

THE MESSENGER

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The Gift of Self

Jim Lawrence

Of all the Christmas stories, few are more romantic and colorful than the story of the Magi. Intrigue, double-cross, and murder: it soon took on a much more imaginative life than the humble account of the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night. Impressive legends have fostered the spiritual arts of devotion over the centuries.

For instance, since royalty, even when misbehaving, fascinate the general public more than academics ever could, the wise men became kings. The regally attired travelers acquired exotic personal names—Balthazar, Melchior, and Gaspar. And, once endowed with a name, it didn't take much to inspire whole life histories. So Balthazar came from Ethiopia and was black; Gaspar was the youngest of the three; and Melchior offered the child thirty gold coins.

The kings went on in future years to meet up with the apostle Thomas, and they all went to India and became archbishops! When they were all over a hundred years old, they finally died, and because they had known the Lord from the beginning, it was believed their bodies never saw corruption.

So in A.D. 1164, remains that were said to be the miraculously preserved bodies of the Magi were transported from Milan to the Cathedral of Cologne in Germany and laid to rest in a special shrine. It became one of the great pilgrimage sites for Christians throughout the Middle Ages.

The Bible doesn't actually say how many traveling Magi appeared at the Lord's birth in Bethlehem. Ancient frescoes in the catacombs of Rome depict four. Augustine insisted there

were twelve, to correspond with the twelve tribes of Israel. A pope of the second century decreed there were three—also an especially symbolic number. Three really does present the best case, because three gifts are specified. And looking around at all the Nativity scenes today, that's the number that stuck.

Now, the Swedenborgian faith always approaches the Bible symbolically. The stories are not treated as documentaries, but rather as vehicles through which God has chosen specially to convey a higher spiritual truth. And this story provides a rich tapestry of correspondences for a sojourn into a spiritual lesson. Let us explore the gifts that were laid at the manger.

When we turn to our knowledge of

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correspondences, there can be no doubt that this scripture story is a vehicle for us to think spiritually about the totality of our living and about how we are relating that living to God. The three gifts—not coincidentally—pertain to worship in the ancient tabernacle, when the children of Israel were still wandering with Moses out in the wilderness. That tabernacle they set up in the center of their encampment every time they moved is fully described in the book of Exodus.

We learn there that all items in the holy of holies were made of either pure gold or were covered with gold (Exodus

25: 10-22). The sweet scent of frankincense burned on the altar in the morning and then again in the evening (Exodus 29:38-39; 30:6-7, 8; 34). And finally, Moses himself compounded an ointment made chiefly of myrrh that was used to anoint the entire tabernacle and everything in it (Exodus 30:22-38).

Swedenborg helps us to see that everything named in scripture has a spiritual meaning, and no caprice guided the gospel writer to cite gold, frankincense, and myrrh as the gifts for the Christ Child, but rather the divine hand who puts before us a complete picture of our salvation, which the baby messiah was meant to represent.

Innermost Motives of Gold

Gold corresponds to divine love, and being in the holy of holies is meant to represent the spiritual development of our inmost motives. Gold is first because it is our innermost motives that determine ultimately everything else about us. One of Madeleine L'Engle's novels is entitled *A Severed Wasp*. It is a powerful image that she borrowed from a George Orwell essay, in which he relates an insight he had one morning during breakfast: "[A wasp] was sucking jam on my plate and I cut him in half. He paid no attention, merely went on with his own meal, while a tiny stream of jam trickled out of his severed esophagus. Only when he tried to fly away did he grasp the dreadful thing that had happened to him." I agree with L'Engle that though a tad grisly, the severed wasp is a rather apt metaphor for how the human race often loses its ability to fly. We lose our ability to fly when we have become severed from our spiritual capacity to do so because we have not nurtured the proper inner foundation

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Guest Editorial

By the Numbers

George Dole

By now, I suspect most *Messenger* Readers are supersaturated with facts marshaled to allay any fears they may have about what is going to happen at midnight on December thirty-first. They know that there is no biblical basis whatever for such fears, they know that the calendar is probably at least four years off, and they know that the second millennium will actually still have a year to go. They may also be beginning to suspect that all this rationality is beside the point. Those zeros are *different*. It will feel strange to start dating checks with a two instead of a one. There will be the feeling that we have turned a corner.

We should be the last people to dismiss such feelings as insignificant, we who have been told so often that our feelings stem from our loves, and that our loves constitute our life. If those numbers stir in us a sense of new beginnings, we might do well to pay attention. Does this prompting indicate that some kind of spiritual door is opened for us? Are we being called to make a fresh start?

It may help to look at the same kind of event on a smaller and more familiar scale. Every annual event, whether it is a birthday, New Year's Day, or the close of the church year, prompts us to pause a moment and take stock (the close of a fiscal year does more than prompt us). There is nothing special about such days except the fact that we set them as signposts on our path, so to speak. They suggest a wider perspective than the usual. They tend to pull us out of our immersion in "the trivial round, the common task," the field in which we have been making our way toward our eternal home.

The coming number shift, for example, may remind us that we are participants in an ongoing story. We are both descendants and ancestors. The human race

through the millennia is our own family; so we can look back a thousand years at what "we" were like then.

Then, for example, we were far more provincial than we are now. We were gathered into much smaller communities that were relatively isolated from each other. Our society was solidly stratified, with unbridgeable gaps between the nobility and the peasantry; and as individuals we took it wholly for granted that our place in life was given us at birth. Most of us were illiterate, and all of us knew from experience that divine powers were constantly at work in our world. There was so much we could not control and did not understand.

A millennium later, we live in a global society, with images from anywhere on the face of the earth as close as the television screen. We are so impressed with our technological accomplishments that we seem to believe it is our destiny to control everything. At the same time, we cannot help but be aware that we now have the power to destroy ourselves with unprecedented efficiency, and we watch with growing anxiety the degradation of our environment.

From a Swedenborgian point of view, it seems more and more obvious that we are in the process of a last judgment. After all, the judgment we face after death is not some dramatic courtroom scene, but simply a relaxation of external restraints that brings our depths out into the open. "There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known" (Matthew 10:26). We could scarcely ask for a more precise description of what is going on in our society as we find ourselves less and less restrained by fears of social disapproval. The "new birth of freedom" that the founders of our particular nation celebrated has turned out to be the beginning of an accelerating process; and year by year, decade by decade, century by century, we are discovering the inevitable consequences of that freedom and the inevitable responsibilities attendant upon it.

How are we responding? Half a century ago, it looked to many as though we would never make it through

the end of the century without destroying ourselves in a nuclear holocaust, but it hasn't happened. At the close of the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1993, the Dalai Lama startled his hearers by saying that he believed the turn of the millennium would be a turn for the better. He sensed a future much brighter than our past. This is quite possible, but it is surely up to us. From time to time an idea takes hold and spreads irresistibly. We may be closer than we think to the time when the realization grows and spreads that technology will not abolish poverty or crime, that the roots of justice (and of injustice) are in our hearts. By then, we may be able to leave the mechanics of our outward lives to the computers and focus our human energies on what computers cannot do—on being truly humane.

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The Gift of Self

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from which to spring.

All the great dramas hinge on innermost motives. We are endlessly fascinated by the enormous influences that tempt us to become corrupt, self-oriented, impure. And when that happens we become severed from the spiritual power that God would give to us for flying.

I was in court recently fighting a moving violation citation. I lost, and I should have lost, but the whole ordeal served as an uncomfortably effective magnifying glass over some of my most basic tendencies. I got in touch in a big way with what can be one of the most ferocious of all human drives: self-justification. And self-justification, I have learned, can draw us away from the truth. These little life situations test our spiritual motives continually. I didn't enjoy feeling powerless in my encounter with the police officer. I didn't enjoy the surge of anxiety over the likely effect on my insurance. And for a time I was powerfully persuaded to think about the whole matter in a certain light, and sometimes powerful emotions can influence us to stand for something other than the truth. I managed not to bend the truth in court, but I was impressed by the power of self-justification to cause me to stand for something less than the truth.

