

# THE MESSENGER

Published by the Swedenborgian Church of North America

December 2000

## Hope, Optimism and PRIDE

The Swedenborg School of Religion Board of Trustees met at Blairhaven Retreat Center in Duxbury, Massachusetts, October 27-29.

Plans are progressing on schedule for the proposed affiliation with the Pacific School of Religion. The goal is to be ready to accept students into the Swedenborgian House of Studies located on the PSR campus by fall 2001. Two students have assured the Board that they will apply for next fall.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEETINGS

- George Dole gave an overview of the history of SSR. This helped the entire Board, new and old members, appreciate the rich heritage of the School and the many changes that it has undergone.
- The Affiliation Committee reviewed the decision of the Board to pursue a partnership with PSR and how it ties in with the new vision for the School. The benefits for both institutions were outlined. The Board accepted the draft affiliation agreement with a few revisions. The final agreement will be reviewed in February 2001.
- Treasurer Sue Burns examined the finances and gave us initial projections for financial needs in conjunction with the affiliation.
- Wilma Wake explained how the Swedenborgian theological curriculum could fit together with the curriculum of PSR. The Curriculum committee foresees that this can be done within the current 3-year format of PSR. Our churches and centers would still be

partnering with the School as field education sites.

- The Development committee worked on the fund drive. The continued financial support of the churches, members, and friends is critical during this period of transition.
- The Faculty Development committee is working with potential faculty to meet the needs of the Swedenborgian House of Studies.
- Lee Woofenden joined the Board Friday evening to lead a philosophical discussion of "Knowledge, Wisdom and the Ministry."
- The Library and Archives committee met with librarian John Hawkins to discuss what needs to be done to prepare the library for the move.
- Bill McKinney, president of PSR, answered questions from our board members on Saturday morning. He assured everyone that the PSR faculty and board are excited about the proposed affiliation. This is a partnership, not a merger. Rachel Rivers and Kim Hinrichs, a recent graduate of PSR and member of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, gave a

presentation to the PSR Board and faculty in mid-October about Swedenborg and the Swedenborgian Church. Kim writes, "I left the event full of hope and optimism and PRIDE for our denomination."

- The Board approved the agreement with the Cambridge Society to their purchase of the chapel from SSR as outlined at the August 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. Further work is ongoing to get a signed purchase and sales agreement. I left the meetings with the same feelings of "hope, optimism, and pride" for the future of our school and our denomination. As we continue to move forward with the affiliation, we ask for your prayers and support.

Jane Siebert  
SSR Board Chair



*The Communications Support Unit & The Messenger editor wish you all a joy-filled Christmas Season.*



SSR Board, (L-R): Ron Brugler, Bob Leas, George Sinclair, Jr., Jane Siebert, Robert Reber, Sue Burns, John Titus, John Anthony, Robert McCluskey, Diana Kirven Stickney, Alan Thomsen, Barb Tourangeau, Jonathan Mitchell, Rachel Rivers. October 28, 2000 at Blairhaven in Duxbury, Massachusetts.

### In This Issue:

- ✧ Spirituality Program Begins at SNC
- ✧ Council Report
- ✧ Christmas Feature
- ✧ Similarities Between the Bahai Religion and Swedenborg
- ✧ Ceremony at Temenos

## President's Update

Ron Brugler

As is always the case when fall rolls around, much of my time is spent in meetings of various kinds. I realize that some of you may cringe at my saying that, thinking that we have too many such gatherings within our denomination. Even so, I want you to know that so far the meetings have been productive, and much has been accomplished that will be of benefit to the growth and well-being of our church. In fact, they have left me filled with a sense of optimism and hope!

In August, for example, I attended the joint session of representatives from the Swedenborg School of Religion and the Cambridge Society, along with Paul Martin as chair of the Council of Ministers. As the October *Messenger* article noted, these sessions led to a framework that may allow the Cambridge Society to purchase the Chapel. Part of this resolution calls for the establishment of what is now being referred to as "The Cambridge Alliance." In subsequent discussions, the Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit (FPRSU) recommended to General Council that we join this group in helping the purchase take place. General Council has expressed a desire to do so, but details for this cannot be worked out until the Purchase and Sale agreement is finalized. Even so, once this happens, a long and draining conflict will be nearing an end. Praise the Lord!

In September I took part in the meetings of the Ministries Support Unit (MINSU), Augmentation Fund Committee (AFC), FPRSU, and the Cabinet, as well as traveling to New York for the celebration of the Rev. Young Min Kim's installation at the Church of the Little Grain.

MINSU met at the National Church in Washington, DC. A full two and a half days were spent reviewing and evaluating the Common Assessment Forms from thirteen of our churches. These reviews led to the various grant recommendations for 2001, along with two recommendations for adjustments

in the 2000 budget. As is always the case, the evaluation utilized criteria that MINSU applies as equitably as they can. This criteria includes such areas as church growth and outreach, stewardship, program offerings, five-year plans, community services, and continuing education of both the minister and church leadership. I was especially pleased with the many programs being offered by our churches and shared the lists with General Council at our recent meeting. One member counted 50 new programs that are being offered by our churches and centers across North America!

It was also a very worthwhile experience for MINSU to meet at the National Church. Under the Rev. Jonathan Mitchell's leadership, this has become a very busy place! While we were there, three different NA groups, a Sufi dance group, yoga workshop, and a worship service by the Ethiopian Christian Church took place, as well as several wedding consultations. On Sunday morning, 39 people (only three were from MINSU) gathered for worship. (Compared with eight the last time I was there.)

The following week I participated in the meetings of the AFC, FPRSU, and the Cabinet. AFC's time was devoted to two primary items—reviewing the grant recommendations from MINSU and a request from SSR concerning a new financial aid program for our students. In reviewing the grant recommendations, AFC took special note of the fact that several of our ministers are paid extremely low salaries—an issue that must be addressed if we are to attract new clergy. The information that we have obtained from other denominations indicates that on average, many of our ministers receive anywhere from \$4,000 to \$7,000 less per year than their counterparts. Throughout the coming year we will be exploring ways to address this.

The new financial aid policy is needed since our students at Pacific School of Religion (PSR) will be eligible for loans from federal sources and thus will face tremendous debt loads upon graduation. SSR had requested that we develop a loan repayment program. AFC saw

both potential and problems with this, in that funding commitments would then be made from three to twelve years in the future. In discussing this, our preference is to develop a two-fold system of grants for students approved by the Committee on Admission to the Ministry (CAM), coupled with increases in our salary scale. In order to address both of these issues, the AFC will be holding a special meeting in February with representatives from SSR, CAM, and MINSU.

On October 1, I was at the Church of the Little Grain to install Young Min Kim as their minister. This was an incredibly wonderful experience, as I had never taken part in a bilingual service. The scripture readings, prayers, sermon and even hymns were offered in two languages. Over 50 people attended, which included seven from the New York Society. I was also able to meet with their church board on Saturday afternoon where we discussed their plans for the future and ways that MINSU might help them. Believe me when I say that we are blessed to have them as part of our church.

(Continued on page 166)

### 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).

December 2000  
Volume 221 No. 10  
Whole Number 5255

Typesetting & Layout  
Town & Country  
Press, Plymouth, IN

Patte LeVan, Editor

**Editorial Address:**

The Messenger  
P.O. Box 985  
Julian, CA 92036

TEL: (760) 765-2915  
FAX: (760) 765-0218

E-MAIL: messenger@jinet.com

#### Business & Subscription Address:

Central Office  
11 Highland Ave.  
Newtonville, MA 02460

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.

# Spirituality Program Begins at SNC

Wilma Wake

**T**he Swedenborg School of Religion is offering a certificate in spirituality this year in an off-campus location being hosted by the Spiritual Network Center in Merrimack, New Hampshire. The SNC is providing the space and has brought several students to SSR. Others have arrived through various recruiting efforts of SSR, so that there are now five new SSR students studying at this off-campus location.

The program is a new one offered by SSR for the first time. It was inspired, in part, by members of the Spiritual Network Center requesting education in an interfaith spirituality that would help them prepare to be spiritual directors.

The certificate requires four courses. One of them is available by correspondence and the other three are to be taken intensively on two weekends per course.

The program is designed for those who want to explore facilitating the spiritual growth of others or who want to deepen their own spiritual lives. It does not train spiritual directors, but rather helps people explore whether this is the right path for them and helps them develop many skills for the journey.

