
THE MESSENGER

Published by the Swedenborgian Church of North America

February 1999

Eco-justice and the Church

William Shakalis

"The earth is the Lord's
and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it,
for he has founded it on the seas,
and established it on the rivers."
(Psalm 24:1-2)

The crises in our world in this twentieth century have included devastations such as war, exploitation, human oppression, and environmental despoliation. Our church teaching and the Word have often addressed the first three in their focus and concern for humankind and its salvation, but it is the fourth—the environment—that is a new and urgent concern of all churches, mainstream and small. The linking of ecology, religion and eco-justice has become a new form of Christian pastoral care for the earth as we enter the twenty-first century.

Our concern for nature and its ecological systems is a religious and moral issue. We cannot run from the facts of the human-created destruction of natural ecosystems: water and air pollution, land desertification, global warming, overpopulation, mass consumerism and waste overaccumulation, species extinction, and the mass destruction of forests. We must see that it is our overwhelming materialism that undermines and destroys our spiritually-based care for all of life that is found in the ecosystems and biosphere that makes up the earth.

Thomas Berry, in his now-classic work *The Dream of the Earth*, sums up the deadly process of extinction we have begun:

"Not only are we bringing about the extinction of life on such a vast scale, we are also making the land and the air and the sea so toxic that the very conditions of life are being destroyed. As regards basic natural resources, not only are the nonrenewable resources being used up in a frenzy of processing, consuming, and disposing, but we are also ruining much of our renewable resources, such as the very soil itself on which terrestrial life depends . . . What is needed, and what can appropriately be considered here, is the deeper meaning of the relationship between the human community and the earth process." (p. 9-10)

Berry gives us a devastating description of the physical/natural dimensions of the crises. For us as Swedenborgians, it is the spiritual basis, religious values and answers, connecting us to nature and creation, and their interlinking values and movements, that show us the way out of this disaster.

It is written in Psalm 104 that God is our Creator, and in his great majesty oversees all that is around us, from grass, to trees, to animals to the cosmos, so that all creation is great and good because of God's love and wisdom. In Job 12:7-9 we find the elemental question and realization that God is the source of all creation, and that we must again renew this relation:

"But ask the animals
and they will teach you;
the birds of the air,
and they will tell you;
ask the plants of the earth,
and they will teach you;
and the fish of the sea
will declare to you.
Who among all these does not know that
the hand of the Lord has done this?"

Mankind's destruction of the earth, especially in the last 40 years in societies as advanced as the United States, has brought our destruction of

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All of Life a Romantic Experience

Renee Billings

Emanuel Swedenborg wrote in his book *Conjugal Love*, "There is a conjugal sphere [a marriage of love and wisdom or good and truth] which flows in from the Lord through heaven into all things and every thing of the universe, even to its ultimates" (para. 222). This sphere operates within human beings, within all of the animal kingdom on earth (even down to worms), and is moreover in all the subjects of the vegetable kingdom from olives and palms to the diminutive grasses.

What a beautiful theology this is! The sun in the heavens, which is in perpetual springtime, creates this sphere of love and wisdom that is continually radiating into our world and uniting what is good in us with what is true in us. The times in our lives when we feel most alive, happy and useful to others are times, I believe, when we to some degree allow the good and the true to be one in us.

Valentine's Day can be a day for us to be particularly aware of the sweetness the Lord brings to our lives as we encounter love reaching for the truth within our own individual spiritual growth processes, between one another in romance, family and friendship and in nature's pure, wild and beautiful endeavor to create, nurture and sustain life. "All the delights of heaven stream forth from the delights of conjugal love, as sweet waters from the flow of a fountain" (C.L. #229).

When we feel the Divine close to us, all of life is a romantic experience. Swedenborg was shown that we can grasp the Divine life most fully when we are in touch with some quality or qualities of conjugal love, the union of love and wisdom within and around us. Have you ever been a part of a dull conversation and then suddenly at the mention of gender issues, romance or perhaps soul mates, people perk up and may even giggle?! I believe we are illuminated and stirred at the deepest levels of our being when we encounter the subject or activity of love reaching out for the truth.

Each of us receives and responds to conjugal love differently and, therefore, we have an infinite variety of relationships with their unique qualities and challenges. This is so because love and wisdom together in the Divine are one and operate according to the same rules in all things yet the person or form that receives this Life determines how it will be expressed. "The changes of good and truth, or of its heat and light, are not variations of itself . . . but arise from the subjects that receive them" (C.L., #222).

Our joy comes in our unique experience and expression of this love and wisdom from our Creator. We are all born to know and to share this reality, and we are blessed in a special way when we find that one "other" who stirs the romantic flame of love that ultimately reflects our Lord's own passionate and devoted love for us.

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

Reprinted from the February 1996 Royal Oak Swedenborgian Church newsletter. ❖

THE MESSENGER

Publisher: The Communications Support Unit
Published monthly, except July and August, by the Swedenborgian Church of North America (founded 1817, incorporated 1861 as the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America).

February 1999
Volume 220 No. 2
Whole Number 5237

Typesetting & Layout
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Press, Plymouth, IN

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The opinions of the contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or the Communications Support Unit, or represent the position of the church. Subscription free to members of the Swedenborgian Church; non-members, \$12.00 a year; foreign \$15.00 a year; gift subscription from a member, \$5.00 a year; single copies \$1.00.

Deadline for material: Six weeks before the first day of the month of issue.

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These Are End-Times

Kim Hinrichs

In the movie *Bulworth*, the character played by Warren Beatty is a tired, burned-out political candidate who, when summoned in front of the microphones of the press, can only begin his speeches by repeating, "We stand at the doorstep of a new millennium." It's a good thing they used this phrase in the movie, because hopefully our real politicians won't use it in the next campaign season. However, we know we're in for it. With only 16 months to go until the year 2000, we are going to be inundated with millennium-talk. By the time the new year rolls around we will likely be glad just to get it over with. But since it's still early in the game, and you're probably not overwhelmed with millennium talk yet, I thought I'd take this opportunity to get you started.

We are indeed at the doorstep of a new millennium. We are living in an end-time, the end of the 20th century. There's a Greek word I wanted to share with you: the word is "eschatos." It means "end-time"—it is the root of our word "eschatology." The whole world is living in an eschatos now, in terms of how we measure time. But also, these are end-times in our personal lives too: we may be experiencing the end of a relationship; the end of a career; the end of childhood; for some of us, it may be the end of our lives. This is certainly an eschatos for me in that this is my last Sunday here with you in this beloved church.

Jesus and his followers were living in an eschatos, too. For a few hundred years around the time the gospels were written, a belief arose within the culture of antiquity that the world was going to end. The Jews thought that a Messiah would come who would start a war which would end the world. The Messiah would deliver the righteous up into the kingdom of God to live ever after in peace. It's a belief in what the biblical scholars call apocalyptic eschatology.

The people of antiquity saw their history as progressing in a downward spiral—their people were continually defeated, temples were ransacked, nations were exiled. Things just kept getting worse. The only way they could make sense of all this and still cling to their belief in God was to believe that all of the negative events were part of God's plan to destroy the present world and create a new one. If you read the gospels with this in mind, you will see

evidence that Jesus and his followers believed their world was about to end. For example, in Matthew, Jesus says, "Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." (Matt. 16:28) They were living in the eschatos, the end-time.