The divine Word encourages us to strive with God to make everything in our holy of holies golden—everything, so that what issues outward into our living will have the grace of God with it. The gift of gold we are called to lay at the feet of our Lord is the purity of our innermost motives. It is the first gift, because from it will spring all good things.

A Frankincense Faith

The spiritual meaning of frankincense is faith. The love we grow with God in our innermost soul manifests as faith. Faith is a trust that God is working for good in our lives through everything that happens. Which isn't to say that God causes everything to happen to us—that isn't Swedenborgian at all, for we ourselves, in the responsibilities of our

freedom, are instrumental in much that enters our life. Sweet frankincense faith, rather, is a profound inner acknowledgment that spiritual growth is available to us in all things that are happening.

A friend who took a retreat at a Benedictine monastery in Vermont told me that the most powerful statement of experiential faith he ever heard was on a shivering pre-dawn morning when an elderly monk said in chapel, "The essence of what we know is only part of the essence of what is." In that moment, he felt he understood deeply for the first time that living with faith has to do with a courageous and generous attitude toward what is happening in the present. We live not only or even chiefly by what we already know fully, but by what we believe in about the greatness of life's purposes.

Another friend, who is going through a legal mess not entirely of his own doing but which nevertheless may severely hamper his life, surprised me by his faith when he shared that he has sensed growing trust that he is being led to greater possibilities by God through his ordeal.

We all burn something on our altar within everyday. Deep within our holy of holies, we keep some kind of flame burning there. Do we know that? Its fragrance manifests that quality of our faith toward the whole of our life. What do you burn on your altar? The divine word encourages us to put a sweet faith of frankincense at the center of our consciousness. It will enable us to meet our life challenges with wisdom.


Spiritual Growth Takes Discipline

And finally, myrrh was laid beside the baby Jesus. Myrrh: it is the symbol of the life of religion—the ability to continually recognize that we have strayed from the path and the commitment to return to it. The old fashioned term for this is repentance. The idea is that with diligence over time we become not only comfortable but skilled in cleansing our spirits. Spiritually, this is rubbing the ointment of myrrh over all things in the tabernacle, to regularly refresh all of the outer chambers of the tabernacle with the brisk clarity of repentance. So the gift of myrrh is our discipline of the self to higher things.

Portia Nelson has written a delightful little piece entitled *Autobiography in Five Short Chapters*. Here's the entire thing: "Chapter 1—I walk down the street. I fall in. I am lost...I am helpless. It isn't my fault. It takes forever to find a way out. Chapter 2—I walk down the same street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I pretend I don't see it. I fall in again. I can't believe I am in the same place, but it isn't my fault. It still takes a long time to get out. Chapter 3—I walk down the same street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I see it is there. I still fall in . . . It's a habit. My eyes are open. I know where I am. It is my fault. I get out immediately. Chapter 4—I walk down the same street. There is a deep hole in the sidewalk. I walk around it. Chapter 5—I walk down another street."


The divine word encourages us to bring our actions and behaviors as precious gifts to the baby Lord . . . But there is only one gift desired, the same brought so long ago: The gift of our authentic self.

The Rev. Dr. James F. Lawrence is co-pastor of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church and manager of J. Appleseed & Co.

Reprinted from the January 1996 San Francisco church newsletter. 

A Christmas Prayer

May all who work for a
world of peace and reason
be granted
the gifts of strength and courage...
may the good that dwells
within every human heart
be magnified...
may the blessing of truth and
understanding be ours...
may the joys
of the Christmas season
dwell within all of us...
and as we grow and build
for tomorrow may we live in
sympathy with all others.

Reprinted from *The Plains Banner*,
December 1997. 

God's Gift of Enthusiasm

Sermon delivered to the Pacific Coast Association October 10, 1999, at the San Diego church.



Ron Brugler

First, let me say how nice it has been to be here with all of you. In my 22 years of ministry, this is my first visit both to a

PCA meeting and to San Diego, and I certainly hope that it is not my last. You have made me feel very welcome, and for that, I want to say thank you!

I must also share that I came here feeling a bit uneasy, a feeling that was caused by the fact that I did not quite know what to expect. In order to calm this feeling, I emailed Jim Lawrence and asked for a bit of guidance as to what I should speak to you about this morning. He replied, "Just do your presidential thing." That would be great except for one problem. In my year and a half of being president, I have yet to figure out what that "presidential thing" is.

In any case, I have decided to share with you a few words as to where our denomination finds itself at the present time, where I hope we are headed, and I will conclude with a few thoughts that I hope will hold more specific meaning for you in the Pacific Coast Association.

So where are we as a church at the present time? Two weeks ago I chaired the meetings of the Cabinet, a group that consists of our support unit chairs, the executive committee of our General Council, and the chair of our Council of Ministers. I began that meeting by sharing about an experience I had a few days earlier while watching a movie at a local theatre. The movie, "The Sixth Sense," is about a child psychologist and a small boy who sees what he describes as "dead people"—all of whom have one thing in common. They had experienced untimely deaths.

In one particular scene the boy describes an event that took place in school one day. His class had enjoyed drawing pictures, and the boy had drawn

one of the spirits. When the teacher saw it, it was as if a SWAT team were being called into action; a meeting took place that included the teacher, guidance counselor, principal, social workers, and the like. As the boy and the therapist discussed the event, the psychologist asked the boy if he still drew pictures. The boy said that he did. "What of?" the psychologist asked, "Rainbows," the boy replied. "Why rainbows?" the psychologist asked? And the boy responded, "Because they don't have meetings about rainbows."

I went on to share with the Cabinet that in many respects, that line hit me like a two-by-four. It did so because, for me, it summarizes the current spiritual state of our church. Oh, to be sure, we are holding meetings, meetings upon meetings (so many that if we liken each of those gatherings

to a wheel, the prophet Ezekiel would be smiling).

And those meetings are dealing with everything from concerns about our seminary, to financial deficits, to issues that are threatening the welfare of several of our churches. But I have come to realize that we are

meeting for the wrong reasons. What we need to be doing is having meetings about rainbows! Rainbows that radiate the promise and potential that our church holds, rainbows that fill us with a sense of excitement and enthusiasm as we help the Swedenborgian Church become all that God intends.

This brings me to the next matter I want to address. What can be done to create this positive atmosphere? One of my favorite Bible passages is found in Paul's second letter to Timothy. It was written at a time when Timothy was discouraged by the way things were going among his new converts. He had been dealing with many problems, and

they were weighing him down to the point that it seemed as though his new congregation might fail. And so, Timothy took his discouragement to his mentor Paul.

In response, Paul offered him the following words of advice: "Timothy, I urge you to rekindle and stir up the gift of God that is within you." And he went on to explain what this gift is. Do you have any idea what that gift is? It is the gift of enthusiasm—of focusing on the great things that God can do among his children.

Enthusiasm. What a fascinating word! We take it to mean that one is eager and ready to face a particular task or challenge. Similarly, the enthusiastic person possesses the ability to generate excitement in others about ideas, events, projects—about anything. This is all very true, for our enthusiasm spreads to those around us because we cannot help but radiate our eagerness and positive



PCA Association attendees (most of them!) in front of the San Diego church, following the Sunday service and luncheon.

attitude to all we encounter. This is what Paul was urging Timothy to do.

But enthusiasm does not end there, and neither did Paul's message to Timothy. I say this because the true meaning of the word was known in its fullness by Paul, a fullness that is all but lost and forgotten in our modern English. It comes from two Greek words—"en" meaning "within," and "theos" meaning God. Knowing this, we can understand that the enthusiastic person was originally one who was in tune with the presence of God in all things.

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Stonehouse Moves to Beautiful New Location

The big news from the West Coast in the fall of 1999 is the purchase by the Pacific Coast Association of a beautiful new building for the use of the Stonehouse Bookstore and Growth Center and for the ministry of the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound. The building includes 15,000 square feet of space, three-fourths of which is presently rented to other organizations. As the need arises,



Stone House Book Store and Growth Center.

the Stonehouse will take over portions of this space, eventually using the whole building as a holistic center.