The first course is History of Western Mysticism, and the photo shows the five students hard at work during the first weekend, Oct. 22-23. They gained an understanding of mysticism through reading materials such as Wilson Van Dusen's *Beauty, Wonder, and the Mystical Mind* as well as writings by Evelyn Underhill and other authors on mysticism. For the second weekend in November, they will read Swedenborg's *Journal of Dreams* and Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle*. They will research a mystic

of their choice for a class report.

In January and February, the group will take Eastern Spirituality with Dorothea Harvey. In the spring, I will teach Pastoral Care with a focus on facilitating the spiritual journeys of others.

Students will also take either Ted Klein's correspondence course in Swedenborgian Concepts or take the new computer Distance Education course that Ted and George Dole are co-teaching on Introduction to Swedenborgian Concepts.

Our five new students are:

**Jami Boyle**, who is involved with the Spiritual Network Center and works as an interpreter of American Sign Language, using upper-case notation (often referred to as ASL). She is in an M.A. program at Andover Newton Theological School as well as the certificate program at SSR.

**Cynthia Jeffry**, who works with the young and the old. She is the mother of three and a leader of activities at the New Hampshire Odd Fellows Home. She has been involved with the Network Center, and is eager to learn and open to where Spirit calls. The Spirituality Certificate Program was an answer to her prayer.

**Brittany Lund**, who recently discovered Swedenborg through the Swedenborg Library and Book Room in Boston. She works in the communications field and wants to do programs on spirituality

and science. She hopes to get the M.A. in Swedenborgian Spirituality.

**Anne Suddy**, who is the new president of the Spiritual Network Center. She is a massage therapist. Anne joined the church this past spring, and hopes to enter the lay leader training program.

**Sarah Schwart**, who is a new member of the Royal Oak Swedenborgian Church. She is flying from Michigan to New Hampshire in order to be part of the spirituality certificate program. She is a librarian and is able offer many resources for obtaining books on mysticism.

The certificate program is an exciting opportunity for SSR, and having a location provided in New Hampshire is a great way to explore off-campus programs. For the SNC, it is an opportunity to get to know the school and church better and to have a vibrant program for the community.

Hopefully there can be other partnerships with SSR and local bodies to offer programs and courses in the future.

*The Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake is an associate professor at the Swedenborg School of Religion and author of several books on spirituality, two of which are available from the Swedenborg Foundation, (800) 355-3222; and J. Applesseed Co., (415) 346-6466 or email, jfl@dnai.com*



(L-R) Cynthia Jeffry, Jami Boyle, Sarah Schwart, Brittany Lund, Anne Suddy.

# Spiritual Network Center Undergoes Transformation

Anne Suddy

I am honored (humbled, actually) to have been elected the new board president of the Spiritual Network Center, and I would like to take this opportunity to update the readers of *The Messenger* about the Center's activities. Before I highlight what has been happening at the Spiritual Network Center (SNC), I want to thank the Rev. Nadine Cotton and Debra Nelson for their years of service as director and board president respectively. Although both have resigned their positions, we pray they will continue to participate in the Center. The Rev. Nadine Cotton left in January for a job in the social service sector.

In July we moved from Concord to Merrimack, New Hampshire. Program participation had declined and the Center needed some financial relief to determine the needs of the community and what programs were of interest. Our Concord phone number and post office box remain the same.

At our August Visionary and Planning Meeting for the Center, inspired by the board and hosted by Debbie Nelson, we reviewed our mission of facilitating the movement of Spirit/God in people's lives, renewed our affiliation with the Swedenborgian Church, elected a new Board of Trustees, and discussed our

plans for future programs. The members of our new Board of Trustees are: Anne Suddy, president; Mary Lamenzo, vice-president; Maryalice Fischer, treasurer; and Kim Dragotta, secretary. Some of our new programs include:

## Spiritual Direction Program

Our long-planned Spiritual Direction Program has begun. We are working with the Swedenborg School of Religion to make available a one-year Spirituality Certificate consisting of four courses: Western Mysticism, Eastern Spirituality, Swedenborgian Concepts, and Spiritual Facilitation. SSR is providing faculty and course credit, and we are providing the space in Merrimack and making the program available to our members. (See the article by Wilma Wake.)

## Spiritual Growth Through Song

Mary Lamenzo is organizing an exciting workshop in December featuring Shawna Carol, a renowned composer, singer, and recording artist. Shawna has developed a unique approach to facilitating spiritual growth through song and will help us connect to Source, individually and collectively.

## Celestial Circle

An opportunity for quiet, meditative Sunday morning worship and discussion will resume in December on a monthly basis with a variety of leaders.

## Annual Holistic Fair, April 28, 2001!

Thanks to Karyn Hannigan, our Fair will be held again at the Capitol Center for Performing Arts in Concord. It was a wonderful success last year with vendors and participants loving the energy of the Capitol Center and having a good time. Booth space and tickets are so reasonably priced that a wonderful networking and learning opportunity is created for all.

## Maine Association

Spiritual Network Center has been a member of the Maine Association since the summer of 1997. At this year's annual Association meeting, I was elected secretary of the Association and will involve SNC in assisting the Maine Association with its plans for hosting Convention 2002.

## This Is Your Center

My experience with all of this is very new. As we continue to move forward with new energy and vision, it is important that our hearts remain open to new ideas and experiences. Your support, prayers, suggestions, and ideas are most welcome. I would also like to thank the Swedenborgian Church for all its support.

Spiritual Network Center  
P.O. Box 3321  
Concord, NH. 03302  
(603) 224-3017

I can be reached directly at (603) 429-3461, or email [Annesuddy@aol.com](mailto:Annesuddy@aol.com)



## The Christmas Promise

Ron Brugler

I remember one morning years ago when Dad surprised my sister and me by telling us that he was going to take us to a movie that night. Believe me, that was a special treat because my father never did such things. All day long we anticipated the big event, growing more excited with each passing hour. We sat on our front porch steps from early afternoon on waiting for him to come home from work. We sat there for hours, but Dad never came.

Our lives are deeply influenced by promises that are fulfilled and promises that are broken. We know that broken

promises leave deep scars upon human hearts. But fortunately we also know that most promises are honored and fulfilled. They are a real blessing of life in which love is made real for us whenever someone is there for us, be it in friendship, support, or understanding. But a more significant truth lies in the fact that because we are recipients of promises fulfilled, we can become makers of promises to other people.

During Advent we remind ourselves of God's many promises to us. God will never desert us in times of need. God will never leave us alone. God will be with us always, and in all ways. As the prophet Isaiah proclaimed, "These are my promises, and I will keep them without

fail. I will lead you and will turn your darkness into light and make all rough roads smooth before you."

In our Lord's birth, we know that each of these promises were, are, and will always be fulfilled. And in celebrating this wonderful season, we make a promise to God in return—that through us, others will know that he has come again to all humanity. That's the real blessing of Christmas. May it be a promise that we make real in many, many ways.

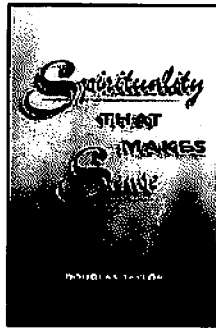
*The Rev. Ronald Brugler is denomination president and pastor at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario.*

Reprinted from the church's December 1997 newsletter, *The Tender*.

# Spirituality that Makes Sense

by Douglas Taylor  
Swedenborg Foundation, 2000  
188 pages, paper, \$14.95

Reviewed by James Lawrence



Doug Taylor is known for his inquirers' classes. A veteran minister in the General Church who has served pastorates around the world, and who is of late a resident of Bryn Athyn, his material for *Spirituality that Makes Sense* grew from repeated requests to capture in a book what he does so well in those classes: weaving Swedenborgian ideas into a picture that, well, makes sense.

That Swedenborgian theology simply "makes sense" is an equally commonplace utterance within General Convention by folks who have joined our churches. This assessment is almost always meant to contrast with the speaker's prior experience in Christian churches. At the San Francisco church, where I am co-pastor with the Rev. Dr. Rachel Rivers, we have taken in some 120 new members from 1990–2000, and we can attest that many intelligent and thirsty seekers are out there looking for a Christian perspective with depth and without superstition. So I was looking forward to this book, since I knew years ago, from Doug Taylor's first book, *Escape from Egypt*, of his ability to present spiritual ideas in a graspable way without dumbing-down their profundity.