The followers of Jesus believed that he was the Messiah they had all been waiting for to lead them into a new age. When he died, and the world did not end, the early theologians had to make sense of all this. And this brings us to another Greek word, *parousia*, which literally means "the coming of an official" and was used to indicate the second coming of Christ. The early Christians surmised that if the world did not come to an end with the death of Christ, then it would come to an end with the second coming of Christ.

It is this belief that underlies the book of Revelation, and its vision we heard earlier of the New Jerusalem. So, the early Christians believed that their world was going to end imminently and that Christ would come down on clouds of glory to usher in a new heaven and a new earth, a glorious kingdom in which the righteous would live on and in which the horrible suffering of the world would be gone forever.

Well, now it is nearly 2,000 years since the death of Christ, and unless I missed it, he hasn't come down out of the heavens on clouds of glory to usher in a new heaven on earth. However, I have good news: I recently came across a tabloid at the grocery store which luckily provided me with the information I needed to back up this sermon. The Second Coming of Christ is going to happen on November 12, 1999! Edgar Cayce, Sitting Bull, Nostradamus, and the prophet Isaiah all agree. An expert on the topic says, "We are powerless to change God's plan to destroy the earth and condemn nonbelievers to eternal torment. But there are definite things we can do to prepare for Jesus' return to earth and the subsequent end of the world." He has three points of advice: don't be afraid, keep in close contact with God, and share

your faith with others, which interestingly enough, is pretty much the same thing as Paul and the early Christians were saying.

I recently came across a passage in a book talking about unanswered prayer. The author was pointing out how ambiguous Christian prayer is, to him, in the face of the

*The truth is
that each one
of us
has the potential—
and I would
suggest the
responsibility—
to reach our
greatest heights
and to glow
with the stunning
radiance of
our true humanity.*

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These Are End-Times (Continued from page 19)

undeniable irony that the most central prayer of all, “thy kingdom come” has gone completely unanswered. It’s true we live in a world where 11-year-old children are being tried for murder; where certain extremist groups throughout the world have killed innocent people with egregious acts of terrorism; a world we have plundered for its natural resources; a world where people starve to death in Africa and live on the streets in America. Jesus said, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Is this what he had in mind? What happened to that second coming of Christ? What happened to that New Jerusalem?

Fortunately for us here in the Swedenborgian Church., we have some help in making sense of this. Swedenborg had a rather revolutionary idea about the second coming of Christ. He said that it has already happened; but furthermore, that it is still happening, and it is yet to happen. Swedenborg said that this second coming would not happen with the literal descent of Christ on the clouds. He said it happens by Christ being reborn in the heart of each person. What this amounts to is the formation of a new way of being here on earth, which Swedenborg referred to as the New Jerusalem. This second coming happens through individuals, to the extent that they accept the Lord, and accept the divine love and wisdom which come from the Lord. Think about that: each person, by accepting and embodying the love that is the source of all life and which is God, has the ability to usher in heaven on earth. The New Jerusalem, then, is a vision of people working toward regeneration who as a whole make manifest the kingdom of God.

I’m not sure I’m too comfortable with the 21st century yet. I’m not sure how I’ll feel when the new year is full of zeros, and the year of my birth gets pushed back into the last millennium. Going forth into the time of zeros feels off-balance, and unknown. Sometimes it seems as if the world really will be somehow fundamentally altered.

And perhaps it will be. As we stand here in the eschatos, on the cusp of a new age, I would like to issue a rallying cry of sorts. I would like to propose that each of us go forth from this ending time working harder than ever before to usher in the New Jerusalem. I would like to invite you to imagine what would happen if each one of us were to truly embody the love of God.

This can be very difficult to do. In my prayer class last Wednesday, we talked about how difficult it is for us control-minded people to surrender ourselves to God. God is with us at every moment. This world is made from God—and yet, it is so hard for us to believe this.

I want to share with you a personal story about surrendering to love. After my husband Bob and I had been dating a few months, my mom came to San Francisco for a visit. I decided it would be nice for the two of them to meet each other for the first time. I arranged for us to go to dinner and then to a concert. The evening was wonderful. Bob was polite, charming, intelligent, and handsome. The three of us had wonderful conversations, and we all enjoyed the concert

too. By all accounts it would seem to have been a success.

The next morning my mom and I sat at the breakfast table in my apartment. She told me what a nice time she had had. “Yeah,” I replied. “But don’t you see how he’s all wrong for me?” She looked at me with a blank expression. “No,” she said. My mother, character judge *extraordinaire*, was not dropping the guillotine on this boyfriend, not this time. She had absolutely no misgivings about this guy. I couldn’t believe it. She asked me what I thought wasn’t right about him, and I couldn’t come up with a good enough answer.

As the conversation deepened, and the tears began to come, I finally admitted that I felt I couldn’t have this love from this very wonderful man, because, I finally said, “it would mean that everything would work out. It would mean that we could be married, and love each other for the rest of our lives.” I was so used to feeling broken, that I couldn’t give myself permission to be whole. As the sunlight streamed in on that wooden table, my mom turned to me and said, “this love is right here in front of you. All you have to do is open yourself up to it. It’s yours—take it.”

Well, to make a long story short, I did open myself up to that love, and we did get married, and we are well on our way to loving each other for the rest of our lives. Opening myself up to that love changed my life.

Although my example is about romantic love, I wanted to tell you this story because I think there is a strong correlation with our relationship to divine love. We think we are undeserving. We can’t conceive of how we could be recipients of God’s love. We become blocked from the reality that we are held in the palm of God’s hand. The truth is that each one of us has the potential—and I would suggest the responsibility—to reach our greatest heights and to glow with the stunning radiance of our true humanity. And so I would like to remind you: this love of God is right here in front of you. All you need to do is open yourself up to it.

Imagine what would happen if we could embody this truth and live it out in our world every day. What if, instead of facing this end-time and this new millennium with trepidation or resignation, we strode forth into the new world fully embracing love and goodness and truth? What if we were to free ourselves to love everyone around us? What if we were to stop in the midst of heated arguments and listen to the other person? What if we were to stop abusing our bodies with unhealthy habits? What if we were to reach out and help strangers in trouble? What if we were to use our minds and our bodies to end violence and discrimination and poverty? What, if we were to create a world in which children didn’t have guns, and human beings were free to live their lives as they chose, with a bed to sleep in and a roof over their heads? We have the ability to do all of these things.

I’d like to read you a poem. If my internet resources are correct, it’s a poem by Marianne Williamson that is often attributed to Nelson Mandela. He read it in his inaugural address in 1994.

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In praying for the church as a whole and for the Cambridge Society/Swedenborg School of Religion dilemma, I found myself turning to the Lord's prayer as a guide and then felt led to formulate a prayer that we all (or many of us) might share and pray together as a means for opening the way to healing and a mutually satisfactory solution.

What was also present with this was the idea of vigil and a sense of soaking prayer. Some things need prolonged attention before resolution comes. It is called in some circles "praying through," praying through to a resolution which all can recognize because there is a peace that comes, the Lord's peace.

It was suggested to me that this prayer might be helpful for any other dilemmas currently being worked on anywhere else in our church. It is a simple matter of substituting the particular name and circumstances in the appropriate places near the end of the prayer. It is helpful if we can actually believe there is a God-given solution, and it is helpful if we can want that more than our own way. This is what the prayer is for: to help us in that regard.

Also, whenever we have a crisis that turns into a prolonged struggle, especially one that is not just our own but involves us and another, it is an opportunity to learn how "to love one another as the Lord loves us."