All of our books and classes relate to holistic health, personal development, and spiritual growth, basically the integration of body, mind, and spirit. We view ourselves not only as a resource center, offering books, classes, and services, but also as a community center. The main reason to offer all these holistic services in one location is to give us all the opportunity to form relationships and community with people of similar interests and values. We want to develop rituals and community experiences that are relevant to our emerging spirituality. To this end, we offer the equinox, solstice, and new millennium ceremonies out at Mosswood Hollow (home of Paul and Sandra Martin), as well as the Swedenborgian Church services each week at the Stonehouse.

The new center is located at 12602 NE 85th Street in Kirkland, Washington,* on the main corridor between Redmond and Kirkland, just two miles from the previous three locations. The site includes a large parking area lined with trees, shrubs, and gardens. The new building was occupied the 30th of September, and the first worship service was held October 3. Management of the property will be under the direction of a three-person committee of the Board of Directors of the Association.

There is a challenge to attract new people to the location and build up book sales and program registrations. Book sales leveled off in recent years to about \$250,000 while program attendance has increased. Programs are held seven days a week, with weekend retreats at the home of Paul and Sandie in Duvall. Program participants in 1998 totaled more than 5,000, and our mailing list includes 6,000 people. A 30-page program brochure is sent out four times a year describing the course offerings and services of the church. Among the special events of the fall were: "The Welsh Celtic Prophecies of Merlin and Their Predictions for the Millennium" with R.J. Stewart, "The Transformational Shaman" with John Mathews and David

Spangler, "Poetic Medicine: The Healing Art of Poem-Making" with John Fox, "Christianity and the New Age" and "Spirituality in the New Millennium" with David Spangler and Paul Martin. There will be a Winter Solstice Ceremony December 21, a Christmas Eve Candlelight Ceremony, and a New Millennium Ceremony and Celebration December 31.



Worship services are held every Sunday, led by Paul Martin twice a month, Erni Martin once a month, and by the lay people on other Sundays. The Rev. Erni Martin has come out of a three-month retirement and has offered to work with the Stonehouse staff at a salary of \$1.00 per year. He has expressed his joy in rejoining the Pacific Coast Association, having served as a minister of the Wayfarers Chapel from 1975 to 1984.

Revs. Paul W. Martin and Ernest O. Martin

*See change of address, p. 163.

"Children of God" Theme of PCA Meeting

The 88th annual meeting of the Pacific Coast Association was hosted by the San Diego church October 7-10, 1999, at Carleton Oaks Country Club in Santee, California.

Our Church president, the Rev. Ron Brugler, was guest of the Association and gave the sermon on Sunday morning, with San Diego church lay leader Eldon Smith assisting. On Saturday morning, Dr. Ronald Youngblood, a translator and editor for the New



Photo: Nan Paget, San Francisco, was honored with a certificate of appreciation for her 10 years as editor of PCA News and Views.

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"Children of God" Theme of PCA Meeting

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International Version of the Bible and professor at Bethel Seminary, gave a study presentation, "The Covenant Concept in the Old Testament."

Some highlights of the Saturday business session included final approval of the building purchase for Stone House, a presentation by the Rev. Harvey Tafel on plans and fund-raising for Wayfarers Chapel's new visitors center, and Nan Paget was lauded for her excellent ten-year editorship of *PCA News & Views*. Charles Bush of Seattle will be taking over the task. The three new board members elected are Lon Elmer and Elisa Greiff, members of the Puget Sound church, and Karen

Fleischer of San Francisco, the new secretary filling Margaret Culver's position. The rest of the executive committee remains the same: Rev. Jim Lawrence, president; Ron Siddell, vice-president, and Stan Conger, treasurer.

The theme, "Children of God," was carried out with food, music, history, and dancing: Friday night's dinner featured Mexican dishes and the Mariachi Fiesta Mexicana, a band of five musicians led by Ramon Gonzalez, who shared some of the background of the music they played. On Saturday evening, Eric Running Path of the Navajo Nation and his group of Native American dancers performed, giving a brief history and the purpose of each

dance before they began. The group is world renowned and spent time in Sweden last summer. The evening closed with a singalong of Negro spirituals.

The Sunday service at the San Diego church, attended by over 50 people, was followed by a buffet lunch and fellowship downstairs. Eldon, Annella, and Carol Smith, San Diego church members, and

others involved with the planning, were thanked for their efforts in putting together a very enjoyable and productive weekend.



Photo: Eric Running Path performing the Hoop Dance.

God's Gift of Enthusiasm

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Thus, Paul sensed that Timothy was more in tune with the problems than with the exciting potential of God's presence within those same situations. In a very real way, he was urging Timothy to look for the rainbow instead of the storm clouds. Enthusiasm would give him power and ability to do God's will.

Friends, Swedenborg tells us the exact same thing. In one simple sentence he spoke volumes when he wrote, "All things are full of God, and all things exist from that fullness." I share those words with you here today and ask that you really think about the following questions. If this is true, then why do we so often assume that new ideas and difficult events are from the devil rather than from God? And what would happen if we really believed that God is in all things, even those things that we take to be problems? Yes, what would happen if we really focused on seeing the fullness of God in all things? I know what would happen. We would be filled with the most powerful force of all—the spirit of God!

My sense is that we, as a church, are at a turning point in our history. We are actually starting to become enthused once again about this thing that we call the New Church. As we gathered at the Cabinet meeting, and looked for new

ways that we might fulfill our call to be children of God, the change in our attitude and spirit was a wonderful thing. And my prayer is that this change will continue to spread from east to west and north to south as we proclaim the truths we have received.

In this regard I want you to know that here in the Pacific Coast Association, you are already leading the way. Your efforts in spreading our new evangel are to be applauded—from the ministry of Wayfarers Chapel, to the praise and celebration of the San Francisco church, to the new forms of outreach taking place at Stonehouse, to the services being provided by Living Waters, to the spirit here in San Diego, you are showing your enthusiasm. It is a light that I hope the rest of our Convention will follow.

And so I urge you, like Paul, to keep rekindling and stirring up the gift of God that is within you. This enthusiasm that you are displaying in so many ways is one of God's choicest and richest blessings for our church. And in displaying it, in sharing it, in living it, you will help to ensure that we are about seeing rainbows and God's fullness in all things.

The Rev. Ron Brugler is president of the Swedenborgian Church and part-time pastor of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario.



Let Evening Come

Let the light of late afternoon shine through chinks in the barn, moving up the bales as the sun moves down.

Let the cricket take up chafing as a woman takes up her needles and her yarn. Let evening come.

Let dew collect on the hoe abandoned in long grass. Let the stars appear and the moon disclose her silver horn.

Let the fox go back to its sandy den. Let the wind die down. Let the shed go black inside. Let evening come.

To the bottle in the ditch, to the scoop in the oats, to the air in the lung let evening come.

Let it come as it will, and don't be afraid. God does not leave us comfortless, so let evening come.

—Jane Kenyon

Reprinted from the Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church July/August 1999 Newsletter, St. Paul.



Millennium Madness

Stephen Koke

Something strange is going to happen this New Year's. The entire world, it seems, is going to celebrate a very rare event, one that few people in the long history of the world ever see—too soon. We are very fortunate in being among those few whose rather short life span lies over a transition between one millennium and another. And, maybe with all too much attachment to some old foibles and quirks, much of our world is threatening to blow it.

A new millennium begins with its year 1, as has been pointed out in these pages before. In our case, that will be the year 2001. The old millennium has to have a chance to finish up and enjoy its thousandth year, our year 2000. In any thousand year period (or century or decade) a zero appears *last*, not first.

That's just basic math. But not to the commercial and political worlds. Even parts of the scientific world are saying good-bye to precision and plan an early celebration this January 1. Why we would do this has been an interesting question. I sent emails to some prestigious institutions and got some revealing replies. *Time* magazine said, in effect, What the heck, who wants to be out alone on January 1, 2001, trying to celebrate? *National Geographic*, a somewhat scientific magazine, said that people are mesmerized by the appearance of all those zeros, and we might as well follow through. My response that the zeros are indeed dramatic, but that if people were educated about the right year they might feel differently about the *millennium*, went for naught. The best answer, though, came from the UK's BBC News Online:

Thank you for your persuasive email. However, as the government, the BBC and the rest of the world appear to be celebrating the millennium at the end of 1999, it would appear slightly odd I think if BBC News Online decided unilaterally to postpone it for 12 months.