His work in *Spirituality that Makes Sense*, however, will likely get a mixed reception by both clergy and laity in Convention. What Doug Taylor has set out to do he has done well, but this is not a book that will deliver what many might hope for from its title. I know of one Convention pastor who read the book first and then eagerly stocked up on it for his congregation, while yet another Convention minister complained to me that the book's title is misleading: after reading it she removed the stock from the church's display! Part of the problem with the title is that "spirituality" in fairly recent times has become associated with the more open-ended searching mode of educated Americans. Conservative Christians do not use the term very much, and even the word "spiritual" was frowned upon until recently as too closely associated with spiritualism.

A quick phone call to the publisher confirmed my suspicion. The original title submitted by the author was *The New Christianity*—a far better match for the thrust of the book (though the final title was early used in-house at the Swedenborg Foundation). But without a doubt, Doug Taylor provides an overview of Swedenborgian theology that many will experience as rather old-school. An audience within Convention certainly exists for this book (and I personally enjoy this sort of straight-forward theology), but the release of *Spirituality that Makes Sense* as an introductory book presents a perfect occasion for

noting the current diversity among Swedenborgians in selecting, presenting, and *interpreting* Swedenborgian theology.

"Doing theology" is like cooking: If we think of emphases as spices, then the same broad theology (a kitchen of foodstuffs) can be made to taste as distinctively different as Cajun and Kansan. (Some believe that the theology itself contains an explicit recipe, but this is yet another discussion!) As for spicing, Wilson Van Dusen has probably introduced more people to Swedenborg's ideas in the twentieth century than any other author. But you can read all of Van Dusen's books and not get the sense that the Trinity is the center of Swedenborgian thought, as it is for Taylor. Van Dusen instead centers upon mystical experience and ways of moving into the presence of the Divine. His selection of ideas from Swedenborg almost always draws upon the philosophical structure of reality, and he keeps seekers looking inward to experience the power of their own life within that structure—while scarcely ever mentioning Jesus.

Moving away from metaphysics into the realm of personal practice, Taylor presents the nuts and bolts of regeneration through the themes of evil, sin, and temptation, while Van Dusen selects dream work, meditation, and methods for mystical experience as focused practices. Many feel Van Dusen opened up a new avenue for presenting the gist of a *Swedenborgian spirituality*, and various permutations of this approach are now greatly favored in Convention. (Many of us, of course, feel that there is room on the plate for helpings from many cooking pots...)

Doug Taylor's approach follows largely the progression of ideas in Swedenborg's *True Christian Religion*. Part One covers the necessity of monotheism, the role of the incarnation, the nature of the spiritual world, and the need for a cosmic redemption two thousand years ago. The style is that of careful explanation with much buttressing of quotes from the Hebrew scriptures, the New Testament, and Swedenborg's theological works. It is a good read for those who want to clarify in their own thinking the basic logic of Swedenborg's high Christology.

Part Two concerns the practice of a believer which, according to the author, involves an understanding of how the trinitarian reality is operative in our daily lives; what faith is; what evil and sin are; the importance of overcoming temptations; and in general making efforts "as if of oneself."

An appendix on the devil will come off to some as an odd inclusion, yet it provides another sensible viewpoint on an ancient knotty theological doctrine. Likewise, there are some interesting omissions or played-down topics. The inner sense of the Bible is not really presented, nor is the sense of revelatory history and the epochal churches.

An unfortunate shortcoming of the book is its lack of an index. If you want to know what the author says about a topic, you are on your own with the chapter titles. But overall, with the first part laying out metaphysical terrain and the second part the human role on that canvas, *Spirituality that Makes Sense* does its job of providing a concise picture of a theological

(Continued on page 167)

# GENERAL COUNCIL REPORT

General Council met at Temenos October 19- 21. Reports were received from President Ron Brugler, Treasurer Larry Conant, Council of Ministers, Wayfarers Chapel, Swedenborg School of Religion Board, and others. General Council feels very positive about all the progress being made with the Pacific School of Religion.

Concerns of the Education Support Unit brought to Cabinet were discussed. EDSU felt their focus should be on youth and that mini-course planning takes too much of their time and energy. It was voted to appoint a committee to head up the 2001 Convention mini-courses and any pre or post convention conferences. The Convention youth program will remain under EDSU. This will be tried for this year and then reevaluated. A Youth Support Unit was discussed. A committee was appointed to explore this and possibly redefine the role of EDSU. A committee was also appointed to explore the need for

sponsorship of the Social Concerns Committee and the National Council of Churches concerns. It was voted to ask the Information Support Unit and the Communications Support Unit to meet and explore their possible consolidation.

A spring General Council meeting was decided upon, the main focus of the meeting being visioning. It was voted to hold this meeting in Washington, D.C. on March 16-18. The fall meeting was set for October 25 —28.

The National Church Trustees (General Council members are also the National Church trustees) met. The Rev. Jonathan Mitchell gave a report. General Council will meet with the Washington Church members sometime during the course of its meetings in March.

There was discussion about the need to amend the bylaw pertaining to Cabinet. It does not allow for the various chairs to send a voting representative. This will be referred to the amendments committee.

There is a demand note (called the Patterson Note) against the New York Association from many years ago that was never dealt with. It is not carried on our books anymore and no one can even remember anything about it. It was voted to forgive the New York Association note.

In other votes it was decided to send congratulations to the Rev. Andy Stinson on becoming an army chaplain, to adopt the theme "Convention 2001: A Swedenborgian Odyssey," and to accept the gracious invitation of Kitchener to host the 2004 Convention.

It was voted to make a grant to the LaPorte church in the event they are able to purchase the building next to them as planned, for renovations. It was

voted to make a grant to the Portland church for church growth and outreach as recommended by the Ministerial Support Unit.

It was decided to leave the President's job at ¾ time for now, but a cost of living raise and merit raise were budgeted. A cost of living raise was also voted for the Central Office manager.

There was lengthy discussion about the amount of time the Chair of the Council of Ministers has to spend in order to perform his duties and the possibility of making this position a salaried position rather than an honorarium. Cabinet felt it should be considered a 1/3-time position. There was concern that this idea had not gone through the Council of Ministers. It was voted to increase the honorarium for the first half of next year and to further study the question of making it a salaried position.

It was voted to request the Ministerial Support Unit to examine the process of transitions in the employment relationship between ministers and congregations/societies. And in conjunction with the Council of Ministers and the Placement Committee, to develop pro-active procedures and policies that may be used to facilitate healthy transitions in ministerial employment.

Fundraising efforts were discussed, and it was voted to request that the Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit explore producing a development plan including fundraising for youth.

There was lengthy discussion about hiring a youth minister for the denomination. The Education Support Unit had developed a tentative job description, which was discussed. Several recommendations for changes will be sent back to the support unit, and the position of youth minister was funded in the 2001 budget.

And finally, last but not least, the 2001 budget was approved.

*Gloria Toot  
Recording Secretary*



*The photo above is of Cabinet members. The Cabinet met prior to General Council, September 22-24 at Almont.*

*Back row, from left: Ron Brugler, president; Paul Martin, chair of Council of Ministers; Chris Laitner, vice-president; Barb Halle, MINSU. Center row: Joy Fleming Zimmer, chair of EDSU; Gloria Toot, secretary; Larry Conant, treasurer; Martha Bauer, Central Office manager. Left front: Susanna Lawson-Buschmann, executive secretary of COMSU.*

## Christmas Comes in Many Guises...

*Editor's Note: This story is a true first-person account from a mother about her family as they ate dinner on Christmas Day in a small restaurant many miles from their home. It was forwarded to me from Fos Freeman last December, with the statement that although the magazine that originally printed the piece is no longer in business, the publisher has given permission to reprint the following shortened version:*

### It Takes a Child

We were the only family with children in the restaurant. I sat Erik in a high chair and noticed everyone was quietly eating and talking. Suddenly, Erik squealed with glee and said, "Hi, there." He pounded his fat baby hands on the high chair tray. His eyes were wide with excitement and his mouth was bared in a toothless grin. He wriggled and giggled with merriment.

I looked around and saw the source of his merriment. It was a man with a tattered rag of a coat; dirty, greasy and worn. His pants were baggy with a zipper at half-mast and his toes poked out of would-be shoes. His shirt was dirty and his hair was uncombed and unwashed. His whiskers were too short to be called a beard and his nose was so varicose it looked like a road map.

We were too far from him to smell, but I was sure he smelled. His hands waved and flapped on loose wrists. "Hi, there, baby; hi there, big boy...I see ya, buster," the man said to Erik.

My husband and I exchanged looks—what do we do? Erik continued to laugh and answer, "Hi, hi there."