Is this not the focus of the Adoramus that we recite each week?

Obviously, it is not something we do automatically or the Lord would not have had to come a first or a second time.

But it is something we need to make a decision about. Do we really mean it or do we just like the sound of the words, the beauty of the idea?

Providentially, the Lord has given us a tool to help us attain this goal. It is one that the angels use regularly, as we are told by our brother in Christ, Emanuel Swedenborg, and that tool is the Lord's Prayer.

This prayer is both a prayer in its own right and a format for prayer.

Prayer for Church Dilemmas



Therefore we can pray this prayer in general and let it speak to our hearts about what we need to address to improve our spiritual lives, or we can pray it with reference to a particular circumstance, seeking insight into the Lord's will in that circumstance, and strength and courage to move in that direction. In other words, we can use this prayer to seek, as it were, the Kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness that all else might be added unto us.

We can know that we are making progress when resentment, animosity, grief, guilt, and like emotions begin to be replaced by hope, empathy, and real appreciation of the other; when new perspectives, insights, and ideas for next steps that are mutually beneficial begin to flow.

Here are the Lord's prayer and the new prayer, together.

Our Father, who is in heaven

Our Divine human parent, residential center and core of all that is

Holy be Your name

You alone are the whole form, measure and content of our lives

Your kingdom come

Please let that wholeness come into our situation, our problem, our dilemma

Your will be done

Please let Your purpose and Your uses be fulfilled in us and through us

As in heaven so on earth (Luke 11:2, KJV)

And from their ever-present potential at the core of the universe and the core of our being, let that purpose and those uses

fully manifest in our outward lives both individual and communal

Give us this day, our daily bread

Please give us, moment by moment, the insights into Your purpose and the changes of heart needed to actively pursue that purpose as it unfolds

Forgive us . . . as we forgive . . .

Please forgive us for our unbelief in You and Your Divine Providence for our use, please forgive our lack of concern for, and our lack of focus on, our mutual process of regeneration

As we forgive those who seem ready to give up on us and the process

Let us not into any temptation

Please, let us not be distracted from desiring Your purpose exclusively or be led astray by merely desiring our own way

But deliver us from evil

But deliver us from an overwhelming hard-headedness and hard-heartedness that sees each other as the enemy and our own use as all important

For Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory

For everything belongs to You, (the School and the Church,) both people and property, we and it:

Our ability comes from You to recognize and function in the uses that we (Church and the School) stand for;

Also from You comes a radiating sphere of love and wisdom by which You, Lord Jesus Christ, in Your second coming, are recognized and valued along with the beginnings of Your New Jerusalem here on earth

Forever and ever, Amen

Thank You, Lord, that it is so, eternally. Amen.

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Eco-justice and the Church

(Continued from cover)

the earth to a crisis of immense proportions. It can only be turned around by an acknowledgment of these errors, a repentance, and a new awakening toward a healing view of creation and a new relating among ourselves, the earth, and our Lord, the Creator.

What can we do? We can commit ourselves to a new theology that brings worship and daily awareness. We must work at several levels: bring eco-justice and creation perspectives into our worship; educate ourselves about our religion, its relation to the earth and the contemporary environmental issues at hand; change our personal and congregational lifestyles toward an environment-friendly and caring ethic; and advocate at the local, national and international levels for eco-justice and the healing of creation.

Swedenborgian churches are cordially invited to join the Environmental Justice Covenant Congregation program of the National Council of Churches. By working in its program of worship, education, lifestyle changes and advocacy, congregations can make creation healing a part of

their ministry. Contact the Social Concerns Education Committee for further information. View the Eco-Justice working Group of the National Council of Churches' website at 'www.Webofcreation.org' for resources.

Put your faith into action by having your congregation become an Environmental Justice Covenant Congregation, and work for eco-justice.

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These Are End-Times

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Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?

Actually, who are you *not* to be?

You are a child of God.

Your playing small does not serve the world.

There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We were all meant to shine, as children do.

We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.

It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.

And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we're liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

Let us let the truth of the love which we inhabit enter into our very bodies and souls. Let us be moved by this love to act in the world. Let us not be held back by our own limitations and our own fears. Let us rise on the wings of doves, through these endings, into new beginnings, carrying the love of God into every corner of this earth. This, my friends, is the New Jerusalem. Amen.

Kim Hinrichs is a member of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church and a second-year student at the Pacific School of Religion. She and her husband Bob discovered the church when they were married there in 1996. They are both website developers/consultants; Kim's husband designed the church's current website. Last summer, she was hired by the San Francisco church to do a ten-week internship. The above sermon was presented July 19th, 1998. A native Californian, Kim is currently doing an internship at Community Congregational United Church of Christ in Benicia.

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Prayer for Church Dilemmas

(Continued from page 21)



It seems to me that the first two lines of the Lord's prayer and the corresponding lines of the new prayer together show us that we have to know the nature of the Lord in order "to love as the Lord loves."

The next four lines of the Lord's prayer and the corresponding lines show us that we have to desire that the Lord's nature be the *primary* part of our nature and that the Lord's will be the *source* and *sustenance* of our lives in order "to love as the Lord loves."

The next three lines of the Lord's prayer and the corresponding lines show us that we have to let go of everything that does not allow the Lord's nature to express itself, in us and through us, before we can even begin "to love as the Lord loves."

The last line and corresponding lines shows us that it is necessary to actively take hold of the understanding of our relationship to the Lord, to things, and to each other, and let that understanding lead us to exercise our will in the direction of "loving each other as the Lord loves us."

My hope is that this prayer as it is derived from the Lord's prayer will help us make further progress in learning to seek the "Kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness" which is the same as seeking to love one another as the Lord loves us. When we do this, our respective uses can be established in both *peace* and *fiscal soundness*.

Praise the Lord . . . Amen.

The Rev. Gladys A. Wheaton is a Swedenborgian minister living in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She is a member of the Social Concerns Education Committee.



THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION Dialog: *Coming Next Month*

Alice Skinner

Next month *The Messenger* will begin a dialogue on theological education, and you are invited to participate. Why you? Because theological education shapes the future ministry of the church. Because we assume that *Messenger* readers want a well-educated and effective pastorate prepared to cherish our faith and communicate its meaning. Our church policy calls for lay people and ministers to cooperate in running the church, in staffing its boards and committees, and in making decisions about its future.

In general, decisions about educating ministers are entrusted to the administration and faculty of the Swedenborg School of Religion [SSR] and to the people elected to formulate policy and take responsibility for the results—the trustees of SSR and the members of the Committee on Admission to the Ministry [CAM]. However, all church members are called upon to be informed about the issues with which these people wrestle, to judge the decisions they make, and to vote for candidates for these positions. Everyone needs to understand the issues well enough to support an educational design that works constructively for the future for the church.

The next issue of *The Messenger* will raise some of the questions under debate, such as the roles we want future ministers to play. What do they need to know about Swedenborgian thought and the Bible? What kind of education do they need to carry our inheritance forward and communicate it to the public as well as to church people of all ages? What training will prepare them to cooperate with lay workers in the church? To help people beset with spiritual problems? What credentials are needed by those who train them? Should our theological school award a recognized degree so its graduates will be accepted by other institutions of higher education? These are but a few of the questions we need to think about as our denomination moves forward into the 21st century.