That's nice British candor.

It seems as though we know, yet we don't know. All the answers I received gave no indication that the math of the matter was known. Yet when I presented it, there was only a determination to go on. We would have to assume that the math was known in at least some cases, but there is a powerful bandwagon involved. It is rolling, and no one wants to be left behind. Succumbing to more aspects of the drama, NBC News

and other news organizations have begun to refer to any annual event or last program of the year as the last one of the millennium. It makes a good headline.

There are enormous benefits for business. Any large celebrations, including trips abroad, and any large displays of color and drama, involve lavish spending and therefore unusually large gains for businesses. And if it is done sooner rather than later, it becomes a great marketing opportunity. To pass up a hot brew of such imminent financial opportunities would be unusual behavior for a competitive business. Hence, a tendency to move the bandwagon on a little faster.

Is there any deeper meaning to all this? In a way, there isn't. We can dismiss it as merely a fuss about a number on the calendar, so moralizing about it isn't justified. But I can't escape the feeling that an opportunity to honor a very rare event, as a member of a very privileged generation, is more of an opportunity than we may suspect. Numbers are often symbols; and especially if they are on our calendars they endow some events with an archetypal appearance, and they will do it for everybody.

When Arthur C. Clarke wrote his famous novel, *2001*, the title hit the public, as it must have hit him, with strong feelings of a great new age that in the story had just become reality.

The number 1 represents strong, portentous beginnings. The film that was based on the novel gave the number enormous visual meaning, and both book and film are today considered classics. The year 2000, on the other hand, may be less significant, feeling more like a transition year, as one period bows out and we shift our attention to the other. Zeros are more bland,

preliminary to any new development. The real millennium, mathematics tells us, begins with 2001, a number whose symbolism seems charged with new substance.

On this basis we might wonder if our strong response to the number 2000, and its commercialization in the face of a mathematical fact, isn't some kind of denial of deeper realities. Almost like a last hurrah before facing real change. A change of millennium becomes a rallying point for whatever the world feels about its future. It's a rare opportunity to gather new energies and ideals from around the globe so that we may all start out new, bringing to each other our best ideas and visions. We can celebrate the new era early, if we want to; but deeper down it may be providential that most of the world work through the old style excess before trying to bring up any new consciousness. In 2001, we will have to get serious.

Stephen Koke is chair of the Communications Support Unit and author of *Hidden Millennium: The Doomsday Fallacy*. ☛

The New Vision Swedenborg School of Religion

FIRST DRAFT

October 1999

Note: This draft is a working document that the SSR Board of Trustees, faculty, and a student representative agreed upon at our fall meeting. Our visions are based upon our Mission Statement, which is printed below for your convenience. We are very eager to receive feedback and suggestions from anyone interested in the future of your Swedenborg School of Religion.

Our Mission Statement:

To prepare qualified men and women for Swedenborgian ministries.
To serve as a center for spiritual growth and Swedenborgian scholarship.
To make our resources available to the church and the community.

We are committed to:

- Maintaining our Swedenborgian identity, including Swedenborgian theology, thought, heritage, biblical understanding, application to spiritual life, spirituality, and mystical connection, etc.
- Providing programs that prepare students to meet CAM's (Committee on Admission to the Ministry) standards for ordination or consecration.
- Maintaining strong partnerships with Swedenborgian churches and centers through various modes including SCE and field education placements.
- Integrating the Swedenborgian education community with the larger interfaith community.
- Maintaining and preserving the Swedenborgian library and archives and making them available to the local and global community.
- Assuring that our faculty has qualifications comparable to those of their peers.
- Offering degree track programs, but not exclusively.
- Pursuing the ability to provide an opportunity for an advanced degree in Swedenborgian Studies at the affiliated institution.
- Placing a strong emphasis on community.

- Placing a strong emphasis on satellite programs and on distance global learning.
- Being oriented to growth and outreach in church life and education.
- Providing ongoing educational opportunities to ministers, centers, and the general public.
- Addressing housing and financial needs of students, including first year students, in cooperation with Convention.
- Assuring the school's long-term financial stability.

This first draft is being sent to all ministers, churches, committees, students, and support units, etc. for their input. Our desire is to build the new vision of SSR together. A trustee of the school will contact each church. We have a site review committee gathering information and comparing potential theological consortiums with which we could affiliate. At present, our two top choices of location are the Andover Newton Theological School in Boston and the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California.

Please send your thoughts and suggestions to:

Jane Siebert,
Chair SSR Board of Trustees
21007 S. Whiteside Rd.
Pretty Prairie, Kansas 67570
Email: sieberts@southwind.net
Phone: 316-459-6504 or
316-459-7356

Editor's Note: As reported in last month's *Messenger*, representatives of SSR and the Cambridge Society met September 17, 1999, for an all-day mediation session at the headquarters of JAMS/Endispute in Boston. We now have permission to publish the preliminary agreement that was signed at that time.

PRELIMINARY AGREEMENT

between
Cambridge Society of the
New Jerusalem
(the "Society")
and
Corporation of the New
Church Theological School
(the "School")

The parties agree that the Society shall continue to have the right to the use of the Chapel in the manner in which the same has been used, pending the obtaining of an appraisal of the fair value of the property on which the Chapel stands. The period of such continued use by the Society, if the Society will agree to a lease at a fair market rental, shall in all events run until December 31, 2000.

The parties shall jointly choose an appraiser, and they agree to make best efforts to engage an appraiser within fifteen business days from the date hereof. In the process of choosing such an appraiser, each party shall have a reasonable opportunity to express to an appraiser under consideration those aspects of the characteristics of the property on which the Chapel stands and the unusual or unique aspects of those characteristics, including present condition of the property, zoning, historic landmark designation and the proximity of such property to major properties of Harvard University and the desire of both parties that the arena of potential purchasers includes only those who would not be

(Continued on page 157)

PRELIMINARY AGREEMENT

(Continued from page 156)

incompatible neighbors for the particular parcel on which the chapel stands . . .

The School agrees that no effort will be made, directly or indirectly, to market the property while the preparation of the appraisal is in process nor thereafter until the parties have had reasonable opportunity for good faith negotiations once the appraisal is in hand to determine the opportunity which the Society shall be given, not to exceed 90 days, to ascertain its ability to purchase the parcel at the appraised figure by the raising of contributions from other sources with or without the Swedenborgian denomination.

The negotiations should also include the opportunity for the Society as an alternative to purchase of the property to lease for a reasonable term* at a fair market rental the parcel on which the Chapel stands.

The parties will share equally the cost of the appraisal referred to above once they have agreed upon the choice of an appraiser.

If the parties are unable to agree upon the choice of an appraiser, the parties agree that George H. Kidder may make the selection of an appraiser.

Agreed to this 17th day of September 1999.

By the School/s/

Richard B. Hatheway

By the Society /s/ L.E. Wiberg

*The Society agrees that the School should receive a reasonable rental for the period given the Society to determine if it wishes to exercise the foregoing option to purchase.

Note: The meeting with the appraiser, Eric Reenstierna, took place October 18, 1999 in Cambridge.



Editor's Note: The following letter was written by Dr. Mary Kay Klein to the SSR Board in March, 1999. Dr. Klein offered it to *The Messenger* for publication.

Dear Friends of SSR:

In 1985 I accepted a call to the presidency of SSR. At the time, the Board had developed a new vision, which included seeking degree-granting and accreditation, developing new sources of financial support, expanding the student body to include students who are not studying for ordained ministry as well as those who are, and providing support for those interested in both parish and non-parish ministries. I accepted the presidency because I wanted to work toward these goals the Board had developed.

