the evolution of his own life from General Church believer, to student, marriage, fatherhood, ordination and a new home in the General Convention of the Swedenborgian Church. Describing core concepts in Swedenborgian theology, the book continues with his wonderfully creative interpretation of Swedenborg in concepts such as diversity, community, pluralism and oneness, the general good, service versus domination, love, justice, and government among others. Later applications are applied to difficult contemporary issues such as abortion, euthanasia, violence, punishment, war, and suicide.

The key to this book's message is that the power of service, and not power of domination, is the way to

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# Adult Congenital Heart Association Formed to Answer Need

**Karen Klein**

Every year in the month of April, thousands of people flock to Boston, Massachusetts, to watch or to take part in the annual Boston Marathon. The marathon covers a distance of 26.2 miles from Hopkinton, Massachusetts, to Copley Square in Boston. It is one of the most popular marathons in the world. The winner gains a great amount of money and on his or her head is placed a laurel wreath. The laurel wreath is an emblem of honor and of achievement.

There are many who deserve a laurel wreath, but they are unknown to the world. They are people who are running in their own marathon. It is not a marathon that will end in 26.2 miles; it is a marathon that will last a lifetime. It is not a marathon for money or reward; it is a marathon that is run to stay alive. These people are people who have been born with Congenital Heart Defects—CHD. Every year they live is cause for a laurel wreath.

—Judy Norwood

I am one of the approximately one million people in the United States with congenital heart disease—i.e., a structural abnormality of the heart that occurs during fetal development. There are many different forms of CHD, ranging from mild to life-threatening. It is quite different from the acquired heart disease which is treated by most cardiologists. CHDers often face major surgery, repeated hospitalizations, use of powerful medications, and limitations on physical activity.

CHD is a largely invisible condition. The restrictions it has imposed on my life, and the lives of others with CHD, are often not obvious to the rest of the world. For example, I use a handicap placard and have been challenged by others for doing so because I look normal.

Growing up, I often felt alone as I did not know other people with

CHD. It was not until I joined the adults with congenital heart disease (ACHD) e-mail listserv, sponsored by the Children's Health and Information Network (CHIN), that I was really able to connect with other adults with CHD (ACHDers).

I had been on the ACHD list for a week or so when I started corresponding with Bonnie Paulsen. We quickly became close friends, and she is the person who introduced me to the ACHD chat on America Online (AOL). She is also the person who proposed starting a newsletter for ACHDers. I was excited about the idea and offered to help. We were soon joined by Anthony Cordaro, Jr., whom we had met through the listserv and chat.

We quickly discovered that existing CHD organizations focus primarily on parents of children with CHD, and on the needs of small children. The three of us made a decision to start an ACHD organization, called the Adult Congenital Heart Association. The

ACHA hopes to address ACHD needs through publishing a newsletter, forming support groups, establishing a web presence, and maintaining a national ACHD resource directory (including clinics, camps, and bibliographic sources). The newsletter is already posted online at <http://www.tiac.net/users/klein/>. We also want to educate the general public about CHD, and encourage more research.

Our current status is that we are working on incorporation, and will be filing

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L-R: Michele Trunnell, James McNulty & Karen Klein.



Back row, L-R: Heidi Wilkinson (Mass.); Martin Miller (Mass.); Bonnie Paulsen (Mass.); Karen Klein (Mass.); James McNulty (Illinois). Front row, L-R: Anthony Cordaro, Jr. vice-president of ACHA (Texas); Sheri Maxwell, co-facilitator of the AOL Chat, (Texas); Tanya DeHerrera (New York); Diane Clapp, founder & facilitator of the AOL Chat (Mass.).

## Adult Congenital Heart Association Formed to Answer Need

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for tax-exempt status. We have already had some gatherings, such as the one on August 1 in Boston. (See group photo).

Members of the group have also helped one another by visiting and making contacts to offer moral support. For example, I was in Florida during the SSR Field Education Supervisors' Workshop last January. Another ACHDer, James McNulty, and I visited Michele Trunnell, who had heart surgery as a young child, and is awaiting a double lung transplant. She had never met another CHDer in person and was thrilled to meet us. We had a wonderful time together!

The trip to Florida proved to be important for other reasons. James and I started dating a few months after meeting in person. We are both very happy!

ACHA is also grateful to Dr. Thomas Peebles of the Boston Swedenborgian Church, who was instrumental in putting us in contact with the head of the International Society for Adult Congenital Cardiac Disease (ISACCD), an organization for health professionals interested in ACHD. ISACCD has been very supportive of our efforts.

For more information on CHD, the organization, or resources, or if you can offer moral, financial, or other support, please contact Karen Klein, President, ACHA, at 273 Perham Street, W. Roxbury, MA 02132, 617-325-1191. My e-mail address is Coatlique2@aol.com.

*Karen Klein is a media assistant at the O'Neil Library at Boston College, and a part-time student studying for a Masters in Library Science at Simmons College. She is the daughter of Drs. Mary Kay and Ted Klein. Mary Kay is president of the Swedenborg School of Religion and Ted is a Swedenborgian minister and professor of theology and philosophy at SSR.*

# Healthy Aging

Joan McGavin

During the pre-convention workshop this year, I led sessions on Healthy Aging. There were 19 of us participating, three men and 16 women from their twenties to eighties in age. We had opportunities to explore and talk about issues of aging before and after the workshop, with ongoing guidance from our leaders, Lorraine Sando and Laura Lawson Tucker. It was a stimulating experience and I think we could have explored the subject more than we had time for. We were able to fit the topic into the convention theme of "Trusting the Promise," that is, trusting the unknown and moving into something new that we are experiencing each in our own way.