So watch for the March *Messenger*. There you will find a variety of views about theological education as well as authoritative information about SSR. You may then wish to write an article or a letter to the editor giving your own opinions and thus participate in a constructive appraisal of our existing education for ministry and the development of a creative design for its renewal.

Alice B. Skinner is vice-chair, SSR Board of Trustees, and president of the Swedenborg Foundation.



Welcome to Convention in L.A.

Marlene Laughlin

Imagine that you have spent wonderful days absorbing the beauty of Pepperdine University in Malibu, meeting with old and new friends, and working very hard as representatives of your church to forge the foundation upon which we will build for the next millennia; now Saturday has arrived. You will now be treated to an exciting trip to Wayfarers Chapel. Traveling south on the infamous Southern California Freeways you will have an opportunity to see the extraordinary manner in which the pioneering spirit of individuals has built a civilization in a desert.

The sparkling blue Pacific Ocean becomes more inviting as your van takes you to Redondo Beach where we will board a whale-watch boat for an hour-long cruise south toward Wayfarers Chapel. The cliffs and rocks of the coastline on the east, and Santa Catalina Island on the west, make an extraordinary scenic voyage. Though the primary Gray Whale migration season will be over, there is a distinct possibility of seeing dolphins and larger whales.

Having enjoyed your afternoon outing, you travel farther south along the Palos Verdes cliffs to "The Glass Church," as Wayfarers Chapel is locally known. The fifty-year anniversary preparations are well underway. Depending upon the progress we have been able to make toward the building of the visitor's center, you are invited to celebrate with us either a groundbreaking or cornerstone-laying ceremony.

Plenty of time has been allotted for you to enjoy the grounds and be aided in your orientation by members of the staff who have been looking forward to your arrival. You will hear the rhythm of the mariachi band that will play for you during the sumptuous Mexican feast prepared for your dining pleasure.

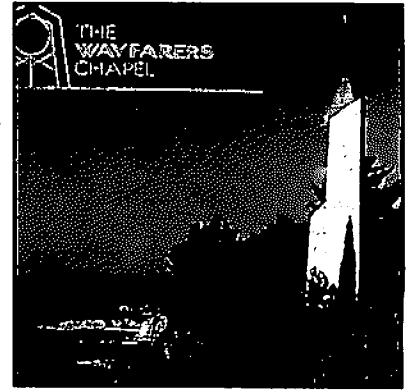
On the terraced lawn overlooking Catalina, we will complete our convention time together by the celebration of ordination. The service will be adapted to the lovely outdoor area with a very special liturgy. We have been planning and looking forward to your arrival and will do all in our power to aid you in enjoying your outing day.

Like yourselves, thousands of visitors come to Wayfarers Chapel each year. Some arrive with a specific purpose such as attending one of our worship or special services. Other people come simply to be surrounded by the beauty of the chapel and grounds. The ministry and staff of the chapel are dedicated to nurturing the spiritual growth of these people through active care and consideration. The Swedenborgian belief in the equality of all people finds much use here with the diverse wayfarers who visit. Our interactions are a ministry of dignity and respect to all. Wayfarers Chapel is a sacred place maintained for the spiritual nurturing of all, a place to rest, renew, and worship both individually and in community.

Though in adherence to Swedenborgian theology and philosophy, the Sunday morning worship service is ecumenical. This openness of perspective and purpose provides a space of comfort for many to move further into themselves and outward to others. People come and return to celebrate weddings, baptisms, and memorial services. On a recent Sunday one family celebrated the baptism of their new grandchild. The parents were married here. The father's parents were married here, and the grandmother's father was memorialized here.

Often during our conversations with participants in baptisms, weddings and worship we find people who would like to belong to a community of people who are open, non-judgmental, and believe as do they that the future is positive. At Wayfarers Chapel, we wish to be helpful to all those who might enter, by whatever door. We are reaching more broadly and deeply into the local and world community. Our literature is taken and read by people near and far. The website should provide us with the ability to develop a chatroom into potential new worship communities.

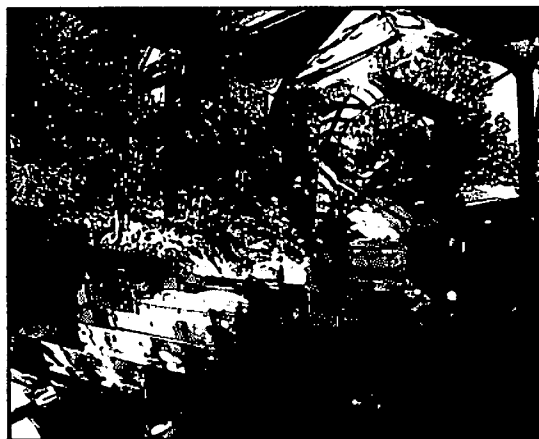
The Rev. Marlene Laughlin is a minister at the Wayfarers Chapel. ❖



Wayfarers Chapel watercolor by Manon Washburn

The Wayfarers Chapel

Harvey Tafel



On the warm, sunny Saturday afternoon of July 16, 1949, several hundred Swedenborgians

gathered on a dusty and barren hilltop on the Southern California coastline and took a leap of faith as they witnessed the dedication of a cornerstone and the consecration of a site for a most remarkable church—one made entirely of glass! On June 26, 1999, another group of Swedenborgians from around the country will again gather on that same hilltop and marvel at what was envisioned 50 years ago.

The Board of Managers, and the ministers and staff of Wayfarers Chapel, invite members attending the annual meeting of the Swedenborgian Convention to spend a day at the Chapel, Saturday, June 26. Again, the festivities will center around the consecration of a site and groundbreaking, this time for the new visitors center building. Designed by local architect Dean Andrews, and Eric Lloyd Wright, son of Chapel architect Lloyd Wright, the new building will grace the northwest corner of the Chapel site. The attractive Wrightian structure will welcome the wayfaring public as they arrive and introduce them to the Chapel.

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, by the Rev. Dr. Leonard Tafel, then president of the denomination. The Chapel building 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. That building has served as education center, library, museum, and visitors center. Landscaping, gardens, and lawns were added over the years. In 1979 a glass loggia (reception office) was built at the base of the tower, and an office was added to the visitors center, which essentially completed the 3.5 acre Chapel site. However, 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 old visitors center has severely curtailed the outreach program at the Chapel as there is no building where wayfarers can go to gain insight and information about Swedenborg and the church. The new visitors center, as much a leap of faith today as the original vision of the Chapel was 50 years ago, will feature a 50' x 25' exhibition hall designed to convey the message of Wayfarers Chapel to the public. Multimedia displays will acquaint visitors with the Chapel, its history and ministry, Lloyd Wright's architecture, and Emanuel Swedenborg and his theology for the New Age. A wide selection of literature will be available. We are tremendously excited about the possibilities of the new visitors center and trust you will catch the vision, too. Welcome, and enjoy your visit!

The Rev. Harvey Tafel serves as administrator at Wayfarers Chapel. ❖

Sunday School Association to Receive 1999 Mite Box

At Convention in Leesburg, Florida, at our annual luncheon meeting, the Alliance of Swedenborgian Women presented a check for \$1000 to the New Church Youth League to help them publish their periodical *Clear Blue Sky*. The Youth League was the recipient of the Mite Box for 1998.

The New Church Sunday School Association has been designated to receive the Mite Box collection for 1999. It will be given in memory of the late Rev. Gertrude Tremblay to be used to publish the Swedenborgian supplement to the *Whole People of God* Sunday School program which many of our churches are using.