In the intervening years, we have made significant progress in all four areas. In 1991, we received degree-granting status for an M.A. in Swedenborgian Studies from the Massachusetts Board of Regents. In the five years during which we prepared our application, we revamped our system of governance; merged the Board of Managers and Board of Directors into one Board of Trustees; developed a new curriculum, a catalog, course syllabi, and numerous policy manuals; asked the help of a number of consultants on various aspects of the program; upgraded our financial reporting system; significantly improved our library holdings; and networked with key offices and personnel in the Association of Theological Schools.

Working together, we started a fund drive, the first in almost 100 years, which to date has raised approximately 1.2 million dollars in gifts and pledges, including three grants from the Lilly Endowment. In addition to the M.A. in Swedenborgian Studies, we have initiated a program for the education of lay leaders and a certificate program in Swedenborgian Studies, from each of which several students have already graduated.

We have upgraded our field education program by increasing the proportion of time devoted to practical experience, initiating training programs for supervisors and teaching parish committees, and networking with other schools in the BTI (Boston Theological Institute, a consortium of local seminaries). Each

student is required to do two six-week programs in a Swedenborgian Center, one traditional and one non-traditional. We continue to give our ordination track students a strong foundation in basic areas such as pastoral care, worship, Bible, theology, and Church history. We have made numerous changes in our curriculum in response to needs expressed by our churches and our graduates. In addition to field education and classwork, we nurture students' spiritual lives by requiring a course relating Swedenborg's thought to the history of spirituality and asking students to work for a time with a spiritual director. Many of our graduates have become parish ministers. Others have pursued more non-traditional paths, such as starting a spiritual growth center in New Hampshire, or, in the case of one of this year's graduates, taking on the directorship of Temenos.

I have very much appreciated the opportunity to work with the Board, faculty, and students on these aspects of SSR's development. I have met some wonderful people, and my life has been enriched by my work in many areas, especially curriculum development, fund-raising, and working toward degree-granting status.

I originally came to SSR after feeling a sense of "call" to the position of president. Each time I applied for contract renewal, and at times of crisis, I felt a sense that I was still being called to this role. Now however, after a great deal of prayer and over a year of consideration, I sense that I am being called to start the preparations for moving on. Accordingly, I will not be applying for contract renewal, but will serve out my current term, which ends July 31, 2000.

During the next nine months, I hope to contribute to some significant progress in pursuing our current goals of finishing our move, working more closely with another seminary, initiating more off-campus and electronic courses, and stabilizing our progressively increasing financial base. I also want to make the transition to my successor as smooth as possible.

Thank you for your help, support, and consideration during these past years!!

Mary Kay Klein
President, Swedenborg School of Religion



General Council Report

General Council met October 21-23 at Temenos Conference and Retreat Center in West Chester, Pennsylvania. All members were present, as well as several invited guests, including Jane Siebert representing the SSR Board. On the first evening, Council reviewed the work done by Cabinet the previous month and spent some time in a visioning process. Officers' reports were presented, as well as reports from Temenos, Wayfarers Chapel, Swedenborg School of Religion, and the National Church.

National Church trustees met during the General Council sessions and viewed a slide presentation by the architect who had done the architectural survey. The trustees voted to expend up to \$2500 for the development of a business plan and feasibility study, including review of zoning regulations, for the Washington Church. This plan will be reported on at the next General Council meeting, if not sooner. It was also voted to accept the Washington congregation's invitation to participate in their visioning process. The details of this will be worked out. A bylaw change to expedite change of membership on the National Church Trustees was suggested.

The Youth Millennium Fund was the subject of much discussion. It was voted that the name of the existing Millennium Fund be changed to the Millennium Permanent Fund (which would be an endowment fund) and that a Millennium Current Fund also be established for those who would rather contribute to the more immediate youth program needs.

Archives were discussed, and various plans and processes were discussed for the archives. The Library and Documents Committee will continue to work with SSR on separating the jointly owned material, in consultation with the Executive Committee and Central Office. The Information Management Support Unit (IMSU) had requested guidance from General Council in preserving the old issues of *The Messenger*. There was a consensus to proceed with this project, IMSU to report back with bids, etc., at the June meeting. Council member Jim Erickson, who has expertise in this area, will work with the support unit on the project.

In response to the visioning done earlier, it was decided that Duane Beougher would work with the Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit (FPRSU) in coming up with a development plan for funds, annual fund drive, public relations, stewardship training, method sharing, etc., for use by the denomination. Council discussed the need for an evaluation process for Internet development by IMSU and COMSU, as well as for other programs.

After lengthy discussion it was voted to grant \$10,000 to Wayfarers Chapel for the new visitors center, and to also guarantee a loan for \$200,000. There was discussion about the Urbana University request to have the Printz Farm back in their ownership. There was a consensus that tacking the cost of this to the end of their loan was a feasible way to accomplish this. There was a vote to first update the appraisal of this property. The Executive Committee was then authorized to finalize the plan, for report back by June at the latest. A phone vote on this issue may be taken. A grant of \$1000 was made to Urbana

University for the proposed Swedenborg Lecture Series.

Discussions took place about the sunseting schedule for Stone House. It was decided, in light of their new situation, to slow the rate of sunseting back to the normal policy. Living Waters Ministry was also discussed. A six-month grant of \$10,000 was made with the final six-month grant pending evaluation.

Council formally accepted the invitation to send a representative to the October and April meeting of the SSR Board of Trustees. Jim Erickson was appointed as representative to the next meeting.

Foreign Ministries support was discussed. It was decided to grant \$500 plus cost of transfer, to the New Church of God in Monrovia, Liberia, for repair of their storm-destroyed roof.

—Gloria Toot, secretary



Safe Harbor

In my youth I vigorously set sail for a promised land
convinced I would find it.

The exploration of exotic ports and the times of
dangerous passage slowly gave way to a desire for safe
harbor.

Round and round that harbor I have floated never
venturing into the tumult beyond.

I did not notice how each tour of its familiar banks
cast my soul adrift more and more.

I was setting sail for nowhere and the easiness of the
journey began to haunt me. My desire to seek safety
seemed to have mortally wounded the adventurer within.

What wonders could I have seen and learned from the
voyages untaken?

I sat becalmed.

A warm and powerful wind pushed me out into the
dangerous currents.

They are taking me where they will and I am afraid
and again I am alive and looking for a promised land
convinced I'll find it.

—Eric Allison



Catch the Vision: The New Visitors Center

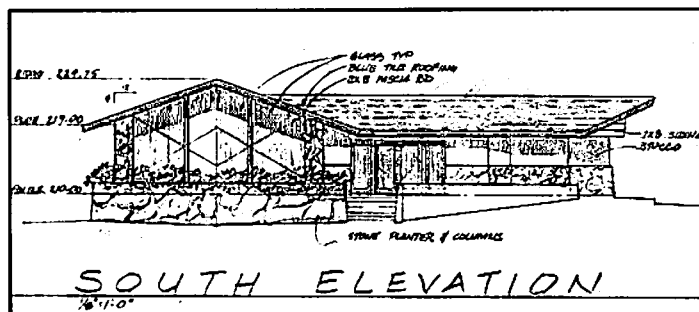
The Wayfarers Chapel is in the midst of a fund-raising program to build a new visitors center. Many members and friends of the Swedenborgian Church have generously contributed, and we want to keep the members of our denomination informed of developments. It is through your help that we can make our vision a reality.

As you may know, the Wayfarers Chapel was opened and dedicated to the glory of God and as a national memorial to Emanuel Swedenborg on Mother's Day 1951. The Chapel complex consisting of the glass and redwood sanctuary, tower, and visitors center was designed by Lloyd Wright and constructed over a period of years as funds became available. The "Hallelujah Tower," as Mr. Wright called it, because it represented upraised arms with the cross held high, was built in 1954. The colonnade and visitors center were completed in 1958. Because of extensive damage by the Abalone Cove landslide, the visitors center building had to be closed in the early 1980s and finally removed in 1995. The loss of the visitors center severely curtailed our educational and visitor-accommodation programs because there was no longer a building where wayfarers could go to obtain information about the Chapel and our Church.