Prior to the workshop, I was sitting in the dining room when someone at my table (male) asked me what I thought, off the top of my head, were the three most important considerations concerning healthy aging. I replied, "attitude, health, and income." I had come to these conclusions after working with the elderly for many years during my nursing career, and also from personal experience as a retired person myself. Interestingly, I don't recall income issues mentioned at all during the workshop. But attitude issues were paramount, with health concerns running a distant second. On a large bristol board headed, "What is Healthy Aging?" people wrote:

- FREEDOM each day to do as I please
- Beginning of a new life
- Embracing change
- An open mind and heart
- Growing in freedom and love
- Not thinking of your age

I was the one who wrote "financial planning," which was very important to me when I retired. Several people mentioned concerns of aging and ill family members and friends, also the losses experienced when loved ones died.

We did an exercise in which we projected ourselves to age 80 when we are fit, optimistic, and healthy; happier than we ever thought possible. Looking back over our lives, we saw the many changes we made in the past years that brought us to this state. This exercise was quite revealing and generated much discussion. We also talked about what we are looking forward to as we age.

Paul Zacharias, in a sermon he once preached in Kitchener titled, "Thoughts on Growing Older," divided life into three main age periods:

- up to age 30, when we are educated and setting out on our life's work.
- up to age 55-58, when we are productively involved in the world with ongoing formation of character.
- after 55-58 when our physical involvement worldly activities decreases and there is more time for reflection, and strengthening family ties and friendships.

He goes on to say that in our third age we can let go of the negative baggage from the past—the regrets, resentments, grudges, and judgments that serve no useful purpose in our world today. There is more acceptance of other, differing points of view. There is no need to judge others, as most people are doing the best they can. There is no need to impress others or worry about external appearances. What

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## Healthy Aging

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is truly important is that which is going on beneath the surface and being oneself with others and with God.

Swedenborg said that, "Good old people, when they die, come more and more into a beauty and vitality which surpasses all conception." And, "To grow old is to put off the human and put on the heavenly." Or, "By old age is signified what is new in one's life." "In our old age," he said, "spirits who are wise and innocent are with us, and communicate with our inmost." Some of the passages about aging in the Bible are in Psalms - 37:25, 71:9, and 92:14; also in Proverbs - 22:8 and 23:22.

In this day and age when people over 55 (or even 45!) are considered superfluous in the working world and often in society in general, those of us who are considered "senior" need

to develop our own attitudes and feelings about the whole issue of our aging and about how we can fit into society. We need to stay fully informed about any legislation or services or opportunities that would impact on us, and one of the ways to do that is to attend workshops such as ours in Florida. Certainly, we finished our time together with what seemed like positive feelings about what healthy aging really is and the experience left us with inquiring minds to learn more. As Robert Browning said,

*"Grow old with me!  
The best is yet to be,  
The last of life,  
for which the first was made:  
Our times are in His hand  
Who saith 'A whole I planned,  
Youth shows but half;  
trust God: see all nor be afraid!"*

*Joan McGavin is a 66-year-old retired nurse and member of the board of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario.*



*L-R, Back row: Carl Blenkin, Liz Bitowft, B.J. Neuenfeldt, Lorraine Sando. Second row: Elizabeth Johnson, Diane Rienstra, Lisa Reddekopp, Manon Washburn, Val Brugler, Cindy Gutfeldt, Rock Oliver. Front row: Pat Zacharias, Marge Calby, Marjie Shelley, Joan McGavin, George McMillin.*

## BOOK REVIEW

### *The Power of Service*

(Continued from page 128)

social and individual regeneration. While the book does indeed take up the issue of social justice, I would have liked to see more discussion on how that would be applied in social policy, the role of government, and the role of churches in social and political action programs.

Swedenborg has much to offer in our times. Where the stress has been on the individual's introspective spiritual journey, in an individualistic way, we have often missed the extremely important social issues, often addressed by other denominations in the Christian church. This is an immense need for both our church members and those coming to us seeking spiritual guidance in all manner of issues.

This book is a must read for all Swedenborgians—especially ministers, lay leaders, activists doing social concerns work, and scholars seeking new ways to apply Swedenborgian thought to action. More so, it is a basic work for creating action in the area of social concerns in our churches and spiritual centers.

Our church needs to develop its social and political action, to reach out to the world and do spiritual healing beyond the congregation. *The Power of Service* gives us the necessary beginning road map. Your congregation does not have a copy of this book? Get one! Your church doesn't have a social action committee? Organize one!

*William Shakalis is a member of the Cambridge church and a co-chair of the Social Concerns Education Committee.*

To order, please contact:

J. Appleseed Co.  
3200 Washington St.  
San Francisco, CA 94121  
(415)346-6466



# Global Climate Change: A Religious Issue

*Joan Brown Campbell*

Most climate scientists now agree that human beings are altering the earth's climate.

How does this happen? The world functions like a greenhouse. Light from the sun enters the earth's atmosphere, reaches the earth and is reflected back into the atmosphere as heat. Small concentrations of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases trap some of this heat and keep the earth warm enough for life to thrive. The rest of the heat escapes to space.

Since the industrial revolution, human activity has added carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, increasing their concentration. More of the sun's heat is trapped, the earth becomes warmer, and the climate starts to change.

The United States, which has 4% of the world's population, produces 22% of the greenhouse gases. The main source of US emissions is the burning of fossil fuels—by industry, by electrical generation, and by cars and trucks.

The 2500 scientists of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have concluded that during the next century the average temperature of the planet is apt to increase between 2 and 6 degrees Fahrenheit. Climate change is already evident. The 10 warmest years in this century have occurred since 1980, and the first five months of 1998 were the warmest ever. Studies also show that during this century there has been an increase in worldwide precipitation, a decrease in polar ice caps, and a rise in sea level.

But why is this the particular concern of religious leaders?