Everyone in the restaurant noticed and looked at us and then at the man. The old geezer was creating a nuisance with my beautiful baby. Our meal came and the man began shouting from across the room, "Do ya know patty cake? Do you know peek-a-boo? Hey, look, he knows peek-a-boo!"

Nobody thought the old man was cute. He was obviously drunk. My husband and I were embarrassed. We ate in silence, except for Erik, who was running through his repertoire for the admiring skid-row bum, who in turn reciprocated with his cute comments.

We finally got through the meal and headed for the door. My husband went to pay the check and told me to meet him in the parking lot. The old man sat poised between me and the door. "Lord, just let me out of here before he speaks to me or Erik," I prayed.

As I drew closer to the man, I turned my back trying to sidestep him and avoid any air he might be breathing. As I did, Erik leaned over my arm, reaching with both arms in a baby's "pick-me-up" position. Before I could stop him, Erik had propelled himself from my arms to the man's. Suddenly a very old smelly man and a very young baby consummated their love relationship. Erik in an act of total trust, love, and submission laid his tiny head upon the man's ragged shoulder. The man's eyes closed, and I saw tears hover beneath his lashes. His aged hands full of grime, pain, and hard labor—gently, so gently, cradled my baby's bottom and stroked his back.

No two beings have ever loved so deeply for so short a time. I stood awestruck. The old man rocked and cradled Erik in his arms for a moment, and then his eyes opened and set

squarely on mine. He said in a firm, commanding voice, "You take care of this baby."

Somehow I managed, "I will," from a throat that contained a stone. He pried Erik from his chest—unwillingly, longingly, as though he were in pain. I received my baby, and the man said, "God bless you, ma'am, you've given me my Christmas gift."

I said nothing more than a muttered thanks. With Erik in my arms, I ran for the car. My husband was wondering why I was crying and holding Erik so tightly, and why I was saying, "My God, my God, forgive me."

I had just witnessed Christ's love shown through the innocence of a tiny child who saw no sin, who made no judgment, a child who saw a soul, and a mother who saw a suit of clothes. I was a Christian who was blind, holding a child who was not. I felt it was God asking—"Are you willing to share your son for a moment?"—when He shared His for all eternity. The ragged old man, unwittingly, had reminded me, "To enter the Kingdom of God, we must become as little children."



*Editor's Note: The following experience is a chaplain's report from Jeanne Spears, submitted to The Messenger by the Rev. Sue Turley, too late for Christmas last year, so I saved it. Sue's Living Waters HIV Ministry sponsors Jeanne at Laguna Honda Hospital. The Rev. Turley, a chaplain and director of Living Waters, teaches CPE courses at St. Mary's Hospital. Living Waters is a ministry of the Swedenborgian Church in San Francisco.*

### They Are My Teachers...

Jeanne Spears

As Christmas approached, there was a festive air on the ward. Decorations, a Christmas tree, and lots of activities by the activities director. But underneath the gaiety there was an unacknowledged sadness, for some patients knew that might be the last holiday season they would be alive, and others felt cut off, abandoned by family, friends, and lovers.

About three weeks prior to Christmas I walked onto the floor and said Hi to one of the patients. He immediately cried and said, "I want to talk to you." As I listened to him expressing his loneliness and sadness, I asked him if the holidays were adding to his feelings of despair. He responded that they definitely were. Then I was able to say to him that I felt that Christmas was an "inside job," that at some point we decide, consciously or unconsciously, to have the Christmas spirit. I asked him if he ever had the "perfect Christmas" since being a grownup. He responded, "Not really." I said, "We are going to have Christmas here—it will be a different Christmas with a different family, but it will be Christmas, for Christmas is an idea, a feeling—a sharing in love."

There are more volunteers around Christmas, a Christmas show, Christmas carolers, but on ward 04 it's really each other, staff included, that they depend on. Patients on 04 tend not to mingle with the rest of the hospital, due to their age and the nature of their illness. Everyone on the floor is HIV positive or has AIDS.

I asked our wonderful youth group to make stockings and

*(Continued on page 160)*



## They Are My Teachers... (Continued from page 159)


got donations from See's, Ghirardelli's, and Mother's Cookies. I distributed 30 stockings to the patients and four pounds of See's candy to the staff. I think it was one of the things that made it more festive, as their allowance for treats is small. But I feel the personal visit of a chaplain on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve was the real gift.

As this ministry is ongoing and a deep rapport and trust is established with each patient, I am pleased to report that we are making a difference in their lives. They find assurance that I arrive every Friday afternoon and that if they need to talk I am there. We talk together, laugh together, and pray together. I feel I have earned their trust; they tell me that love, friendship and family have been lost in the choice of heroin, that lovers and family have discarded them because of AIDS, that their children are in foster homes because of addictions. I know they see me as a non-judgmental person representing a non-judgmental God.

They are my teachers. I see them try to express their individuality in an institutional environment, sometimes by acting angry and tough. I see them hope and pray for every last moment they can have on this earth, even in this environment, for life is precious. I see their denial of their role in their situation, but I also see the start some of them got—sometimes homes with love, and sometimes a series of homes with no love at all.

I have realized that when truly strong one must be kind, and each week I am reminded of my strength.

*The Rev. Jeanne Spears is a Church of Religious Science minister. She writes, "After spending over 25 years in the health field as an x-ray technologist, instructor, and radiation protection specialist, I was stricken with a severe case of rheumatoid arthritis. After months of extreme disability, not being able to brush my hair, teeth or basic functions without splints and pain, I realized I needed to go on permanent disability and focus on regaining as much of my mobility as possible. So with regret I left my position with the health department, and in 1994 I relocated to San Francisco to be near my daughter and live in my favorite city in the world.*

*Since then I have been fortunate to have excellent medical care and surgery. I have learned to pace my life, rejoice in the good days and relax into the flares, which are a fact of chronic disease. But the gift it gave me was the compassion and understanding that is so essential in my ministry. Since I could no longer work, I turned my attention to finishing my ministerial program and was able to channel my energy in a new way... life is good.* 



Jeanne with a young resident, Christmas '99, Laguna Honda Hospital.

## Similarities between the Bahai Religion and Swedenborg

John Wilson

It would seem to me that there are a number of parallels between Christian teaching and Bahai teaching, and more particularly and interestingly between Bahai teachings and the writings of Swedenborg. Of course there are significant differences. Perhaps none more so than in the view of the deity of Christ. The Bahais see Christ as one of a number of great revelators—prophets such as Moses and Mohammed.

For the Bahais, Baha'u'llah was the last in the line of prophets chosen by God as special messengers bringing new teachings and confirming the heart of the teachings from previous revelators.

If one believes that there is a kind of evolutionary process at work in the great religions of the world and that each has its purpose and particular relevance to its own age, with the Bahais being founded the closest to our own age, then it follows that it should be carefully examined and evaluated. I have used almost exclusively the excellent book, *Baha'u'llah and the New Era* by Dr. J. E. Esslemont as my source. This book, written in the early part of this century, is directed to Westerners and, in particular, to Christians.

At this point it would be appropriate to give a brief summary of the history of the Bahais. Just as John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ, so did Baha'u'llah have a forerunner, who was given the title of The Bab. It was in the early 19th century that The Bab began to preach in his native Persia. Shortly after, Baha'u'llah, a young nobleman of Persia, declared that he was the chosen one whose task it was to proclaim a new revelation from God. Baha'u'llah said he was the latest of the prophets, successor to Christ, Moses, Buddha, Zoroaster, Vishna.

He gradually enunciated his teachings and as a result suffered, along with his followers, much persecution, suffering, and hardship. He was imprisoned many times; indeed most of his adult life was spent in prison or under house arrest.

He taught the need for religious unity, the emancipation of women, the need for world peace through a world council, education for all, and the need for love of one's fellow man.

He declared that all the teachings of the great religions could be divided into truths that were eternal and truths which were of particular relevance at that time of proclamation but may be superseded by a new revelation or indeed no longer have validity. This is the first similarity. Swedenborg wrote that all religions were from God, and the revelations had special relevance to the people of the particular era. On the other hand, Swedenborg was adamant that Christianity represented the pinnacle of truth.