To fill this void, a new visitors center, designed by Eric Lloyd Wright, son of Lloyd Wright, will be constructed in the northwest corner of the Chapel property. Continuing the concept of Wrightian architecture, the new building will feature a large exhibition room designed to convey the story of Wayfarers Chapel and provide visitor accommodations, including much needed public restrooms. Multimedia displays will acquaint visitors with the Chapel, its history and services offered, Lloyd Wright and its architecture, Emanuel Swedenborg and the Swedenborgian Church. The space will also provide for a variety of community-centered concerts, workshops, and seminars. A wide selection of literature, books and pamphlets will be available as well as Chapel remembrances.

Those of you who attended convention festivities at the Chapel on June 26, 1999, participated in a ground-breaking celebration. The Chapel's Board of Managers has voted to begin construction on March 1, 2000.

The total cost of the building is \$500,000. Our sister Swedenborgian Church in Los Angeles has generously given a grant that matches every dollar contributed up to \$125,000 which will double donations to \$250,000. The fund-



Artist's rendering of the new visitors center, designed by Eric Lloyd Wright and partner Dean Andrews. Wright is the son of Chapel architect Lloyd Wright and grandson of the renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

raising thermometer shaped like the tower will show you our progress. The initial fund-raising program raised over \$15,000 given by Swedenborgians across the United States and Canada, including several churches and associations. The Pacific Coast Association had made a grant of \$25,000. With matching funds this amounts to over \$80,000. We are off to a good start.

For those of you who want more information on how you can help us meet our goal, please contact me by phone or email.

Thank you for your generous support. We look forward to keeping you abreast of developments in future issues of *The Messenger*.

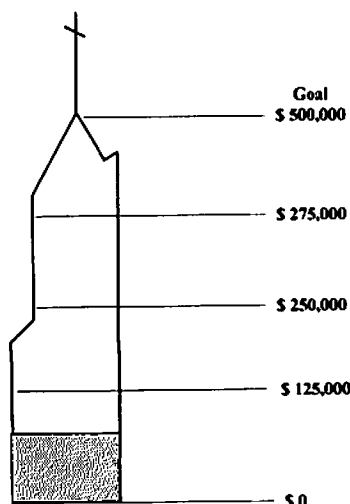
Rev. Harvey Tafel

310-377-1650

Harveyt@wayfarerschapel.org

Swedenborgian Church Meeting Dates

Dec. 27-30 SCYL Retreat Almont	Mar. 18-19 Urbana Trustees
Jan. 13-15 Wayfarers Chapel Palos Verdes, CA	Apr. 6-10 EDSU Temenos
Jan. 16-19 Council of Ministers Executive Committee Kirkland, WA	Apr. 27-30 SSR Board Temenos
Feb. 5-7 SSR Board San Francisco	May 5-6 Wayfarers Chapel Board
Feb. 24-26 MINSU Ft. Myers Beach, FL	May 17-19 COMSU Temenos
	June 28-July 2 Convention 2000 Urbana U.



First Annual Youth Training Workshop Big Success

Eric Allison

What is a Youth Training Workshop? Its purpose is to train adults how to start, lead, nurture, and develop youth groups—specifically, leagues or groups for teenagers. The evaluations of the Youth Training Workshop indicated that the twelve participants were very pleased with the workshop overall and went home energized and empowered. Actually, the workshop was so well received that General Council voted enough funds to have two such workshops next year. People have been requesting something like this for several years, and the Education Support Unit (EDSU) responded by sponsoring this workshop at Almont the last week of September. I volunteered to put it together and then realized that I had very little experience in this area. So, I looked through the Detroit phone book for people who were experts at working with youth. With the help of Divine Providence and the Rev. Renee Billings and dozens of calls to many talented and dedicated people, I was able to snag enough presenters. We had nine presenters from various churches and one Swedenborgian (Eric Hoffman). I can tell you it was a little scary booking all these people whom I had never met or heard speak. But, they were all good. Every one of them.

One bonus of this workshop was that Cabinet members were able to attend a portion of it because they were also meeting at Almont. Perhaps, having Cabinet, General Council or any support unit meet during workshops like this is a model we should consider.

The best way to get a bird's-eye view of what happened it to look at the biographies of the presenters and their topics.

John Divine

John is currently teaching for the Waterloo, Ontario, district separate school board where he has been for nineteen years. He has been involved in youth ministry for twelve years and has led numerous week-long retreats for fourteen-year-olds, working with about two thousand kids per year in a residential retreat program. He is the initiator of a youth group with 300 members from three different Catholic congregations. He helped start youth groups in many other churches and has been a consultant for youth ministers trying to launch youth groups. John gave numerous methods for getting teens to enjoy prayer, singing, and community building. John also spent a lot of time meeting with people one on one, responding to specific questions. He has a wealth of knowledge.

Gregory Day

Gregory is nineteen and recently arrived in Michigan from Alabama to perform his "Year of Service" for the Bahai faith. He is living and working at Louhelen Bahai School near Flint. He has participated in the "Youth Workshop." Gregory told us about his "Year of Service."

Eric Hoffman

Eric served as pastor of the LaPorte New Church in LaPorte, Indiana from 1992 to 1998. Eric lives in LaPorte and serves as chaplain for the Swedenborgian Youth League of North America. Eric started a thriving youth league in LaPorte. He has been on the staff of the Almont summer camp, has led numerous retreats, and has served as president of the Sunday School Association. Eric shared what worked well, medium well and rarely. Everyone wanted more time with Eric.

Mike Houser

Mike has been in youth ministry since 1992. He was youth pastor at First Assembly of God in Collinsville, Illinois, for over two years in St. Charles, Missouri A/G for four years and is presently youth pastor at Trinity A/G in Mt. Morris, Michigan. He currently runs the "Power House" youth group which has 125-150 at Trinity Assembly of God in Flint, Michigan. Mike shared techniques for attracting and following up on young people. Under his leadership the size of the youth group doubled in a little more than a year. Even though many of his techniques worked better with larger churches, we found his presentation to be an inspiring testimony of his commitment to serve God.

Peter Shaw

Peter lives in Kitchener, Ontario. He recently retired after thirty-five years of teaching in Australia, England, and Canada. While teaching he directed numerous school choirs. Under his direction the St. Aloysius Youth Choir (1970-79) became known as the best youth choir in Ontario. He is a well known folk singer in the Kitchener area. Peter gave everyone a recently recorded tape of songs for worship, played for our devotions and explained how he got a youth choir to grow from 0 to 30.

Christie Spear

Christie is a former minister of the Metaphysical Church of Davison, Michigan. She has a masters degree in Education and has taught Grades K-8 for ten years. She is a Core Curriculum Trainer for the Bahai. Christie gave us examples of

how small groups can discuss how their faith applies to daily living.

Colleen Williams

Colleen created and directs the Youth and Others Uniting to Help Humanity program. Operating for three and half years, this program has a regular core of thirty teens reaching as many as three hundred teens in the inner city of Flint, Michigan. She is involved with Peace International and Human Race Relations. Colleen shared how her outreach is an expression of her Bahai faith.

Those in attendance were: From San Francisco—Holly Gottschalk, Kim Hinrichs, Cliff Jepsen and Tom McEntee. From Cincinnati—Rhett Billings. From Kitchener—Andrea Hutton, and Deb Wilson. From Cleveland—Cynthia Holden, Steve Dzeba and son Brendon. From Concord, New Hampshire—Nadine Cotton.

The Rev. Eric Allison is Pastoral Ministries Consultant. He lives in Kitchener, Ontario.