Climate change will hurt creation. People of faith know, as Psalm 24 tells

us, that "the Earth is the Lord's and all that is in it." Human beings are called to care for the earth. We do not own it, but are to treasure and nurture it as a sacred trust.

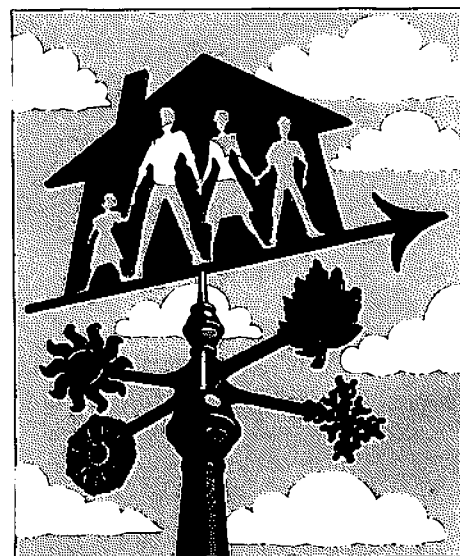
All living things will be affected. Higher temperatures cause more evaporation and soils will tend to dry out faster. At the same time, increased amounts of water in the atmosphere will mean more rain or snow overall which can cause flooding and soil erosion. Sea levels have already risen about 6 inches over the last 100 years. As temperatures rise, glaciers and permafrost will melt, further raising sea level, flooding islands and low-lying coastal zones. We are not taking good care of God's creation.

Second, people of faith have long believed that we are "our brothers' and sisters' keepers." We are responsible for each other's well-being. Climate change will affect the health and safety of everyone. The changes in the weather will threaten our supplies of food and water.

Those living on islands and low-lying coasts will probably lose their homes.

With climate change, heat waves will happen more often. In July, 1995, 465 people died in Chicago from a heat wave with temperatures exceeding 90 degrees Fahrenheit day and night. Diseases that thrive in warmer climates—malaria, encephalitis, cholera, dengue and yellow fever—are apt to spread with expanding range of mosquitoes and other disease-carrying organisms. This could result in 50 million to 80 million additional malaria cases per year worldwide by 2100.

Third, people of faith are called to justice and fairness. The rich of the world—the industrialized nations—are primarily responsible for the in-



crease of greenhouse gases, with 73% of the gases due to human activity coming from these nations. It will be the poor in the developing world, and in the U.S. and other industrialized nations, who will be the first affected by heat waves, storms, floods, and disease.

It is only right that those who cause a problem be the ones who rectify it. It is not fair that restrictions be placed on the poor to make up for damage, past and present, caused by the conduct of the rich.

Fourth, God provides opportunities for gracefulness. Perhaps the Kyoto Protocol is one of those. Though failing to deal with the magnitude of the reality, the Kyoto Protocol is an important first step. It calls upon the industrialized nations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 5.2% below 1990 levels by 2010. The U.S. target is 7%, Japan 6% and the European Community 8%.

Faithfulness has always involved demands and opportunities to do the right thing. The reality of climate change now provides both. Will we be faithful?

*The Rev. Dr. Joan Brown Campbell is the General Secretary of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. ❖*

*Why is this  
the particular  
concern  
of religious  
leaders?*



# TEMENOS CONFERENCE AND RETREAT CENTER

## UPDATE

Last November we celebrated the completion of the new eight-bedroom retreat house at Temenos. Well over 100 people attended the dedication, including church members from Wilmington and Washington, D.C. On the Memorial Day weekend, volunteers from the church erected a beautiful broad deck along the south and west sides of the new building. Gary Crowell from Stoneham, Maine, supervised the project.

The response to the new building has been most gratifying. There are few weekends still available for rental during 1998 and 1999. Some groups rent a weekend each month into the year 2,000. We are now concentrating on attracting groups for midweek use.

The Middle Atlantic Association will hold a retreat here in October. The General Council will meet at Temenos the end of October.

The Temenos property has been deeded by General Convention to the Swedenborgian Church at Temenos

(formerly the Philadelphia church). The retreat center is announced as a ministry of the church. Temenos is owned and operated by the local church, although it has its own bylaws and board of managers.

We are proud of our programs, which are expanding in number and participants. We distribute program brochures three times a year to over 5,000 people.

We enjoy close ties with the Swedenborg Foundation, whose office is only ten minutes away. The Foundation has helped us stock our library and bookroom, and we provide meeting space and overnight accommodations for the Foundation.

We expect to be financially self-supporting in 1998, with operating income exceeding \$200,000. One problem area is to generate money for capital expenses, such as a new roof and air conditioning for the historic farm house, and a new septic system for the gate house.

We are applying for partial tax exemption for the retreat center property, and the result of this appeal will have a major impact on our financial condition.

For the third year in succession, we held a week-long summer camp for children ages 5-11. The camp leader was Ruth Tafel, a retired school teacher and president of our church.

I recommend the integral relationship of our local church and the retreat center as a model for our denomination. Instead of competing with one another, they are mutually supportive. Ten people have joined the church in the last two years, and several of these people were attracted by the Temenos programs. Both the church and the retreat center exist to forward the purpose of our denomination: to facilitate the spiritual well-being of people.

*Ernest O. Martin*  
Director



If you do your job with integrity...

If you perform useful service for the spiritual well being of your neighbor...

If you make every effort to forgive others who offend you...

If you're able to look within and acknowledge your own sins...

If you are able to turn to God for help in times of spiritual temptations - times of anxiety and despair, times when you are driven to act contrary to what you know to be good and true...

If you resist the tendency to rationalize and justify selfish motives...

If you strive to accept God's will in all events, pleasant and difficult...