Abul Baha (Baha'u'llah's son)—called the Branch—was

(Continued on page 161)



## Similarities between the Bahai Religion and Swedenborg

(Continued from page 160)

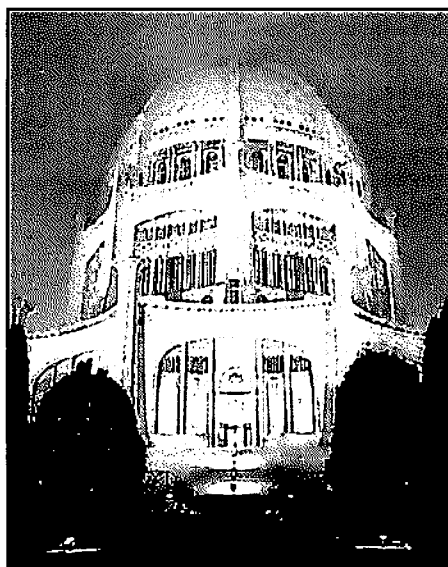
given by his father special responsibility for further elucidating the Bahai teachings and ensuring that the new religion would not fall prey to schisms as so many other religions have done. Abul Baha was educated in England and traveled on lecture tours both in Europe and the USA. Like his father, he wrote extensively, and his lectures and interviews were often recorded.

He said: "Each divine revelation is divided into two parts. The first part is essential and belongs to the eternal world. It is the exposition of divine truths and essential principles. It is the expression of the love of God. This is one in all religions, unchangeable and immutable. The second part is not eternal; it deals with the practical life, transactions and business, and changes according to the evolution of man and the requirements of the time of each prophet. For example, during the Mosaic period the hand of a person was cut off as punishment for a small theft; there was a law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but as these laws were not expedient in Christ's day, these were abrogated. Likewise divorce had become so universal that there remained no fixed laws of marriage, therefore His Holiness Christ forbade divorce."

As an aside, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that in both cases we have access to the actual writings, and in the case of the Baha'u'llah and his son Abul, not only their writings but others who recorded their sayings particularly in Abul's trips to the UK and America.

The Bahais believe, just as Swedenborg stated in many places in his writings, that there is a oneness between the physical and spiritual worlds. It is possible to be "in heaven or in hell" in this world. The spiritual world is very real, and the Bahais encourage us to develop spiritual faculties. This is not to say that we should tamper with psychic forces and just as Swedenborg does; there is a warning against this.

As we know, Swedenborg has given us



*The Bahai House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, famed for its architecture and gardens as well as for its welcoming spirit felt by thousands of visitors year-round. (Courtesy Bahai Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois, Copyright 1984 by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States.)*

a very detailed account of the heavens and hell. The Bahais teach that heaven and hell are not in fact like the portrayal given by some of the older religions. These descriptions should be regarded as symbolic in the same way as the Garden of Eden is symbolic. Heaven is not a place which is subject to time and space but is a state of perfection. Hell is a state of imperfection. Heaven is harmony with God's will and with our fellows while Hell is being out of harmony. The joys of heaven are spiritual joys, and hell is deprivation of these joys.

Death brings to us a fuller and freer life.

Abul Baha said, "The mysteries of which man is heedless in this earthly world will be discovered in the heavenly world, and there he will be informed of the secrets of truth . . . and know thou for a certainty that in the divine worlds the spiritual beloved ones will recognise each other and will seek union with each other, but a spiritual union. . . The difference and distinction between men will naturally become realized after their departure from this mortal world. But this distinction is not in respect to space but in respect to soul and conscience." All this of course is very Swedenborgian.

For the Bahais there is no such thing as positive evil. The argument is that if God is infinite then there can be no other power in opposition. Evil then is lack of goodness, a bad man is a man whose goodness is undeveloped. Although it is an interesting concept, I doubt that it could ever fit comfortably with Swedenborg's view of spiritual domains.

Something more akin to Swedenborg would be the Bahais' teaching that there can be finally no fundamental disharmony between religion and truth in Science. The Bahais have no difficulty with the extreme age of the universe and with evolution of the species and of man. Although they do deny that there is an evolutionary link between man and the apes. They regard the Genesis story as symbolic and not to be taken literally.

When we make a study like this between two spiritual philosophies which use different language and ideas but express similar basic truths, we find just how much the various faiths around the world have in common. I find comfort that in spite of diversity, gems of fundamental truth can be found in all traditions.

*John Wilson is a lay church officer and the Rev. Julian Duckworth's church assistant in the Sydney, Australia, New Church Society. His father is a Baptist minister. John has a broad and practical interest in doctrine, and was attracted to Swedenborg's writings about 20 years ago, according to the Rev. Duckworth, "especially attracted by the New Church teaching on Ruling Love."*

*Reprinted from The New Age, The Official Journal of the New Church in Australia, Spring 1999.*



### Church Calendar Dates

Feb. 25-Mar. 1	Edfest Carefree, Arizona
Mar. 8-11	MINSU Deland, Florida
Apr. 5-8	EDSU Temenos
May 16-17	COMSU Temenos
June 24-July 1	Convention 2001 St. Paul, Minnesota

The Communications Support Unit is sponsoring a unique scholarship opportunity for a writer 18 years or older who is interested in writing for the Swedenborgian Church to attend "WRITING FROM WITHIN," a three-day workshop at Temenos Retreat Center. All expenses paid, including round trip travel to West Chester, Pennsylvania. The workshop takes place April 27-29, 2001.

If you are interested in writing for our denomination in any capacity—*Messenger* articles, pamphlets, books, sermons, we encourage you to apply for this three-day weekend intensive to learn the Metcalf-Simon Method of Proprioceptive Writing with expert Mary Bok, in the peaceful setting that Temenos provides.

## WRITER'S SCHOLARSHIP OFFERED BY COMSU

Write to:

COMSU, c/o Patte LeVan,  
Editor, *The Messenger*  
P.O. Box 985  
Julian, CA 92036.

Or send email to Patte LeVan at  
messenger@jinet.com.

In several brief paragraphs tell us:

A. why you want to take the workshop

B. what you are interested in writing for our denomination

C. what specific subjects, if any, you feel you may have useful expertise or background in (psychology, health, creativity, experiential subjects, mystical subjects, etc.) that you can relate to Swedenborgian spirituality

D. what topics or themes you would most like to see *J. Appleseed* and *The Messenger* address in future publications.

The deadline for our receipt of your entry is March 10, 2001.

We thank you in advance for your interest in writing, and we invite your input and suggestions about publication in our Church.



## Temenos Retreat House Dedication Ceremony

Members of General Council joined the Swedenborgian Church at Temenos, and the staff, board members, and friends of Temenos on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2000, to dedicate the rooms of the Retreat House in the names of the generous donors who made the building a reality. Before the ceremony, the Rev. Susannah Currie, Temenos' minister and director, pinned white carnations on all those attending in appreciation of their support for the Temenos Retreat Center ministry.

During the ceremony, board chair John Smailer read the mission statement and purpose of the Temenos Retreat Center, and the Rev. Ron Brugler, denomination president, offered a prayer for the intentions of this unique ministry of the Swedenborgian Church. The Swedenborgian Church at Temenos' choir offered the anthem, *Surely the Lord is in This Place* and candles were lit for each room as Ruth Tafel, church president, read the dedications. All donations, large and small, were acknowledged in the Rev. Susannah Currie's benediction. The beautiful plaques, with names written in calligraphy, will be hung in the rooms to let all who visit know the names of the people who came together to create the "sacred space" that is the Temenos Retreat House.

### TEMENOS ROOM DEDICATIONS

The main conference room is a gift of George H. and Jean E. Munn.

The grand piano in the main meeting room is a gift of Helene Boericke and her nieces, Betty Boericke Imhoff and Rai Boericke Barnitz.

The deck was lovingly given and constructed by the families of Perry and Ernest Martin and Carol Skinner Lawson to support the Temenos vision that here you may gaze on the stars.

The library, now the Los Angeles Church Room, is decorated with paintings by Manon Washburn, artist and member of the Los Angeles Society.

The downstairs meeting room is a gift of the members of the First' New Jerusalem Society of Philadelphia.

The office is a gift of John Harms and family in memory of Janet Harms.

Room 1 is a gift of Wickham and Alice Skinner who contributed this room in appreciation of the vision and dedication of Erni & Perry Martin.

Room 2 is a gift of Robin and Susan Tafel.

Room 3 is a gift of August and Mary Ebel.



*Chris Laitner, denomination vice-president and trustee of the National Church, lighting the candle for room 8, a gift of the Washington D.C. church. The Rev. Susannah Currie (L) and Ruth Tafel, look on.*

Room 4 is a gift of Betty Boericke Imhoff.

Room 5 is a gift of members of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches.

Room 6 is a gift of Peter and Gloria Toot.