Please send your Mite box donations to our treasurer, Margaret Krause, by May 30, 1999, to be included in this year's collection.

Margaret's address is:

229 South Park Avenue
Box 264
Pretty Prairie, KS 67570

NEW SWEDENBORG PUBLISHER LAUNCHED

Karin Alfelt Childs, author of *The Temple of Wisdom*, and her husband, Jon, began a mail order business last November. They call it "Fountain Publishing; Art, Music, and Literature of a New Christianity." Their catalog features products inspired by uplifting concepts from the Bible and from the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. Two of the items carried in their catalog have been reviewed in the pages of *The Messenger*, namely *The Temple of Wisdom*, and the *Call of the Prophets CD*. For a free catalog, send your name and address to: Fountain Publishing, P.O. Box 80011, Rochester, MI 48308-0011, or over e-mail to FtnPublish@aol.com. ❖

Science and Religion are Coming to Terms

Lee Woofenden

In 1633, as Galileo Galilei rose from his knees after making the statement that the Church had required of him—that the Earth remains stationary and the sun orbits it—he is said to have muttered, “Still, it moves.”

Too bad Galileo is not alive today. Instead of putting him under house arrest for the remainder of his life, the Church might be calling him up and asking him to design and build a steeple.

That is exactly what has happened at the New Jerusalem Church (Swedenborgian) located on Central Square in Bridgewater, where I serve as pastor. On Sunday, December 8, church members and local residents celebrated a merging of church and commerce.

Representatives from Sprint PCS and the town of Bridgewater joined us for a dedication service and ribbon-cutting ceremony marking the completion of the church's brand new 98 foot steeple.

The new steeple is a replica of the original which graced the town's center for more than 120 years until it was destroyed by fire in July 1994. Now, thanks to

the need for antenna sites to serve the growing digital wireless telephone market, our church has become the latest sacred space to conceal within its spire an antenna devoted to secular purposes, sparing the town of Bridgewater the need for a new stand-alone steel tower.

This union of sacred and secular represents more than a marriage of convenience between churches looking for income to support their programs and wireless carriers looking for antenna sites that will help improve both their service and public image. In fact, these partnerships are the result of a fundamental shift that is taking place in the relationship between religion and science.

As both Galileo's experience and the modern debates about evolution versus creation attest, religion and science have more often been in conflict than in harmony over the years. Religion has seen science as a cock-sure youngster with no respect for its ideological elders. Science, meanwhile, has viewed religion as an obsolete old-timer, hopelessly out of touch with the new realities of our world. But teenagers do mature, and old dogs can learn new tricks.

Advances in science and technol-

Thoughtful scientists are now realizing that science alone is insufficient—that as a species, we must still wrestle with the moral, ethical and spiritual issues to which religion has addressed itself for millennia.

ogy have brought great improvements in our lifespan and lifestyle. Public health, computers, and communications are among the positive that come to mind. However, atom bombs, biological weapons, and environmental pollution have shown us that technology can destroy life just as readily as it can promote it.

Thoughtful scientists are now realizing that science alone is insufficient—that as a species, we must still wrestle with the moral, ethical and spiritual issues to which religion has addressed itself for millennia. Meanwhile, many religious leaders have begun to realize that religion's proper sphere is in the area of human social and spiritual life, not in passing judgment on physical and biological truth.

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), from whom the Swedenborgian Church gets much of its distinctiveness among Christian denominations, saw scientific knowledge as a foundation and doorway to spiritual wisdom. And, in turn, he saw spiritual wisdom as a guiding light in the proper use of science and technology.

Swedenborg, himself a scientist and engineer-turned-theologian, was an early voice in the trend toward rapprochement between religion and science that has gained momentum in recent years.

These new attitudes among both scientist and religious leaders are moving our society toward much



Photo: (l-r) Roderick Walsh, Bridgewater fire chief; James Nihan, Bridgewater Board of Selectmen; Lawrence Conant (cutting ribbon), church moderator; Rick Pearl, Sprint PCS representative; William Smith, Bridgewater Historical District Commission; and the Rev. Lee Woofenden, pastor. Ribbon cutting ceremony for the Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church steeple dedication on December 6, 1998.

(Continued on page 31)

A Christmas New Year Valentine from Muff Worden in Iceland

21 December 1998

Gledileg jól og gledilegt nýtt ár!!

It's been a year and about a month since I first came here in 1997, and though sometimes it all feels very new, I really have gotten used to many customs and landscapes in this time. That doesn't mean it isn't still special—it is—it just means I know how and where to look for some things now, and continue to be gleeful about that.

For instance, I have seen the dvergasteinn—the dwarfstone—a huge boulder shaped like a dwarf's house and sitting on the beach of the farm named for it in Seydisfjord, and have noted that the farm's cows seem to have a special feeling for that stone in particular. It is said to have sailed across the fjord under its own power sometime in the early 1800s just after the people moved the church, piece by piece, from the south side of the fjord (very near where the dvergasteinn had been) to the north, so that it could continue in what had apparently been a happy proximity.

It has been a great year in many ways, most of all because I continue to be involved in music fulltime and more, as teacher, accompanist, performer, and concert series producer. There is certainly joy in being able to work in one's own chosen field as much as one wants, and on the financial side to be paid adequately for it. I have been surrounded by wonderful people, many of whom have now become good friends. I have been able to drive around Iceland on the Ring Road, however fast a trip it had to be, and have enjoyed the variety in the land-and-seascapes as I noted quite a few places to be explored later in much more depth.

I mean—I'm driving in the brilliant sunlight of the middle of a summer night along the vast black sands of the southern coast, warm breezes coming off the ocean, car windows open, and right beside the road is a large lagoon full of icebergs of many sizes, calved from the big glacier an arm of which is **right there**, close by and in full sight!!! The only thing I missed was a polar bear sipping iced tea under a palm tree, but maybe I just didn't peer around the right rock.

Flying the hour's trip between Egilsstaðir and Reykjavík, both ways, the pilots detoured a little south in order to fly past, and to show us, the great column of black ash and white/grey steam rising from "volcanic activity" under Grimsvotn, the warm water lake that is under the huge Vatnajökull glacier. With each burst the column's shape changed, while the prevailing winds blew the top of it—some 10 km up—into a "cirrus anvil" like that of a thunderhead. Lots of amazing lightning inside the column—thunderstorms and lightning are very rare in this country, so one sees lightning mostly inside of volcanic eruptions like this. It was the first such eruptive activity I have seen, and quite intriguing.

As most of you probably heard in the course of the year, the winters are really quite mild here, name of country notwithstanding. What we do have more of is wind. Possibly

because there are no trees to slow it down, and because the landscape's temperatures vary so much, the wind can change direction and force very rapidly.

So while we haven't had much snow so far, it has been the wind force that has created road problems like blowing snow/poor visibility. By the same token, the wind that is blowing out of the southeast just now may well melt all the ice within a few hours, clearing the roads pretty well all the way to the inland valley I need to climb up into and through just past Reyðarfjörður.

On December 12 and 13 I was alto soloist in Bach's Christmas Oratorio, performances given by the Austurlands Kammerkor and orchestra under American bass-baritone Keith Reed's direction. It was a quasi-staged performance for which I designed the lighting (keeping the old theatrical skills going, you see) and played to sold-out houses both days, despite rather wild weather on Sunday. The next night I was singing Copland American song settings and soloing with the Reyðarfjörður church choir in a gospel number (doing my Aretha imitation, they said) in their Christmas concert, and the next two nights saw me involved with my students in Christmas concerts in Seydisfjord and then here in Stodvarfjord.