MINI-COURSES

EDSU is currently brainstorming for Emini-course ideas and presenters for Convention 2000 in Urbana, Ohio. We are exploring a variety of topics including eco-justice and the theme of convention. Please contact Bill Baxter, Chair of EDSU, 100 Pelham Rd., Apt. 2J, New Rochelle, NY 10805, or bilbax@erols.com

JOB OPENING: SCYL COORDINATOR

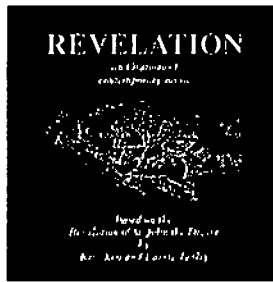
The Swedenborgian Church Youth League is looking to fill the position of SCYL Coordinator. Duties of the coordinator include maintaining the national youth league, maintaining and distributing the SCYL mailing list, coordinating retreats, and facilitating SCYL functions at convention. Applicants should have two years experience in a Swedenborgian youth program and good organizational skills. The position is quarter time, averaging 10 hours per week. A complete job description is available on request. Please send cover letter, resume, and list of references, as well as any nominations or suggestions to Bill Baxter, Chair of EDSU, 100 Pelham Rd. Apt. 2J, New Rochelle, NY 10805, or bilbax@erols.com

"Revelation" Lauded

Revelation," the double CD set by Ken and Laurie Turley, has been receiving some attention lately. It was reviewed in the April-May edition of *Face Magazine* in Portland, Maine, and they had this to say: "This is hands down the most unusual submission in this batch of locals, or in a while. In form it is very much like 'Hair' or 'Godspell,' a narrative rendered almost entirely in song. Based on 'The Revelation of Saint John the Divine,' this sprawling work is a truly impressive accomplishment . . . this must have been a monster to write and arrange, particularly when you consider that seven vocalists and thirteen instrumentalists have parts. That having been said, this is impossible to describe without taking up a dozen pages of text. These two discs contain almost 88 minutes of music divided into three parts—'Introduction,' 'Visions and War,' and 'The Final Judgment'—and 43 songs. The musicians do a wonderful job with material that varies greatly in tempo and mood, and the vocalists are nearly as good. This is likely to be of more interest if you're particularly religious, but it stands up, too, as a piece of music."

It is also being carried in the catalog of Fountain Publishing, operated by Jon and Karin Childs of the General Church. They describe it as follows: "This sincere and amazing interpretation of the book of Revelation . . . is guaranteed to make you feel like dancing! The Turleys are both from very musical backgrounds and the musical styles you'll hear on this CD include classical, folk, soul, jazz, and rock and roll, with dynamic singing and instruments ranging from violins to electric guitars. If you like the music of 'Godspell,' you'll love the vibrancy and professional sound of 'Revelation.'"

You can order the double CD from Fountain Publishing, PO Box 90011, Rochester, MI 48308-0011 Item #KLTO1 (with free performance program) or directly from the Turleys at 8 Elm Street, Fryeburg, ME 04037. The price is \$20.00 plus \$4.00 shipping.



living water

by Karen Childs Elder

Review by Ken Turley

This is the second CD from the Childs family of musicians I have had the pleasure of reviewing. My first impression is the fine quality of the recording. Each instrument is heard distinctly, and the voices are well balanced with the accompaniment. All in all it is a most professional sound.

The arrangements are creative and supportive of the mood and message of each song and range from contemporary soft rock to a kind of "neo-renaissance" feel. The tasteful use of percussion instruments and drums underpinning the layers of piano, synthesizer, and bass blend to create a very satisfying sound. The vocals are not obscured or overpowered by the instruments, and in this case that is a very good thing, for the singing throughout this CD is first rate. The lead vocals by Karen Childs Elder are simply enchanting. Each word is clear and understandable, and the quality of her voice is strong, clear, and filled with a feeling of compassion that draws the listener into the mood of reverence created by the lyrics.

The lyrics warrant special notice. While the words are the creation of Ms. Childs Elder, they are often inspired by, if not drawn from, Scripture passages from both Old and New Testaments. So if you are looking for a listen that is beautifully crafted and reverently uplifting in content this is a CD well worth owning. It can be ordered from Fountain Publishing, P.O. Box 8011, Rochester, MI 48308-0011. (Item #NA01 for the CD, price \$15, or Item #NA02 for the Cassette tape, price \$10. Please add \$2 for one item or \$4 for more than one to cover cost of shipping.



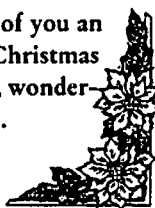
The Rev. Ken Turley is a musician, composer, and pastor of the Fryeburg New Church in Fryeburg, Maine.

From the Editor:

To follow up on last month's editorial regarding the plight of women in Afghanistan, I received the information packet from the Feminist Majority Foundation. The packet contains all the necessary information to aid the movement to restore Afghan women's human rights, including a petition that has room for six signatures, to be mailed to the Foundation when completed. (The collected petitions are then mailed to President Clinton and Secretary of State Albright) Again, the toll-free number to call for this packet is 1-888-WEWOMEN.

The editor and the Communications Support Unit wish all of you an especially joyful, peaceful Christmas season, and an enlightened, wonder-filled, Y2K glitch-free 2000.

Patte LeVan



Free Set of Swedenborg's Theological Works

Standard Edition, complete, some signs of wear, but in good shape. A few annotations in the text and margins, but the bulk of the set is clean. This package is available for the asking. You pay only shipping costs.

Please contact
Stephen Koke
Box 496 Santa Ysabel, CA 92070
Phone: (760) 765-4885
stevekoke@jinet.com

Sower Notes Sought

If you have a set of *The Sower Notes* you would be willing to sell, please contact:
Annella Smith
San Diego Swedenborgian Church
4144 Campus
San Diego, CA 92103

(*The Sower Notes* were published by the American New Church Tract and Publication Society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and are no longer in print.)

INTERFAITH GLOBAL WARMING CAMPAIGN *Angel Trek 2000 Trip*

Renee Billings

The Church of the Holy City (Royal Oak, Michigan) is part of a Michigan coalition, along with three other states, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Iowa, to initiate the INTERFAITH GLOBAL WARMING CAMPAIGN put forth by the National Council of Churches. As an ecojustice congregation, the Church of the Holy City has chosen a representative member, Dr. Margaret Dwyer, to take part in a year-long interfaith campaign designed to develop support for international treaties like the Kyoto protocol and to help people of faith see global warming as a religious issue.

In this campaign, religious leaders and lay people will begin addressing the global warming issue with their local congregations, government, and media. Increasing awareness of what each of us can do in our local areas will inspire us to become better caretakers of God's earth and empower us to make a difference for future generations.

Part of fulfilling this Global Warming Campaign is educating our people. The Church of the Holy City is preparing now to do this. In the spring of 2000, people from Michigan and other parts of the Midwest will take a gentle pilgrimage to the "City of Angles," through Sequoia National Park and up to San Francisco in honor of dedicating ourselves to a transition to peace "once and for all." This ANGEL TREK 2000 begins and ends with travel, prayer, healing, learning, and celebrating the joy of life on Earth as we enter the beginning of the third millennium of our faith in the Lord to be stewards of the Earth in an atmosphere of peace that passes understanding.

If anyone would like to participate in this week-long ANGEL TREK 2000 trip and fly out of Detroit with the group or meet us in Los Angeles, contact Rev. Renee Billings at (248) 546-7583, email RevRenee@aol.com or Dave Smith at Directional Strategies in Royal Oak, Michigan at (248) 398-5142. A deposit is needed to secure passage. A limited number of people may participate.

The 80 participants of the trek will prepare together throughout this year with fund-raising activities that will aid our passage fees and raise \$50 per person for the Church of the Holy City's "New Building Fund." These events include classes offered in the community to prepare for the trek, donations raised from offering healing groups in the community, performances related to peacemaking offered in the community, and similar events we create as we register the 80 participants. This is a pilgrimage designed to involve all of us who will travel together. We invite you to participate and share your knowledge or skill(s) on the trip about angels, peace, and/or stewardship of the environment. We especially encourage our youth to participate. The Michigan Association voted in October to give a \$1000 grant for two youths confirmed in the Swedenborgian denomination to work and travel with the Angel Trek 2000 group. The cost per person is \$1463. Each youth would be given a working grant of \$500 that helps with the cost of the trip. Whatever each youth would like to contribute to the week-long trip would focus on sharing something about 1) angels, 2) peace, and/or 3) the environment. Look in the next issue of *Clear Blue Sky* for a Michigan Association youth scholarship opportunity for the trip. Come along and learn with us!

The Rev. Renee Billings is pastor of the Church of the Holy City (Swedenborgian) in Royal Oak, Michigan.