Room 7 is a gift in memory of Stewart E. Poole.

Room 8 is a gift of The Washington Society of the New Jerusalem.



# Social Justice

**Editor's Note:** The following Social Justice column originated recently in the newsletter of the Portland, Maine Swedenborgian Church, with contributions each month by various members as they feel moved to share their viewpoints. The introduction states: "The Social Justice column is not presented as the opinion of the Swedenborgian Church as a whole, but rather a way for us to share issues with one another which link to our faith and are important to us as individuals." The article below was submitted by the Rev. Kitsy Winthrop, the Portland church's interim minister.

## Seed Chain Weakening

**Alert!**

Beware the WTO and seed terminator technology.

Canadian former CBC television producer Richard C. Bocking has given permission to quote the following excerpts from his recent address at the First Unitarian Church of Victoria:

"In recent years we have come to realize that the most important, sustaining aspect of our earth is its biodiversity, the vast number of living species that have evolved, each fitting into its own niche. Each has a distinctive genetic code, ensuring that it will accurately reproduce itself. That tiny miracle, a seed, is the mechanism used by plants to pass characteristics from generation to generation.

Thousands of varieties of useful plants exist because farmers and gardeners have grown them, produced seeds, selected the best, and grown them again. They traded seeds with one

another, always searching for those that grow best on their particular patch of land. This chain of seed-saving nourishes 6 billion of us here on earth today; but the chain is weakening, and there are indications that it could break.

Since the beginning of this century, about 75 percent of the worldwide genetic diversity of agricultural crops has been lost. The erosion of genetic treasure has been especially rapid in the western world as farming developed into large-scale industrial enterprises, and as ownership of seed companies became concentrated into fewer and fewer hands. Now, the loss of species is becoming even more rapid with the advent of a new threat: genetic engineering.

This is not, as the biotech industry insists, merely a continuation and refinement of plant and animal breeding as we have been doing it for thousands of years. This is new and utterly different, because genetic engineering crosses the species line, forcing a mating that nature would never allow, and for good reason. The barrier between species is a critical factor in creating and maintaining the marvelous biodiversity of our world, with plants and animals suited precisely to their environments.

The seed, as we have seen, is the ultimate symbol of life. But the holy grail of the biotechnology industry is a seed that will grow only once; the seeds on the plant it produces will be sterile, dead. The point of the terminator technology, as it is called by its foes, is deliberately to break the ancient chain of seed saving and growing, to force food producers of the world to return each year for seed to the six gigantic corporations that own and control the biotechnology industry and most of the world's larger seed companies.

This is a particularly shocking example of abandonment of moral standards in a large and growing industry. But it is just one ethical issue that genetic engineering requires us to confront. For this is a Pandora's box containing issues ranging from human and environmental health to political science to the scientific method and the future of our universities; from the family farm to global corporations, trade treaties, and the economy of nations."

## Ask Swedenborg

Dear Mr. Swedenborg:..

*Are Christians the only people being "saved"?*

**Answer:** In our theology, the simple answer is, No. The root issue within spiritual salvation is a growth of living goodness (or love) within a person, involving a love of God, others, and one's self. What we love most is what draws us toward Heaven or Hell. There are many sources of truthful ideas that foster this orientation toward life. The Old and New Testaments are one as well as many others.

Swedenborg felt that to know, connect deeply with and pray to, the Divine-Human presence of God we call the Christ, is the most powerful way to meet with the Divine's love and truth in life. Yet the Lord's love and wisdom flow into and impact life everywhere. In fact, Swedenborg learned from the angels that non-Christian faiths are truly needed, since earthly Christianity sometimes engages in spiritual and doctrinal corruption, and because certain cultures and mindsets aren't very

open to the Lord as Jesus Christ.

Swedenborg learned that "the Lord's kingdom on earth consists of all those who are in good, who though scattered over the whole earth, are still one, and as members constitute one body." (*Arcana Coelestia* 2853.2) Also, the "means of salvation have been provided for everyone; Heaven is such that all who live well, of whatever religion, have a place there." "Those born outside the church are people equally with those born within it, they are from the same heavenly origin, and are equally living and immortal souls; he who acknowledges God and lives rightly becomes spiritual in his degree and is saved..." (*Divine Providence* 330.4-5)

*Reprinted from Correspondences, the Sept./Oct. 2000 Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church newsletter, St. Paul, Minnesota, the Rev. Kit Billings, pastor.*

*If you have a theological question that you would like addressed, please send your questions to the Virginia St. church at 170 Virginia Street, St. Paul, MN 55102 or by e-mail to: st.paulswedch@juno.com*



**1999 First Week:**

August 8-14: HOLY DISASTERS

The Original Disaster:  
"Eden to the Flood"

*Rev. Lee Woofenden*

Numbers 16: "Korah,  
Dathan and Abiram"

*Rev. Dr. Bill Woofenden*

Deuteronomy: "Destruction of  
the Temple"

*Rev. Dr. George Dole*

Lamentations and

Isaiah 40-55: "The Exile"

*Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey*

Daniel 5: "The Writing on the  
Wall"

*Rev. Dr. Bill Woofenden*

Jonah: "Nineveh: The  
Disaster that Wasn't"

*Rev. Lee Woofenden*

"Judas's Betrayal"

*Rev. Dr. George Dole*

"The Crucifixion"

*Rev. Susannah Currie*

Revelation 16: "The Seven  
Bowls of Wrath"

*Rev. Ken Turley*

A Panel of the Presenters

Q. and A. Time

**Second Week:**

August 15-22: WHO IS JESUS  
CHRIST?: THE DOCTRINE OF THE  
LORD

"Why the Incarnation? Basics  
of God on Earth"

*Rev. Lee Woofenden*

"Divinity: The Great Debate"

*Rev. Dr. George Dole*

"The Lord, Jesus Christ  
Superstar"

*Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake*

"A Personal Relationship,"  
part 1

*Rev. Gladys Wheaton*

A Personal Relationship,"  
part 2

*Rev. Gladys Wheaton*

"The Human Side of Jesus"

*Rev. Dr. George Dole*

"The Lord, The Redeemer"

*Rev. Dr. Bill Woofenden*

"The Son of Man, Healing  
Teacher"

*Rev. Ken Turley*

Colossians 2:9: "The Fullness  
of the Godhead"

*Rev. Dr. Bill Woofenden*

A Panel of the Presenters

Q. and A. Time

**2000 First Week:**

August 6-12: BIBLICAL  
COVENANTS OLD AND NEW

Exodus 24:7: "The Covenant  
Code"

*Rev. Dr. Bill Woofenden*

"The Changing Covenant"

*Rev. Dr. George Dole*

"Covenant Renewal"

*Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey*

Luke 10:25-27: "Pietism as  
a Renewal Movement"

*Rev. David Eller*

"The Blood of the Covenant"

*Rev. Lee Woofenden*

Jeremiah 31:31: "The New  
Covenant"

*Rev. Dr. Bill Woofenden*

Acts 4:32-5:2: "The New  
Covenant Community"

*Rev. David Eller*

"Signing on the Dotted Line"

*Rev. Lee Woofenden*

"Reading the Fine Print"

*Rev. Dr. George Dole*

A Panel of the Presenters

**Second Week:**

August 13-19: PROPRIUM AND  
THE LIFE OF FAITH  
(i.e. ego/id/the "dear self" in  
relation to God)

"Proprium—You can't live with  
it. You can't live without it."

*Rev. Lee Woofenden*

"Proprium—A Necessary  
Illusion of Self-Guidance,"  
part 1

*Rev. Dr. Bill Woofenden*

"Proprium Felt and Proprium  
Thought"

*Rev. Dr. George Dole*

"The Revolving Door of  
Reason"

*Rev. Robert McCluskey*

"Cooperation with God and a  
Sense of Self"

*Rev. Dr. Ted Klein*

"Partnership as a Way of  
Fooling Proprium"

*Dr. Stephen Larson*

"Proprium—A Necessary  
Illusion of Self Guidance,"  
Part 2

*Rev. Dr. Bill Woofenden*

"Loving the Self as the Lord  
Loves"

*Rev. Gladys Wheaton*

"Our Own Temple"

*Rev. Dr. George Dole*

A Panel of the Presenters

**All 20 tapes (two weeks) cost \$34, including shipping. (One week's tapes cost \$17.)  
If you are ordering all tapes (40) for 1999 and 2000, cost is \$68. Send check to:  
Fryeburg New Church, 4 Oxford St., Fryeburg, ME 04037, (207) 935-3413**

## SHOP ONLINE AT STONEHOUSE



**Beginning December 7, 2000:**

Shop for Swedenborgian books online! [www.stonehouse.org](http://www.stonehouse.org)

The Stonehouse Bookstore & Growth Center's new website offers a large selection of Emanuel Swedenborg's popular books plus thousands of other books on spirituality, health and healing, the creative spirit, and more, plus a selection of delightful gifts for those you love, or for yourself.