*...then you're probably uniting religion and daily life!*

*Anonymous*

## Temenos Programs

September 1998 through January 1999

### ONGOING

Monday evenings  
Tuesday & Friday mornings  
Tuesday mornings  
Tuesday evenings  
Tuesdays & Wednesdays  
Wednesday mornings  
Wednesday evenings  
Thursday mornings  
Thursday evenings

### PROGRAM

Support Group for Men  
Exercise—Energize!  
Mindfulness Stress Reduction  
Mindfulness Stress Reduction  
Programs for Homeschoolers  
Support Group for Women  
Support Group for Women  
Yoga  
T'ai Chi

### BEGINS

pending  
Sept. 11  
Oct. 6  
Oct. 6  
Oct. 6  
Sept. 16  
Sept. 16  
Sept. 17  
Sept. 24

### SEPTEMBER PROGRAMS

17 Reiki Support Group  
25-26 The Personal Totem Pole  
27 Communicate and Connect

### OCTOBER PROGRAMS

3 Create a Diva Doll  
9,10,11 Proprioceptive Writing  
16 & 23 Books for the Making  
17-18 Soul's Journey - Fire's Breath  
18 Freeing the Creative Spirit  
18 An Event for Couples  
24-25 Reiki: Level I  
31 Reclaiming Creativity

### NOVEMBER PROGRAMS

1 Give Thanks and Celebrate  
8 Dreaming Body Movement

### NOVEMBER PROGRAMS ~ CONTINUED

20-22 Trails Weekend  
21 World Rhythm Orchestra  
21 Tony Vacca Concert  
22 Holidays or Holy Days?

### DECEMBER PROGRAMS

1 Reiki Support Group  
4 Solstice Renewal Lecture  
5 Solstice Renewal Workshop

### JANUARY PROGRAMS

9 Parenting Yourself and Child  
12 Reiki Support Group  
16 Celebrating Introversion  
24 Ember Day  
30-31 Reiki: Level II  
30-31 Soul's Journey—Fire's Breath



## As Presented at Leesburg Convention

**A**t convention in Leesburg, Florida this past June the program featured presentations by the individual support units, followed by break-out sessions for the question-and-answer opportunities. The following is the report of the presentation and break-out session of the Ministries Support Unit (MINSU).

The Ministries Support Unit (MINSU) was formed two years ago by the merger of the Growth and Outreach and the Pastoral Ministries support units. MINSU's presentation opened with a review of the purpose of the support unit as described in Convention's bylaws. Linda Tafel, MINSU chair, recalled that at MINSU's spring meeting, after this somewhat overwhelming description was read, one person noted we might consider renaming the support unit "SUPERSU."

MINSU opened the discussion at convention with a presentation of their Long-Range Plan, followed by the Guidelines for Evaluating Requests for Funding. Part of MINSU's role in supporting local ministries includes receiving requests for denominational funding and making recommendations for the General Council's and the Augmentation Fund's budget process. An important consideration in these recommendations is both to support ministries and to encourage eventual financial self-sufficiency, so that funds are freed for use by other ministries—including new start-ups.

After the general presentation, break-out sessions were held by the individual support units. MINSU's break-out session was well-attended. The following local groups were represented:

Temenos/Philadelphia, Kelowna, B.C., Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Urbana, Calgary, Kitchener, Pawnee Rock, New York, Elmwood, St. Louis, Bridgewater, St. Paul, Cincinnati, Royal Oak, DeLand, Fryeburg, Ft. Myers, Puget Sound, El Cerrito, Zurich.

### QUESTIONS ASKED AND RESPONSES:

Do you have the new common assessment form [used to apply for denominational funding]?

*Yes—the modified CAF is available here this week and will also be mailed to all ministries after convention.*

Can the CAF be provided on disk?

*It is in computer form in the Central Office and can probably be e-mailed or sent on disk, but can't actually be completed and submitted online this year. We will ask IMSU to help get this implemented for the future.*

What is the dream weaver concept?

Chris Laitner, Convention's vice president, helped in the response:

*That people in convention were trained and called on to work with someone who had a new idea. A dream weaver would work with the person or group to clarify its goals, required resources, budget, evaluative steps, etc. The concept got stalled because of disagreement about how and when the role was to be used. The dream weaver was meant to give the person proposing the idea immediate support and assistance, while being a screening process to take the burden off the support units. In actuality, the support units ended up taking on the role of the dream weavers.*

*A computerized pool of people resources available for ongoing help was part of the original plan, and is just now starting to come into being.*

The Rev. Friedemann Horn asked about support for the foreign field, specifically Patrick Duvivier's ministry in France.

*Receiving a specific proposal from Patrick will require MINSU and General Council to consider the question of support to foreign ministries.*

Are the guidelines for evaluating a ministry used in future years for that ministry?

*Yes. MINSU looks at recommendations it has made in previous years and how they have been worked on by the local ministry when considering current requests. General Council intends to address the issue of multi-year recommendations for some projects / ministries and how requests from these ministries will be handled.*

What workshops on worship are available?

*Eric Allison, the Ministries Consultant, conducts workshops for lay people to help them learn how to improve their worship leadership. MINSU has an annual budget line for workshops of different kinds to help local ministries improve their overall effectiveness. This includes paying transportation and workshop costs. Usually all these funds are spent each year, but ministries need to know about them so they can apply.*

*It was also noted that associations might have workshops at their annual meetings so that more congregations could benefit from the expertise of one leader.*

Dick Sommer noted that Pastoral Ministries Consultant, Eric Allison has been very supportive in helping the Urbana church.

*Eric noted that his help is inexpensive—generally only local room and board is required.*

George Dole said it would be good to record what is learned from those who attend workshops.

*Eric said we do request people to summarize their experiences, which we can then communicate to the ministries.*

What does MINSU do to help isolated members who want to become lay leaders?