We have 45 students, including about 8 adults, in the music school for lessons, theory, groups and such, and Torvald, the head music teacher (he's Norwegian and married to an Icelander) also teaches tonmennt, or basic music, to the primary school students. The older kids go to the menntaskóli in Egilsstaðir, an hour and a half away, to board for the week and to finish in four more years what are the equivalents of our last two years of high school and first two years of college. After that, some elect to find work after graduation (and are qualified for a lot of jobs with that equivalent of an associate's degree), and most continue to university and possibly on to grad school after that. As I have said often, education is important here, and it is available either free or at very low cost to all students all the way to university graduation.

This school year I have a crazy schedule that has me driving almost as much as I always did at home in the US. Two days a week I teach here, two days in Seydisfjordur (two hours away on clear, dry roads), and one day in



Photo above: "The Pond" at the top of the Fjord; Bjólfur, without snow, in background.

(Continued on page 28)

A Christmas New Year Valentine from Muff Worden in Iceland

(Continued from page 27)

Reydarfjörður (one hour away if roads are clear and dry). I am also organist and choir director in Faskrudsfjörður, the next fjord north of here, only a half hour away, co-director of the Samkor Sudurfjarda (community choir from 4 fjords) and one of the directors/accompanists for a regional choir. So I am happily driving a Cherokee with 4-wheel drive, large studded tires, and a very conservative driver behind the wheel, especially on days when the road surface is chancy.

The problem with the schedule is only in the lack of time I have at home, ergo lack of time to do much prep or anything else, let alone to sleep. So this fall I have been mostly stressed and exhausted, especially after a very full summer of working hard to get the new concert series going in Seydisfjord (it was a bloomin' success, and we will do it again in '99) and no vacation. I was trying very hard to hold out till Christmas break, did manage to last, and have now caught up on some long-needed sleep and feel decidedly more human and even am beginning to relax a little.

I've made up my mind that I will be able to continue this madness through the school year till May, but that I will not do it again next year. Something will have to change, and probably that will mean moving back to Seydisfjord where it looks as if I will have fulltime work again (RAH!!), maybe only jobbing out to Reydarfjord one day a week, and continuing with the church in Faskrudsfj.

One of my blessings has been to have e-mail here, for ease of keeping in touch on a quick basis with family and friends at home and in the UK. I am grateful to so many of you who are in touch often or once in a while, and am delighted to have been found by several friends, both in e-mail and snailmail, from whom I have not heard in a long while. The quickness of e-mail allows for even short responses, so I just need to find a bit more time in order to do justice to the friends and family

without e-mail capabilities!

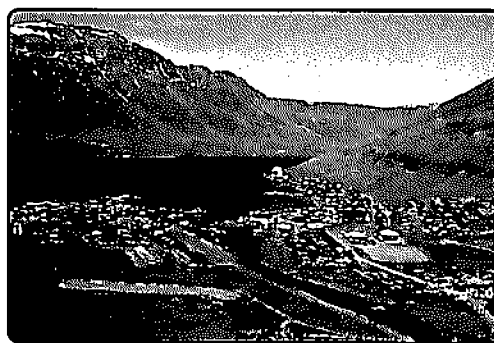
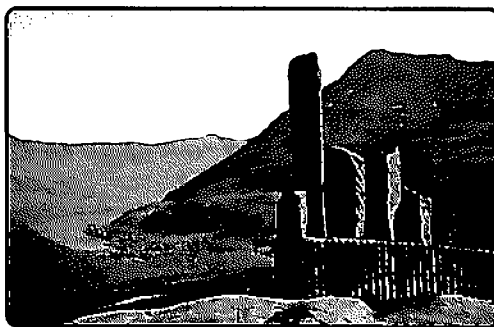
But do keep in touch! I love hearing from everyone and will eventually manage an answer, however brief.

Meanwhile, for those of you who are traveling, don't forget to check on Icelandair's 3-day stopover possibility, which might allow us to get together either here at this end or in Reykjavik. At least all phone calls within the country are local calls, so we can phone if all else fails! I have extra space and you're welcome to visit . . . hopefully not all at the same time, which might crowd things a tad . . . and to enjoy this amazing landscape too.

Well, time to put on the national winter costume - a galli (pronounced golly), which looks awfully much like a one-piece, waterproof, fleece-lined snowmobile suit - and to try the roads again. Funny how many dark blue shmoos there seem to be in Iceland in the winter, and I am one of them!

Sooooo - Merry Christmas to all, and a very happy and healthy 1999! May all your computers be Y2K-proofed, and all your hearts light and cheerful and healthy too. And do keep in touch—and if you have any other questions I haven't answered, just send an e-mail or a real letter.

Love and hugs,
Muff



Seydisfjörður

New address, etc.:

Muff Worden
Leynimerur 7,
755 Stöðvarfjörður, Iceland
Simi/Phone/and FAX: +354-475-8979
Farsimi/car phone +354-854-4078
e-mail: muff@eldhorn.is

Editor's Note: The above was excerpted from Muff's wonderfully newsy Christmas e-mail letter. We thought Messenger readers would appreciate catching up on her adventures!

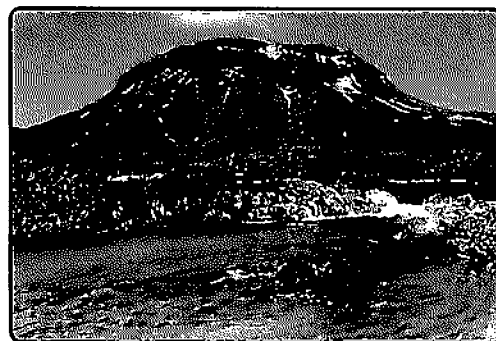


Photo above: "Herdubreid - "Broad Shoulders"—an extinct table volcano.

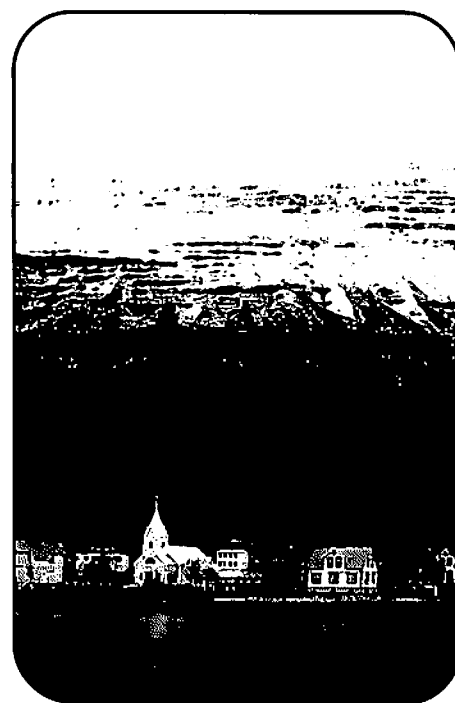
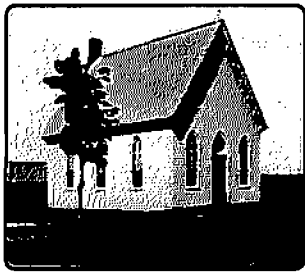


Photo above: "My" church—the only blue church in Iceland with Bjölfur, extinct volcano, in background (3000 + feet) (cloud at top is really snow blowing off the peak).