Phone: 425-889-5106

Fax: 425-889-8638

## TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I was thrilled to read Lorraine Sando's article about SSR and Cambridge finally reaching an agreement

(October 2000 *Messenger*). It seems that they all opened their hearts and minds to influx from the Lord and let their differences be subordinated to what they all share in common. It was a wonderful healing.

I realize this would be a huge step, but would it not be wonderful if we could accomplish something like this between Convention and the General Church? They are after all both based on New Church doctrines.

I know there are several U.S. cities where people of General Convention worship separately from General Church people and often are not even aware of their presence. This doesn't seem to be very brotherly. Personally, I would like to see us arrive at a place where we could say, "These are the conservatives and we are the liberals, but we belong to one church."

Paul Roger Hammond  
Los Osos, California

(Letters continued on page 166)

**CORRECTION:** The email address for Mona Conner published in the November *Messenger* at the end of her article, "The Art of the New Church Display Case", p. 142, was incorrect. The correct address is monadiane@earthlink.net.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

## THE EAST COAST YOUTH RETREAT

Blairhaven Conference Center

Duxbury, Mass. ~ October 6-9, 2000

Joyous shrieks and running hugs greeted me as I stepped out of the car in the light shining from the retreat center. My bed was already saved by friends who had arrived earlier. Thus began one of the weekends I spend all year waiting eagerly for.

This Columbus Day weekend, there were only twelve retreat goers, including the three counselors. Despite the small numbers, the retreat was one of the best yet. Our group created and led a worship service in church on Sunday morning, following our topic "Creative Prayer and Worship." It included many aspects of many different types of cultures including a Native American chant and dance.

Between lectures and preparing for the service, our group went to the movies, went bowling and played football and cards. I encourage others to join the fun and come along on Memorial Day weekend next spring. It is a wonderful time that lifts your spirits and motivates you to greet your life with compassion and joy.

Emily Turley  
8 Elm Street  
Fryeburg, Maine 04037  
Lakeemet@landmarknet.net



## Full-Time Ministerial Position Available

The Board of The Church of the Holy City in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada is seeking applications for a full-time minister. Edmonton is located in north central Alberta on the beautiful river valley of the North Saskatchewan River. It is the legislative capital of Alberta with a population of over 700,000.

We are looking for an energetic, creative, and outgoing, full-time minister to help maintain our church society and encourage it to grow. The applicant must be able to provide Swedenborgian-based services; interact with a range of age groups and religious/spiritual interests; work with the existing program outline, modifying where needed or possible; using Swedenborgian teachings to encourage the growth of the Swedenborgian church; commit to approximately 40 hours each week with 2 days off during the week; motivate members and be innovative and enthusiastic.

### The Applicant:

- An ordained minister with training and education through S.S.R.
- Skills to include pastoral counseling and organizational qualities
- Open, friendly, and able to work well with a wide range of personalities and spiritual interests
- Family oriented: we are hoping for someone to come and grow with us and our families as well as able to reach out and encourage others to join the church
- Able to work with and for the Edmonton Church Board
- Able to make a commitment of at least 3 years to ensure the growth of the church in Edmonton.
- Own transportation required.

Benefits—Salary to be negotiated per the guidelines of Convention. Pension contributions through General Convention and vacation with pay.

Please forward all replies and/or inquiries to:

The Ministerial Committee  
The Church of the Holy City—Swedenborgian  
9119—128 A Ave.  
Edmonton, AB Canada T5E 0J6

Or email: Attn: Doreen Van Rooijen,  
rooijenj@telusplanet.net



## TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

I would like to make a

correction to information printed in the October *Messenger*. I am not president of Transitions. I am simply the head of our PR (Public Relations) Department. We do not hold elections. Last fall when we revamped Transitions we came up with offices or departments that we thought would help make Transitions more efficient and noticeable. People volunteered for these offices or departments. So in a way—we are ALL president of Transitions. It's a different way of doing things, but then that is what makes us unique.

Thank you,

Jenn Tafel  
Transitions PR  
so\_calmeetsboston@as-i

## Christmas 2000

### NOW AVAILABLE ON CD

Christmas 2000, the soundtrack of the Turleys' latest musical play for Sunday Schools, is now available.

The new CD presents a contemporary setting of traditional carols by the Rev. Ken Turley, featuring Laurie Turley and the Little Choir of Angels:

1. *The Rap Of Gabe*, a hip-hop message from the head angel
2. *Angels We Have Heard On High*, a French Carol as ethereal folk music
3. *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* Hebrew melody, 9th century lyrics as gospel blues
4. *Angels We Have Heard On High*, to the beat of a different drummer
5. *Away In A Manger*, 15th century German song as country gospel


6. *Joy To The World* Handel's famous carol as a southern rock classic

7. *O How Shall I Keep My Christmas*, a Swedenborgian carol as a folk rock message song

8-14. Instrumental versions of the above (for a Christmas mood or as accompaniment to the play)

CD alone.....\$15.00  
Script of Play.....10.00  
Postage and Handling.....3.00

Send check made out to Rev. Ken Turley, 8 Elm Street, Fryeburg, ME 04037

*Christmas 2000* is the first of three CDs of original music to come from Ken's recent sabbatical, a project sponsored by the Communications Support Unit (COMSU) and the Fryeburg New Church. 

## President's Update

(Continued from page 154)

I was also able to spend some time on October 17<sup>th</sup> in Yarmouth Port, on Cape Cod, with Walter Chapin. I toured the church and parsonage, was updated on the restoration work that is taking place, and became familiar with the New Church Preservation Society that is raising funds for that work. I was very favorably impressed with Walter's efforts in preserving this gem of a building, and hope that in the future we can work together to establish a viable outreach ministry in that community. Even without a formal ministry, over 1,000 people have toured the building to learn about the restoration work that is underway. These visitors are greeted with a very professional and informative display on the history of the Swedenborgian presence on Cape Cod. The potential for growth and outreach is great, thanks to Walter's efforts.

Next followed the meetings of General Council, which were held in the beautiful surroundings of Temenos. These meetings were incredibly positive and productive. The major task we faced was the finalization of our 2001

budget. However, this year we first devoted considerable time to reviewing the state of our church, the work of our five support units, and the goals and direction we want for the denomination. This process led to approving funds for the new youth ministry position, exploring the possible formation of a Youth Support Unit and the possible merger of the Communications and Information Management Support Units, funding for the "Scholar in Residence" program at Urbana University in honor of Swedenborg's birthday, and many other actions that will serve our church well.

The General Council meetings ended with our attending the dedication service for the rooms in the main Temenos building. The spirit of that service touched all of us in a very special way. I was also very favorably impressed with the success of this new ministry. The Rev. Susannah Currie and their board are doing an excellent job in making Temenos a truly "sacred place."

My calendar notes that over the next few months I will be attending several more meetings. These include a convention planning meeting in St. Paul, two meetings of the SSR Board, a regular and

special meeting of the Wayfarers Chapel Board, the Investment Committee, COM Executive Committee, and MINSU. I will also be taking part in installation services for Andy Stinson and Jun-chol Lee, and visiting our congregations in Ft. Myers, Florida; Fryeburg, Maine; Boston, and Edmonton.

From all that I have done since our June convention, and as I look forward to the coming year, my heart is filled with an overwhelming sense of optimism for our church. We have talked about growth for years. Now that talk is turning into the walk. And if we continue this trend, that walk will soon become a run! To all of you, including both our clergy and laity, who are working so very hard to work with the Lord in these important ventures, Thank You! Your dedication and service is a wonderful thing to witness.

P.S. During my travels many members have inquired about my training regimen in preparation for my bout with Jessie Ventura in St. Paul during the upcoming convention. I am in training. I am focusing on running.....away!

*Merry Christmas to All!*

The Bruiser



## BAPTISMS

**Chilgren**—Colin Michael Chilgren, son of Edward and Kimberly Chilgren, was baptized into the Christian faith September 24, 2000, at the New York New Church, the Rev. Robert McCluskey officiating.