*Contact the president of SSR and/or the chair of the Council of Ministers.*

What can we do to get in touch with people who have specific expertise?

*(Continued on page 135)*

## As Presented at Leesburg Convention

(Continued from page 134)

*Eric is working on a "Dream Team" list of people in Convention with expertise in various areas.*



### MINSU asked of the group—

What is not being addressed that you would like to see in our long-range plan? Are there guidelines you think need to be changed? Things that need to be added or deleted?

*Keep before people the ways to communicate with MINSU—i.e., who are the liaisons\* with the local churches.*

Ron Brugler asked if there were any unasked questions.

*Pat Tukos pointed out the need to keep telling people who the resource people are and whom to contact about what.*

MINSU noted that this need is met in part by the MINSU liaisons.\*

*Linda explained that MINSU is aware, because our denomination is small, of the potential for conflicts of interest. MINSU intends to avoid these in the future through the nomination and election process, but recognizes they will arise from time to time because of changing circumstances of members and ministries. MINSU has established the policy that a member absents him/herself from the deliberations when discussions of a ministry with which s/he has a close involvement take place.*

*Linda also noted that MINSU does have limits on how much money is available. So we aim to reduce funding gradually as ministries become more independent, so that we can help others. MINSU is also responding to Convention's desire to balance the budget by gradually reducing recommendations for funding to a given ministry each year. Ultimately we aim to reverse the flow of money from Convention to the churches so that ministries are giving money back to Convention. (A few are already beginning to do this).*



## MINISTRIES SUPPORT UNIT LONG-RANGE PLAN

### Mission Statement

We seek to serve God by promoting excellence, unity, and growth in the Swedenborgian Church through the development, fostering, and support of its varied ministries.

Excellence will be pursued by:

- 1) Development and implementation of uniform policies and procedures for MINSU operations.
- 2) Development and use of a relevant and appropriate Common Assessment Form.
- 3) Provision of education for boards, committees; "cutting edge" information related to ministries' missions.

Unity will be pursued by:

- 1) Encouraging communication among like ministries.
- 2) Continuing communication of updated MINSU policies and procedures throughout Convention.
- 3) Cohesive and consistent application of policies and procedures.
- 4) Communication of MINSU's activities to appropriate individuals and bodies in Convention.
- 5) Seeking information and direction from the denomination.

Growth will be pursued by:

- 1) Use of the Pastoral Ministries Consultant's skills and expertise.
- 2) Support for workshops and institutes in church growth and congregational enrichment.
- 3) Use of "Dream Weaver's" concept.
- 4) Training in stewardship and fundraising.



April 19, 1998

### MINSU Guidelines for Evaluating Requests for Funding

- 1) The ministry's Mission Statement and a clearly articulated statement of faith aims in a form that can be offered to visitors.
- 2) Current and planned programs to meet people's physical, emotional

and intellectual needs and facilitate spiritual regeneration.

- 3) Programs that serve the larger community.
- 4) Specific plans for communicating about your ministry and programs to the community (i.e., publicity and advertising).
- 5) Ongoing education and leadership training for the board.
- 6) Specific plans for continuing education for the minister.
- 7) A systematic stewardship and/or fundraising program.
- 8) Specific plans for numerical growth including
  - A. Visitor follow-up and integration program.
  - B. A detailed plan for the coming year's activities, including programs, outreach, budget, etc.
  - C. A 5-year plan for the general direction of the ministry.
- 9) Movement toward financial self-sufficiency either by requesting less funding each year or by developing and implementing a plan to become more self-sustaining.

NOTE: MINSU will look at the unique situations of individual ministries in applying these guidelines.



MINSU members at the time of the presentation were as follows: Betsy Coffman (Urbana, Ohio), Paul Martin (Redmond, Washington), Linda Tafel (Southwest Florida), Alan Thomsen (San Francisco), Ken Turley (Fryeburg, Maine).

Paul Martin's term ended at this year's convention session. Elected at convention were Barbara Halle (LaPorte, Indiana) and Manon Washburn (Los Angeles).

\*MINSU is currently reassigning liaisons to local ministries because of elections at convention. A complete list will be provided for the next issue of *The Messenger*. In the meantime, please contact the MINSU chair, Linda Tafel (941-463-5030; [lltafel@peganet.com](mailto:lltafel@peganet.com)).



# Portland, Maine Church Begins Renovations

Mark Allen

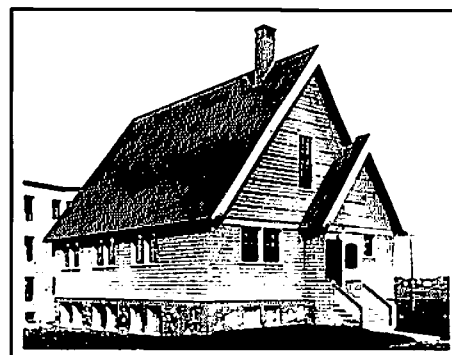
The Swedenborgian Church of Portland has started work on the exterior renovation and handicapped access upgrade of our building. The project calls for the reshingling of the front facade of the building as well as the construction of a new entry deck, stairs, and a handicapped ramp.

Designed in 1909 by the noted architect John Calvin Stevens, it was an excellent example of restrained shingle style architecture tailored to a financially restrained church community. Over the years the small congregation was forced to make changes to the building's appearances for maintenance reasons. Some of these were: removing the original, but decayed entry stairs in the 1930s, and removing the shingle siding and replacing it with asphalt shingles in the 1940s. Now, in the '90s the concrete stairs are crumbling, the siding is falling away, and our church has no way to accommodate handi-

capped members or guests.