Almont Summer School 1899-1999

Barb Tourangeau



Yes, Almont summer school will be one hundred years old this summer.

At this time I'd like to give you a little of the history of the summer school and the people who started it. The following account is taken from the *Almont Cook Book* as written by Elinor Johnson and a history written by Helen Hamilton Finch in 1925.

The original New Church families that founded the Scotch Settlement near Almont, Michigan came from Glasgow and Paisley, Scotland in 1838. Worship and study meetings were held in homes until 1876 when the church was built. In 1899, the first summer school met for one week. The young people boarded at nearby homes, but the minister and his family slept in the church. The Rev. E. J. E. Schreck, the pastor of the Detroit church, started the camp after spending his summer vacation with the people of the area in their rural church. Schreck received little support from the people in the area, as they deemed it impracticable. Schreck, with the aid of Mrs. Brink of Capac, sent invitations to all the young people in the area. Of those who came, six young ladies were confirmed that year. The one-week camp was such a success they decided to hold it for two weeks in 1900.

Among the devoted New Church people who thus became known to Mr. Schreck was Mrs. John Allan, one of the original members of the Almont society, a pioneer of sturdy Scottish stock, a woman of unusual strength and sweetness of character, known in those hard early days for her wise head, kind heart, and good works. To ensure that her many grandchildren would have a place to learn the doctrines, Grandma Allan set up a fund to finance the building, and a summer school, with

money her children had given her to buy clothes. This fund resulted in the creation of the first dormitory building the following summer—a shell house, but affording shelter and making it possible for all who came to stay on the grounds. The upper story was for the women and girls; the lower the men and boys. All slept on the floor on mattresses improvised from neighboring haystacks. Cooking was done in one end of the horse shed on a gasoline stove.

In 1904, following the death of Grandma Allan, the family had a well dug as a memorial to her. That summer session, a large china loving cup was filled with fresh cool water and passed around at the last Sunday dinner table. This ceremony continued for some years. The loving cup is still at Almont.

In 1906, Robertson field, across the road from the church, was given to the assembly. This was a recreation area, but since more room was needed for campers, tents were set up for the boys. Next year the cottage was moved to Robertson field. A kitchen and dining room were added, and the first cook was hired. In 1912, the porch was added, and flag-raising was in the front yard of the cottage.

A roomy chancel was added to the church, and in 1912, a belfry and bell. In 1921, after the First World War, Old Rec was built with rooms upstairs and a recreation hall below. By the '30s there were dorms all around the field: little girls, big girls, boys, the new recreation hall, (all of the old rec now converted to rooms) and little cottages for the ministers.

During the Second World War it was necessary to close the camp. Due to the rationing of gas, a trip to Almont was out of the question. It resumed again in 1946.

In the '50s a little boys dorm was built and a craft cottage made from a

small cottage. Almont continued through the years, until in the '70s, rejuvenation began. A new winterized building housing a recreation hall, kitchen, and dormitory wings for boys and girls appeared on Robertson Field. The dining hall was remodeled, and Heritage Hall was added. With the purchase of additional land the church was turned to face camp and repositioned on a new foundation. It, too was winterized and refurbished. Almont could now be open for winter retreats.

In 1983 Brandau Bay was dedicated in the lake that was developed from the mining of gravel on our property. Now there was a lake for swimming, boating, and fishing at Almont.

After one hundred years Almont summer school is still going strong. Many of the descendants of our founding families are still coming to Almont. Of our present board of trustees four are members of the

founding families. Mary Lou Jerrett, Betsy Lau (vice-president), and Barb Tourangeau (president) are related to Grandma Allan, and our treasurer, B. J. Neuenfeldt, is the daughter of Elinor Johnson whose mother, Edith Hamilton Ferguson, was a member of the first confirmation class in 1899. The Hamilton family of Almont were very active in the early days of the summer school. Uncle

Jim Hamilton, as he was called by all, wrote the words to our flag song, "Fling to the Breeze," which we still sing today.

To celebrate our centennial, Almont is planning a two-week session this year from July 25 through August 8, 1999. For anyone wishing to serve on staff we have many positions available for full or half scholarship. For information contact our director, Rev. Renee Billings at the Royal Oak Swedenborgian Church, 1050 E. Eleven Mile Rd., Royal Oak, MI 48067. Phone 248-546-7583. Fax 248-546-7591.

Barbara (Penabaker) Tourangeau is a lifelong Swedenborgian and treasurer of the Royal Oak (Detroit) Swedenborgian Church. ❖



Almont New Church Assembly, Almont, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR

Praise for "A New Pentecost in a New Church"

Dear Editor,

In the December *Messenger* Eric Allison has written on the importance of prayer in our churches. His article pleases me very much. I am pleased also that our current SSR students for the ministry cannot "go through four years of school" without exposure to, and education in, prayer. In the first year they study Western Spirituality, with its many approaches to prayer and religious experience, and experience for themselves the support and guidance of a spiritual director of their own choosing. A strong emphasis in both of the worship courses is on a *prayerful*, as opposed to a *thinking about*, conducting of worship. I am very glad that this emphasis is being recognized in our education of ministers.

Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey
Gloucester, Massachusetts

OPINION

Kudos for Recent Messengers

Dear Ms. LeVan,

I would like to thank you and the writers you have published in the last several issues of *The Messenger* for excellent work and very interesting, thought-provoking material.

I was impressed with Eric Allison's two-part series on "the New Pentecost"¹ and very pleased with his emphasis, as well as the understanding he expressed for our New Church traditions. I also thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated Jim Lawrence's review of the film, "What Dreams May Come"² not only for his forthright

criticism of the production but for his (and Mona Conner's) explanation of some of the background to the work. I personally enjoyed the movie, even though I found the references to reincarnation purely gratuitous, and I was glad to read something about their context.

Then—among other things—there was that marvelous review of *A Scientist Explores Spirit*,³ a book I only recently discovered and have highly recommended. Now I will be making photocopies of Koke's review to insert in every copy of the book we sell at our book centre. Good stuff! Important, too!

Your publication is attractive, well-planned and proof-read, clean, informative and easy to read, but most importantly it has given me much in a very positive vein to think about lately. Thank you and thanks again to all your contributors.

Michael Gladish
Pastor, the Olivet Church, Toronto

- 1 November and December Messengers
- 2 December *Messenger*, (continuing "Dreams" commentary from November *Messenger*).
- 3 January *Messenger*

OPINION

And, More Commentary on "What Dreams May Come"

Dear Editor,

In addition to the reincarnation idea, the story is unSwedenborgian when it allows children who appear to have permanently entered heaven to lie (regarding their identity).

The story isn't internally consistent, in the sense that the one sure way of qualifying as a resident of hell is to be so self-indulgent that you despair. Yet Robin William's character seems to create for himself a heaven that is self-indulgent.

The story also fails to be Swedenborgian because it contains no sense of community. And adding this could have made the movie a lot more interesting. For example, it would have

been interesting to see exactly how several people might have failed to give the wife adequate support while she was still on Earth. Another example: suppose soon after he died Robin Williams found a heavenly community he liked? He'd have a job there helping people, perhaps children. Then when he hears that his wife is in hell, his decision to risk everything in order to try saving her would have more meaning. He'd risk losing more than just contact with his two Earthly children and experiences cavorting through one landscape after another.