**Foster**—Claire Ann Foster, infant daughter of Theresa and David Foster, was baptized into the Christian faith October 22, 2000, at the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, the Rev. Dr. Rachel Rivers officiating.

## CONFIRMATIONS

**Board, Boxell, Hall, James, Rigney, Severson**—Todd Board, Kris Boxell, Tim Boxell, Margrit Hall, Gerry James, Dan Rigney, and Bill Severson were confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church and received into Christian fellowship as members of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church October 22, 2000, the Rev. Drs. James Lawrence and Rachel Rivers officiating.

**Mitchell, Rienstra**—Anne Mitchell and Sherilyn Rienstra were confirmed into the faith and life of the Swedenborgian Church October 29, 2000, at the New Jerusalem Church in Bridgewater, Mass. the Rev. Lee Woofenden officiating.

## Marriages

**Bridgham and McDonald**—Lisa Bridgham, member of the Portland, Maine, Swedenborgian Church, and Neil McDonald, were united in marriage in a beautiful outdoor ceremony May 20, 2000, the Rev. Jade Angelica (UUA) officiating. The McDonalds will be moving to Cape Elizabeth, Maine, soon.

**King and Hardman**—Marie King and Richard Hardman, members of the Portland, Maine, Swedenborgian Church, were united in marriage May 6, 2000, at the Portland Swedenborgian Church, the Rev. Susannah Currie officiating.

**Logan and Humphrey**—Liz Logan and Douglas Humphrey, friends of the New York New Church, were united in Marriage July 4, 2000, at the New York Swedenborgian Church, the Rev. Robert McCluskey officiating.


**Reichardt and Tucker**—Amy Noelle Reichardt and Joseph Patrick Tucker were united in marriage April 8, 2000, at the Cambridge Church of the New Jerusalem, the Rev. Dr. George Dole officiating.

## DEATHS

**Hanson**—Laurence Clarion Hanson, age 95, longtime member of the Vancouver, British Columbia New Church Society,

entered the spiritual world at the hospital in Vancouver April 18, 2000. He is survived by their son, Bradley, in Kanata, Ontario. Mr. Hanson requested no services.

**Miller**—Irva Muriel (Lemee) Miller, 86, longtime active member of the New Jerusalem Church in Bridgewater, Mass., entered the spiritual world October 22, 2000, after a brief illness. A memorial service was held October 25 at the Bridgewater church, The Rev. Lee Woofenden officiating. Mrs. Miller was a daughter of the late Clarence A.R. and Alice (Pye) Lemee. She was preceded in death by her husband Gordon W. Miller, her son Wayne G. Lovell, a grandson Gregg Lovell, and her sister Greta Johnston. She leaves two brothers: Albert and Scott Lemee; a daughter and two sons of her late husband Gordon Miller: Marjorie Howard, Bruce Miller, and Donald Miller, and four grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews.

**Reddedopp**—Esther Christine Reddekopp, 77, entered the spiritual world September 11, 2000, in a nursing home in Medicine Hat, Alberta. Esther and her late husband, Norman Reddekopp, had lived for some years in Kelowna, B.C., where they were active with the New Church group. Esther is survived by three grandchildren: Kelly and Kathy Reddedopp in Calgary, and Jeff Shorthouse in Medicine Hat. 

## *Spirituality that Makes Sense*

(Continued from page 157)

system that can be overwhelming with its detail. I found many sections to be helpful. While on vacation in France, I carried the book into Chartres Cathedral and had an opportunity to meditate upon its pages for about half an hour in front of the main altar in a section that is reserved for worship and prayer (as opposed to cameras and guidebooks). While there I read through a discussion of the Ten Commandments as the paradigm for how we can become complicit with evil and fall into sinful behavior. Bob Kirven's teaching during my days at the Swedenborg School of Religion on shunning evil has always stayed with me. The Latin word for "shunning" evil, in Swedenborg's well-known phrase, is really better translated as "fleeing." "Fleeing" seemed more imagaic than "shunning," but not until

reading Taylor's pages in Chartres did I really move deeper in my understanding. Taylor's words helped me to fall into a deep contemplation of the inner nature of resisting evils, and suddenly, I recalled the spine-chilling horror I have felt on numerous occasions upon realizing how deeply I had been countenancing evil in my heart regarding some matter. *And I got it:* letting that horror register becomes a fleeing from the evil and is indeed a most effective "shunning" of it.

The devotional reader will find many places of such potential enlightenment in Doug Taylor's *Spirituality that Makes Sense*. Just don't be misled by the title. This is an excellent read if you want to take another crack at grasping precisely why Swedenborg's ambitious cosmology and Christology relate to your personal life—or if you want to share your faith with someone whose

experience (either positive or negative) has been rooted in traditional Christianity.

*The Rev. Dr. James F. Lawrence is co-pastor at the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church and manager of J. Appleseed & Co., our denomination's book publisher.*



## NOTICE

The Swedenborg School of Religion is trying to contact Ms. Jacquelyn Menefee. If anyone has her address or other contact information, please let Stephanie know at 617/244-0504, or aa@ssr.edu, or c/o SSR, 1320 Centre St. Suite 403, Newton Centre, MA 02459.

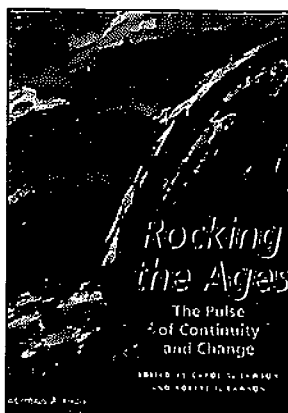
*Many thanks!*



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.

## Rocking the Ages: The Pulse of Continuity and Change

New Chrysalis Reader Anthology



Edited by Carol S. Lawson and Robert F. Lawson 192 pp \$13.95, Chrysalis Reader 7. Swedenborg Foundation, October 2000.

"We are individuals living in an age, and living out a series of ages within our own lifetimes. The points at which these multiple

ages connect or veer asunder are mapping points in our attempts to partake of our humanity, and these mapping points can be traced in relationships, in art, endeavors we pursue. Each of the contributions in this volume of the Chrysalis Reader arises out of the tension between ages, between our own era and other eras, other times. Each piece here shows us as human beings 'rocking the ages'—pushing and pulling against the limitations of one age, seeking the freedom of another; retilling,, refertilizing, remaking ourselves in the mirror of eternity, as Swedenborg would tell us we will one day remake ourselves in the world beyond."

—Stuart Shotwell, excerpt from the foreword

Sixth in a series of richly illustrated anthologies of original essays, fiction, and poetry for the spiritual seeker, this Chrysalis Reader will spark thoughts about aging, art, cowboys, love, weddings, and Elvis. Through contemporary stories, essays,

and poems, *Rocking the Ages* explores challenges presented by coming of age, the courage required in growing old, different paths in seeking the divine, conflicts between generations, the bond of people and nature, and ways to use the past—reminiscing, reassessing, and predicting. For all of us on the journey to greater spiritual awareness, *Rocking the Ages* is a diverse collection of wisdom with the power to delight, surprise, and inspire.

We see twentieth-century suburbs crowd out a man's love for open spaces and horses. A photographer and poet bring to life the moment an ancient pictograph was created. A journalist recounts what could have been the interview of her lifetime—an interview she turned down. A British scholar recalls his accidental run-ins with T.S. Eliot. A daughter faces the irony of placing her mother, a retired nursing home worker, in a nursing home. A writer looks for a balance between honoring her grandmother, a holocaust survivor, and coming to terms with an eating disorder. A labyrinth builder makes her point with a backyard path mown in a meadow. This anthology also explores coming of age on both an intimate and grand scale. Throughout, our sense of human connection is immersed in the dual-layered fabric of permanence and flux..Traveling between the worlds of continuity and change, this original, literary collection surprises, delights, and inspires us with its well-rounded wisdom.

Carol S. Lawson, senior editor of the journal *Chrysalis* from 1986 to 1994, is now the series editor of the *Chrysalis Reader*, and works in Dillwyn, Virginia. Robert Lawson is a former editor for Simon & Schuster and Macmillan Computer Publishing. Currently the communications and development director for the Greenwood School in Putney, Vermont, Lawson is also a published poet, freelance editor, and writing consultant.

To order *Rocking the Ages*, please call (800) 355-3222.



The Swedenborgian Church  
of North America  
*The Messenger*  
11 Highland Ave.  
Newtonville, MA 02460

Forwarding Address  
Correction Requested

Non-profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Plymouth, IN  
Permit No. 105