The Kyoto Protocol

A UN Framework Convention on Climate Change was adopted by 160 nations at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. It sets a goal of stabilizing global temperature and provides for annual conferences to negotiate agreements until this goal is reached. The President signed and the Senate ratified the Framework Convention in 1993.

At the 1997 conference in Kyoto, the industrialized nations adopted the Kyoto Protocol, an amendment to the Framework Convention, in which they each agree to make specific emissions reduction by 2012. The US reduction is to be 6-7% below its 1990 level, which is about 30% below the level of US emissions otherwise projected for 2012.

At Kyoto, a decision about setting targets and timetables to limit the emissions of the developing nations was postponed. The US wants developing nations to adopt targets and timetables before the industrialized nations begin making reductions. Most developing nations, led by China and India, want the industrialized nations to begin making reductions before they agree to any targets and timetables. The year 2000 has been set as a deadline to resolve this and several other matters.

The Kyoto Protocol must be ratified by over half the industrialized nations before it takes effect. US ratification is crucial. President Clinton has signed the Kyoto Protocol, but is not expected to send it to the Senate for ratification until the remaining issues are resolved. This means it will probably not be considered by the Senate until after the year 2000 elections.

All nations that signed the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 must inventory their domestic emissions, create pilot programs to limit them, and participate in the international efforts to reduce global emissions. Developing countries cannot join the treaty's technology transfer and financial aid programs until they adopt binding emissions limits. Simple justice requires industrial nations, and the US in particular, to take the first steps to slow global warming. Let us begin to remove the log from our own eye so we can see more clearly how to help our neighbors consider the speck in theirs.

What can we do?

- Write your senators and representatives! Tell them global warming is a religious issue, the US must participate in strong and fair international agreements and adopt strong national policies. This is the most important thing you can do right now!
- Resolve to use less energy!
- Ask your congregation to make a commitment to care for God's creation through worship, teaching and learning, congregation lifestyle, and community, national and global involvement. For information about the NCCC Environmental Justice Covenant Congregation program, call 212/870-2386. Be an Energy Star Congregation by considering ways to improve the efficiency of your buildings and equipment and curtail unnecessary energy use. For information about the Energy Star Congregation Program call 800/288-1346.

—Rev. Renee Billings



Way of Wisdom: Meditations on Love and Service

(Continued from page 164)

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) wrote thirty volumes of theology and five volumes of his own spiritual experiences that detailed a new way of understanding God, heaven, and the self. With care and love he described a path that leads to a life of fulfillment and meaning both here and in the afterlife—the way of wisdom—covering a range of topics from the nature of the Divine to surviving the depths of spiritual struggles.

This useful collection of one hundred quotations, adapted for present-day readers from the works of Swedenborg, is arranged for meditation, self-reflection, and personal growth. The precious gems of wisdom challenge the reader to grow both in spirit and humanity. True development emerges from an under-

standing of our relationship with the Divine, a knowledge of our own inner dimensions, and a productive interaction with others.

Grant Schnarr and Erik Buss deepen reader insights with commentaries on the meditations at the end of the book.

"This is not a book to be read through at one sitting. It has no plot, no characters, no narrative flow. Rather, it has moments of excitement—the rush of delight when the spirit apprehends truth."—*from the Introduction*

Grant Schnarr is the author of *Return to the Promised Land: The Story of Our Spiritual Recovery: A Twelve-Step Guide*.

Erik Buss is pastor of Cascade New Church in Seattle.

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PASSAGES

Birth

Immediato—Malayna Jaise Immediato was born October 10, 1999, to Paula and Carl Immediato, members of the Wilmington, Delaware Swedenborgian Church. All are doing well.

Confirmations

Brighton—Christine and John Brighton were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church and welcomed into membership October 24, 1999, at the New York New Church, the Rev. Robert McCluskey officiating.

Dwyer and Tanner—Margaret Dwyer and Lynda Tanner were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church September 26, 1999, at the Church of the Holy City in Royal Oak, Michigan, in conjunction with the Angel Trek 2000 Global Warming Campaign Kickoff, the Rev. Renee Billings officiating.

Haug—Fran Haug was confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church and welcomed into membership

October 3, 1999, at the Church of the Holy City in Wilmington, Delaware, the Rev. Randall Laakko officiating.

Deaths

Geis—Bernice Geis, age 80, member of the New York New Church, entered the spiritual world October 22, 1999, after a long illness. Active in the church since the mid-1940s, Bea is survived by her husband and soul-mate, Albert, and her children Linda, Paula, Wayne, Holly, Wendy, Donna, and Leala. (Her daughter Diana is deceased.) A funeral service was conducted October 28 at the Flushing Memorial Chapel, Flushing New York, the Rev. Robert McCluskey officiating.

Sharpsteen—Lois Sharpsteen, beloved member of the Swedenborgian Church at Temenos in West Chester, Pennsylvania, entered the spiritual world October 9, 1999. A memorial service was conducted October 16, the Rev. Susannah Currie officiating.



Out of Silence

The new issue of *Out of Silence*, the newsletter for survivors of sexual abuse and those who support them, is full of information and inspiration. Topics covered include a report on the new General Church SAPHE Committee and another on the incidence of abuse; several stories from survivors, one with thoughtful insights on the teachings of conjugal love in our schools and a second that testifies to heartfelt spiritual healing; articles from a therapist who works with survivors, and another who explores the possibility of healing with the eyes; information on how to help children stay safe from abuse; plus poetry, letters, and book and video reviews.

We are not for survivors only; an important part of our mission is education. So if you'd like to learn more, be supportive, or help prevent abuse, please subscribe.

To be on our mailing list (we publish once a year), please send \$6 per issue to:

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Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

Contributions to support this use would be most welcome, and can be mailed to the same address.

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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.

Lost Legacy: Inspiring Women of Nineteenth-Century America

Susan Poole, Editor
Foreword by Cecile
Andrews, author of *The
Circle of Simplicity*



"The compelling stories in *Lost Legacy* show that dedicated women building their lives on high ideals can be a positive force for transformation. The work these women did reminds us that a social vision built on a spiritual foundation can always change the world."

—Marianne Williamson, author of *Healing in America*

Lost Legacy is a unique anthology of inspiring nineteenth-century women writers, artists, and activists, influenced by Emanuel Swedenborg, eighteenth-century scientist and visionary. Important concepts shine through their artwork, music, letters, and books. Dr. Harriot Hunt spoke of the importance of integrating the mind, body, and spirit for good health. Lydia Child wrote powerful letters for the cause of freedom. Ellen Spencer Mussey, the first dean of a law school, presented a paper at the World's Parliament of Religions and later became one of the most prominent attorneys of her time. Jesse Willcox Smith, friend and student of famous artist Howard Pyle, became the most popular children's book illustrator of her time, including illustrating Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*. Each woman in *Lost Legacy* helped to create positive

social change by using her unique gifts and talents.

In *Lost Legacy*, editor Susan Flagg Poole and colleagues have brought back to life an era crucial to our present cultural understanding—and we can only hope that schools, colleges, and universities will immediately adopt this well written and compelling book as a textbook to inspire today's young men and women. The women's stories describe a social and spiritual foundation on which we can build today. *Lost Legacy* restores to us an inheritance of dedicated lives, courageous social reform, and higher ideals, which our emerging century can use to create a more spiritually conscious world.

—Denise Breton and Christopher Largent
The Paradigm Conspiracy and Love, Soul and Freedom

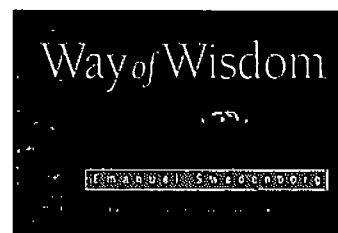
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Way of Wisdom: Meditations on Love and Service

Emanuel Swedenborg
Grant R. Schnarr and Erik J. Buss, Editors

"Love and wisdom, without action, are only imaginary concepts. They become real when they are used."

From Swedenborg's
Apocalypse Revealed



(Continued on page 163)

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