On the 19th of April a dozen people from the church kicked off the project by stripping away the worn asphalt siding and exposing the original plank sheathing. One small treasure discovered was the penciled names of the construction workers who were working on the building in late December 1909. This little historical item was left in place and another series of signatures were added to the building for future generations before a new vapor barrier was placed on the building. As of late August the lower facade reshingling has been completed and work is progressing up into the gable ends. Our neighbors often walk by during construction days and compliment us on how wonderful the building is looking. It's great morale booster for us all!

Further plans call for the start of the deck and stairs this fall. We want to have them operational before the snow flies and then complete the detail work and the ramp starting in spring



*Portland church as it looked in 1922. Photo courtesy of Earle Shettleworth, Jr., and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.*

1999. While contemporary building codes don't allow us to be able to totally replicate Steven's 1909 design, we are determined that the spirit of his work be reflected in the new design. It's quite a project and it's been a great way to announce to the Portland greater community that we are going strong.

*Mark Allen is president of the Portland, Maine Swedenborgian Church. He and David Webster have been spearheading the restoration project. The cost of the project is between \$8,000-\$10,000, mainly for materials, as Allen reports that nearly all of the labor is being donated. ❖*

## TO THE EDITOR

### OPINION

#### The First Radical Vision

To the Editor:

"What was it that was the core discovery of the founder of your faith? What did he/she teach before it got layered over by traditions, politics, and the trappings and seductions of power?

Is it possible to recover that first, radical vision, and how would this affect your own spiritual life, your relations with other people, and with God?"

This provocative, challenging passage recently caught my attention. It's by *Toronto Star* columnist Tom Harpur, probably Canada's best-known religious writer.

How would you answer this probing query? What would you say was Swedenborg's "core spiritual discovery?" Was it the reality and nature of spirit? The oneness of God in the risen Christ? That love is ultimate reality? That eternal life is NOW? The dual gift of freedom and responsibility—in other words, we are in charge of our own spiritual destiny? That God's all-wise and all-loving providence oversees all the affairs of every human being throughout all creation? His beautiful teaching on personal life after/beyond death? It's a good question, isn't it?

And is it possible to even partially

recover that first, radical vision? We can't put ourselves in Swedenborg's shoes, of course. But can we dip into our memory bank and remember the very first time that the wonder and the power and the glory of the New Church teachings broke through and illuminated our entire inner world! Can we recapture even a little bit of that original blessing? What an incredible breakthrough that was. It gave us a new lease on life. We began to see ourselves, other people, and life's experiences in a fresh, clearer light.

And what has happened to that bright and morning light?

A little something to think about.

*Paul Zacharias  
Kitchener, Ontario*

❖

# TATTOOS AN EXPRESSION OF SPIRITUAL IDEALS

New Yorkers thought *Messenger* readers might be interested to know that Al Geddes, a member of the New York New Church, has the Swedenborgian cross and a quote from *Heavenly Secrets* tattooed on his arm, along with a tattooed picture of the "Lamb of God."

The quote from Swedenborg is tattooed in Chinese characters and loosely translates, "Conscience is God's presence in a person." (*Arcana Coelestia* 4299). When we took these photos of Al's tattoos for *The Messenger*, he offered the following thoughts about their significance for him:

"Tattoos have been used since ancient times to express spiritual ideals. In fact, the early Christians in the times of persecution were tattooed with a cross or a fish as a mark of recognition."

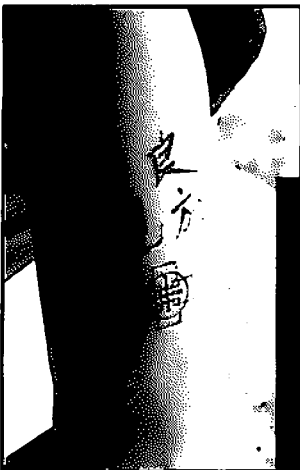
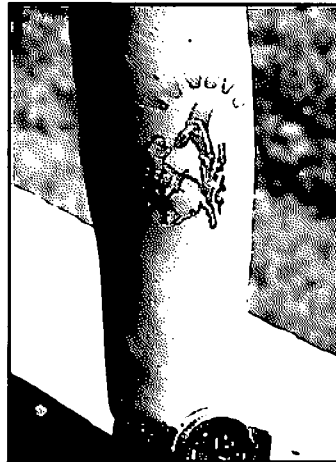
In my case, the Chinese ideograms were a combination of the latest youth fad, plus a reminder to myself to act according to "God's vision for mankind" rather than out of expediency or selfish interest.

As for the "Lamb of God," when I first saw it, the image it evoked was that of "The Good Shepherd." Since I have been a rapid transit conductor for 29 years, I thought this would be a fitting tattoo for someone of my occupation to wear. Lately I have had a pronounced change of attitude towards my passengers, which the tattoo also reflects. Another image it represents for me is that of divine intervention, which I sincerely believe brought me to the New York New Church in the first place.

When people ask me what this particular tattoo means, I tell them it's like a Roerschach blot. The true meaning for them is in what *they* see; there is no right or wrong answer.

As to whether the Swedenborgian cross is on Al's arm upside down?...well,... Hey!, that just depends on who's looking! Thanks for the inspiration, Al. We expect this to start a whole new Swedenborgian trend!

*Submitted by Mona Conner and Al Geddes for the New York New Church.*



## *A Prayer in Autumn*

Dear God, I see You . . .

In the auburn splashes of tree  
and the fiery tapestry of forest,  
lain as if a quilt, upon the hills.

Dear God, I feel You . . .

In the cool smack of the early  
evening air upon my rosy face  
as I walk upon an empty street.

Dear God, I hear You . . .

In the rustle of leaf piles and in the  
giggles of children at play in them,  
laughter's sweet music resounds.

In the waning light, low and full,  
In the crisp aliveness of a dying time

I am with You, my Lord,  
And let us walk together.