Jody Perkins (*Bramel*),
San Francisco



SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH MEETING DATES

1999

- Feb. 8-14 Council of Ministers
EdFest
Tucson, Arizona
- Feb. 19-20 Urbana Trustees
Urbana, Ohio
- Mar. 7-9 C.O.M.
Executive Committee SSR,
Newton, Massachusetts
- Mar. 10-12 Committee on Admission
to the Ministry SSR,
Newton, Massachusetts
- Apr. 8-10 Retirement Committee
Florida
- Apr. 17-18 Wayfarers Chapel Board
Wayfarers Chapel,
California
- Apr. 23-24 SSR Board of Trustees
Newton, Massachusetts
- Apr. 25-27 East Coast Peer
Supervision Blairhaven,
Duxbury, Massachusetts
- May 1 Investment Committee
Temenos
- June 20-27 Pre-Convention and
Convention 1999
Pepperdine College
Malibu, California



DEATHS

Dennison—Melvin R. Dennison, 86, only son of Walter H. and Luella M. (Bartels) Dennison, entered the spiritual world November 18, 1998, in Chicago, Illinois. In his youth Melvin was one of a large group of young people who were confirmed into the faith of the New Church at the old Humboldt Park church; he was active there until World War II, when he joined the Army and served overseas. A gentle, quiet man, Melvin never married but maintained a loving and caring relationship with his family, making a home for his father until his passing in 1961. Melvin is survived by his three sisters: Ethel Rice of Massachusetts, Janet Lareen of Illinois and

Nancy Hendrix of Nevada; and four nieces, two nephews, and eight grand nephews and nieces.

Upton—Dagny R. Upton, 97, longtime member of the Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church in St. Paul, entered the spiritual world in her home at the Ebenezer Luther Hall in Minneapolis December 11, 1998. She was loved by many at her church and elsewhere, and was known for being a gentle and kind soul. Her resurrection service was conducted at the Virginia Street church December 18, 1998, the Rev. Kit Billings officiating. Dagny is survived by her sister, her husband Jim Bober, and five nieces.



CALL FOR NOMINEES

The Nominating Committee is seeking qualified candidates for the offices listed below. If you have any questions or suggestions, please notify your minister or a member of the nominating committee immediately. Thank you for your prayerful involvement in this important process!

Vice-president—elected for one-year term.

Recording Secretary—elected for one-year term.

Treasurer—elected for one-year term.

General Council—three persons elected to three-year terms. One minister and two lay persons.

Communications Support Unit (COMSU)—one elected for three-year term.

Education Support Unit (EDSU)—one elected for three-year term.

Information Management Support Unit (IMSU)—one elected for three-year term.

Ministries Support Unit (MINSU)—two elected for three-year terms.

Nominating Committee—two nominated for one elected five-year term.

Committee on Admission to the Ministry (CAM)—one minister and one lay person, each elected to one-year terms.

Board of Trustees, Swedenborg School of Religion (SSR)—two elected for three-year terms.

The Nominating Committee submits names for vacated unfulfilled terms on any/all of the above positions. Occasionally a person in a current position may be nominated for another position. In such an event the N/C should have a "back-up" nominee to account for any such position vacated by election to another support on board.

Sharon Billings, Chair
5602 Betty Lane
Millford, Ohio 46150
(513)-248-0636

Nominating Committee

Sharon Billings, Ohio
Rev. Robert McCluskey, New York
Barbara Tourangeau, Michigan
Mildred Laakko, Delaware
F. Robert Tafel, Massachusetts



Science and Religion are Coming to Terms

(Continued from page 26)

more than peaceful coexistence between science and religion. An atmosphere is now growing in which these two erstwhile opponents can complete a transition from bitter conflict through peaceful coexistence to fruitful cooperation.

The partnership between Sprint PCS and the New Jerusalem Church is a result of this new atmosphere of cooperation between religion and science. And the church's new steeple, which carries aloft its cargo of advanced communications technology, is a practical example of what this new cooperation can accomplish.

It only makes sense. Religion, in its better times, has always been in the business of connecting people to one another and to God.

Today, churches are helping high-tech companies connect people to each other through technology. And the support these companies give to the churches in return, in the form of structural improvements and rental payments, is helping the churches pursue their age-old mission of improving the moral and spiritual climate of society by reconnecting people to their spiritual roots.

Who says religion plus science equals conflict? More and more, religion plus science equals constructive connection, both material and spiritual.

And that is a trend we can all celebrate.

The Rev. Lee Woofenden is the pastor of the New Jerusalem Church in Bridgewater.

Editor's Note. Lee Woofenden's article is reprinted with author's permission from the weekly newspaper, *Boston Business Journal*. It appeared in the *Opinion* section the week of December 18-24.



BLOOPERS FROM CHURCH BULLETINS:



"Low Self-esteem Support Group will meet Thursday from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Please use the back door."

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.

Voluntary Simplicity Author to be Theme Speaker at Convention

Cecile Andrews, community educator and author of *The Circle of Simplicity: Return to the Good Life* (HarperCollins/March 12, 1997/ \$20.00) has been chosen as this year's convention theme speaker. Our convention theme is "In God's Hands." Ms. Andrews will address convention as well as lead the pre-convention theme workshops with Lorraine Sando and Cindy Gutfeldt.

Choosing to simplify her life and follow her passion, she abandoned her career as a college administrator and now lectures and gives workshops on "Voluntary Simplicity," "Finding Your Passion," and "Building Community." She also helps groups and organizations form Voluntary Simplicity study circles and writes a column for the *Seattle Times* called "Voluntary Simplicity." She has hosted a radio program called "The Simple Life" on the local National Public Radio station, and her work on simplicity circles has been featured in the PBS documentary "Escape from Affluenza."

VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY

"Voluntary Simplicity," Cecile Andrews states, "is an age-old philosophy that has been a constant theme in American history. It has once again captured people's imagination as we struggle to build lives of high fulfillment and low environmental impact. Our lifestyles of rushing too much, working too much, and consuming too much are killing people's spirit and ruining the planet."

"Voluntary Simplicity is not, as one young person thought, a life of 'self-deprivation.' It is a turning away from activities that have failed to deliver satisfaction and contentment—activities such as shopping and scrambling up the career ladder—to activities that bring true joy and meaning—creativity, community, and the celebration of daily life."

ABOUT THE BOOK

In *The Circle of Simplicity*, Cecile Andrews offers her thoughtful take on what has gone wrong, closely examining all that is troubling about our modern lives, and fashioning a pragmatic blueprint for change. Andrews' philosophical, down-to-earth suggestions for discovering ways to simplify day-to-day life—whether that means changing careers, cutting consumption, carrying less debt, improving the environment, or spending more time with family and friends—provide the first steps toward replacing a workaday routine with greater enjoyment and fulfillment.

Andrews' approach promotes the idea of simplicity circles, small groups of people who gather together to help each other simplify their lives. The idea for simplicity circles draws its inspiration from a number of sources, including Swedish and Danish educational models, Native American wisdom, and Quaker spiritual practices.

"Simplicity circles lead to both personal fulfillment and social change," Andrews asserts. "Change doesn't usually start from the top, and it isn't initiated by just one person. It is people, in their ordinary lives, who search for answers and make a difference . . . In examining their own lives, people discover their own wisdom and begin to transform themselves and the values of a society." ♦

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