*Andrew Stinson*

*From the Swedenborg School of Religion  
Book of Prayers, January 1997. ❖*

## SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH MEETING DATES

### 1998

- Oct. 7-9 Committee on Admission into the Ministry, Newton, Massachusetts
- Oct. 16-18 SSR Board Newton, Massachusetts
- Oct. 29-Nov. 1 General Council Temenos, Pennsylvania
- Nov. 7 Investment Committee Temenos, Pennsylvania
- Nov. 13-14 Wayfarers Chapel Board Wayfarers Chapel, California
- Nov. 14-15 Retirement Committee Newton, Massachusetts

### 1999

- Feb. 8-15 Council of Ministers EdFest Tucson, Arizona
- Feb. 19-20 Urbana Trustees Urbana, Ohio
- Apr. 17-18 Wayfarers Chapel Board Wayfarers Chapel, California
- June 20-27 Pre-Convention and Convention 1999 Pepperdine College Malibu, California

# Unofficial Camp Report



Elliott Bazzano

The following report was written by Manon Washburn's 15-year-old grandson, Elliott Bazzano of Santa Rosa, California, as a thank-you letter to the Los Angeles church members for their generous financial aid that allowed him to attend Almont summer camp.

To whom it may concern,

**A**lmont summer camp was fun. I arrived there late Saturday night (or, actually early Sunday morning), which was about 1:00 a.m. Michigan time (10:00 p.m. California time). I didn't fall asleep until about 3 because I tend to get anxious about stuff. I woke up at about 7:00 a.m. and wasn't tired in the least. Most of the people I hung out with during winter Almont were still asleep, and they didn't wake up until about 11:00 a.m.! I said hi to everyone & stuff. The first day was probably the most exciting. The Monday-Friday daily schedule was as follows:

- 8:00 a.m....wake up and go to breakfast
- 8:45 a.m....leave breakfast and shower, brush teeth, etc.
- 9:15 a.m....flag-raising (which consists of holding hands in a circle while singing a song) & morning chapel
- 9:45 a.m....lecture: a minister discussed a topic in the chapel. And I must confess I slept through most of them, as did others (Sorry?)
- 10:45 a.m....Class: according to age group, everyone was divided up and discussed various issues, such as highs & lows of this year.
- 11:45 a.m....lunch
- 12:45 p.m....free time
  - 1:15 p.m....rest hour: relaxing quietly in dorm; or in other words, SLEEP!
- 2:15 p.m....free time
- 5:45 p.m....dinner
- 6:45 p.m....flag lowering (same idea as flag raising, except the flag goes down(hence "lowering") & evening chapel

7:00 p.m.....free time  
11:00 p.m.....reside to dorms  
12:00 p.m.....lights out

The cycle repeated till Friday. On Friday all of the people who were newcomers to the teen dorms had to get initiated. To save myself the embarrassment, I'd rather not get into that; but it was gruesome. (I can't wait till next year when I can bring a friend to do that to...) Saturday was pretty normal. On Sunday I said my "goodbyes" & left at 1:15 p.m.

I am looking forward to going back in December. I'm also looking forward to

seeing all of you for (PCA) Association in Seattle.

Till September,  
Elliott Bazzano

Editor's Note: Grandma Manon, who is also president of the L.A. church, comments, "It may sound like they didn't do anything, but when I asked him about this, he said, "We talked!" The leaders he met were the Revs. Renee Billings, Eric Hoffman, Ron Brugler (our new president of Convention), and new youth leader Betsy Lau. Elliott says it was a wonderful experience. I only hope it was half as wonderful as Split Mountain Camp used to be for us." ❖

## Letter from the Editor:

The Communications Support Unit and *The Messenger* want to take this opportunity to thank all those who responded to last year's *Messenger* Fund Appeal.

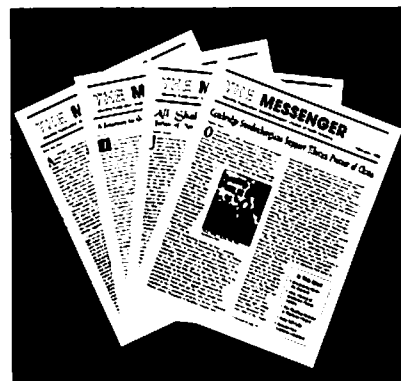
Donations and subscriptions for 1998 and 1999 thus far total over \$3,000, with nearly \$450 into the endowment fund. *The Messenger* Endowment Fund now has a current worth of \$110,000. As we build up *The Messenger's* endowment, our church's publication can eventually become financially independent.

Traditionally, *The Messenger* has been given at no charge to all members of the Swedenborgian Church—ten free informative newsletters that offer timely lay and ministerial views on our church issues, plus inspirational Swedenborgian insights to help each of us on our spiritual journey.

There is no plan to charge readers for their ten issues, but the cost to the church is approximately \$30 for each yearly subscription. If you feel that *The Messenger* is worth \$30 a year to you, perhaps you would volunteer to defray some of the publication's costs. Your support and love for your church's *Messenger* are sincerely appreciated, and again, many thanks to those of you who made contributions to *The Messenger* in the past.

Note: We are printing our appeal letter again because the return envelopes were inadvertently left out of your September issue. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Blessings, Patte LeVan



Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_. I want my enclosed contribution to be used for:

☐ One-year subscription to *The Messenger*      ☐ *The Messenger* endowment fund

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to *The Messenger* and mail it in the enclosed pre-addressed envelope included in this issue, to: Swedenborgian Church, Central Office, 48 Sargent Street, Newton, Massachusetts 02158.

## Births

**Kalinowski—Anthony Gene**  
Kalinowski was born August 7, 1998, to Tony and Tammara (Mounce) Kalinowski, both of whom are members of the LaPorte New Church Swedenborgian. Little Tony came into the world at 5:12 p.m., weight 10 lbs. 8 oz. and 21 1/4 inches long. All family members are doing fine.

**Glanders—Tristan Lee Glanders** was born August 13, 1998, to Melissa Glanders of the LaPorte New Church Swedenborgian. Melissa is daughter to proud grandparents Michael and Virginia Glanders. Tristan was born at 10:01 p.m. weighting 6 lbs. 11 oz.

## Marriages

**Buteux and Dole—Sarah Buteux and Andrew Dole** were united in marriage August 22, 1998, at the Cambridge Chapel in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the Rev. George Dole, father of the bridegroom, officiating.

**Hulcher and Holczer—Susan Rae Hulcher**, daughter of Sharon Reddekopp, and Steven Holczer were united in marriage May 23, 1998. Her grandfather, the Rev. Erwin Reddekopp officiated. The marriage took place in the Airdrie United Church.

**Kennedy and Schellenbert—Shaun Kennedy and Kelly Schellenberg**, both of Winnipeg, Manitoba, were united in marriage May 23, 1998, at the chapel of the R.C.M.P. Training Academy in Regina, Saskatchewan.

## Death

**Colburn—Walter J. Colburn** entered the spiritual world June 16, 1998, following a stroke. He was married to Lurabel Long Colburn, lifelong Swedenborgian and daughter of Frank and Cora Long of the former Lakewood, Ohio, church.



# Urbana VP James Dillehay Announces Retirement

James Dillehay, Vice-President of Academic Affairs, announced his retirement from Urbana University effective June 30, 1998. As chief academic officer of the university, Dillehay is credited with numerous contributions that have strengthened Urbana University. Dillehay upgraded standards, recruitment, curriculum and reputation of the teacher education program so it is now one of the best known and respected programs of its kind in the region. He is the author of more than 40 technical and evaluation reports for area school districts and has published numerous articles and books, as well as papers which have been presented on the national level.

Dillehay laid the ground work for establishment of the Master of Education degree program that opened in the winter of 1998. He also enabled a number of degree graduates to obtain teaching certification through a special one-year accelerated program that has served hundreds of teachers within the past several years.

Don Davis, a professor of corporate finance and chair of the business department, took over the position July 1. Davis has been in education since 1959, and has been with Urbana since 1986.

## Did You Know?

### Story of a Hymn

**A**mazing Grace is frequently sung, but often without the knowledge of its author's life. John Newton (1725-1807) was a slave trader who became attracted to Christianity. One day, when he was in his ship's cabin reading a sermon of John Wesley's, he suddenly saw the evil of what he was doing. He ordered the ship to turn around in mid-ocean and returning to Africa, he set his human cargo free. Later he wrote, "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me... How precious did that grace appear, the hour I first believed."

After his conversion, he was constantly amazed that God could love him. This is reflected in many hymns he wrote, such as *Approach My Soul the Mercy Seat*, *Hail the Glorious Golden City*, and *How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds*.

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

# Call of the Prophet

Reviewed by Stephen Koke



How do you translate an idea of Swedenborg's into music? Thomas Bramel has done it by writing music whose spirit fits various challenges and stages of growth about which Swedenborg had much to say. Bramel's new CD, *Call of the Prophet*, subtitled *Music inspired by the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg*, is dynamic, imaginative, and poetic. It mixes conventional acoustic instruments with electronic music, gets occasionally into some unfamiliar musical territory, but is generously endowed with lovely tones, melodies, and harmonies.

Each of the nine tracks has its own theme, described in the jacket commentary in the form of a verbal picture or short drama. For example, the first track is centered on this little scene:

An angel witnesses the end of a marriage. In her sadness and angst, she prays that the Lord will show the couple the way to a loving relationship. But they refuse the light offered and separate; the man to pursue his selfish goals, the woman to follow her worldly wants. Knowing she cannot make decisions for others, the angel pulls away.

The composition is performed by Dieter Wulforth on the violoncello. It is a haunting, beautifully elegiac melody.

Thomas studied under Asher Zlotnic and composed incidental music for plays at the Source Theater in Washington, DC. He was introduced to the theology of Emanuel Swedenborg by the Rev. Richard Baxter, who married him and his wife Jody. They had been looking for a chapel that would marry them without requiring them to join the church first, yet they didn't want a dry civil ceremony. That was a discouraging prospect, but it brought them to the Swedenborgian church where Dick was officiating. The

piece, "Call of the Prophets" is dedicated to him.

Prophets take a young man deeper into the realization of his own darkness and teach him the Way of Light. At first, he is unwilling to reflect on his internal state, choosing to remain in the dim light of his own rationalizations. But with each successive Call, he turns to look deeper into his motivations. Each time he looks he discovers a darker region of himself. Finally, understanding that his self love and love of the world are emptiness, the young man chooses to turn away from self justification, and he is lifted up, out of darkness into great joy.

The suite does have a few pieces that seem unrelated to Swedenborg. "Spring on Planet Gilees" seems a bit gratuitous in this collection:

As the planet Gilees thaws from its frozen, crystalline winter, a young female creature flees from the Dark One. She flies over the melting terrain, then spins and weaves herself inside out. The metamorphosis destroys her fears and hesitation. As the creature becomes one with The Dark One, they are illuminated, and Gilees becomes abundant with life.

Despite that, Bramel's suite is important because it helps musicians and other artists in the Swedenborgian community put Swedenborg's imprint on parts of our culture that churches find difficult to reach with what are usually specialized books and sermons. We have always needed to give him more general recognition as one of the great contributors to human consciousness, and it will probably be done by interpretations of his vision that touch many different cultural interests and institutions.

To order, you may need to contact:  
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