



International Summer Camp in England Part 2: SCYL Teens Reflect

From July 26 through August 3, fourteen teens traveled with the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL) to Purley Chase Centre, the (Swedenborgian) General Conference retreat center, in Atherstone, England, to join with Swedenborgian teens in the International Summer Camp (ISC). On the way, they spent a day exploring London. Last month the Messenger shared the reflections of the adult leaders on the trip. Following, some of the teens share their reflections.

Molly

My trip to England I will never forget, and one particular moment that sticks in my mind is our first day, touring London. We started the day walking around the city and taking pictures of amazing architecture towering over us.

After taking in the city, we went into a place called the dungeon. We walked through the dungeon listening to actors tell stories of London's past. My favorite story was the fictional tale of Sweeney Todd. It was very spooky, but amazing to see all the visual effects



Gil, Dac, Ivy, and Holly outside Buckingham Palace

they created with lighting and sound.

After about two hours, we left the dungeon and went on a boat ride under the Tower Bridge. We had been awake for quite a while by this time, so it wasn't a big surprise when a lot of people fell asleep on the ride (whoops!). The boat ride definitely helped everyone to relax before we were onto the next adventure.

After stepping off the boat, we decided to look around a small market area. Food stands were all set up, each one selling something special. I decided to buy a smoothie, and it was delicious.

Our time in London had come to an end. We picked up our carry-ons from a small store where they kept them safe for us and we began our two hour train ride to Purley Chase. Although the trip was exhausting, I had an amazing time and would do it all over again if I had the chance!

Jack (Dac)

The SCYL England trip to London and Purley Chase was an experience I will never forget. Being in London

with the people I'm closest to was beyond incredible. My favorite part definitely was going to the London Dun-

geon and learning about the history of London while also being scared out of my mind.

When we moved on to Purley Chase, I felt instantly welcomed and at home amongst the British teens and staff. I really enjoyed learning all their songs

and games and inside jokes while also sharing the numerous Almont traditions. My favorite part of Purley Chase was the evening activities. They were all unique, and the staff did an excel-



Youth director Kurt Fekete samples some strawberries at an Atherstone Market



Blindfolded teens search for gems in the Crystal Maze

lent job creating the fun and getting everyone involved. I made a bunch of lifelong friends there and I will miss

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The Editor's Desk



Why Can't We All Just Get Along?

“Why can't we all just get along?” were the words of Rodney King after being severely beaten during an arrest in Los Angeles, in 1991.

This issue of *the Messenger* brings to our attention an issue of political, cultural, and religious contention with which we continue to wrestle.

Rev. Jim Lawrence examines some of the early history of the Swedenborgian Church and slavery, focussing on Rev. Chauncey Giles as the first American Swedenborgian to passionately call for the freedom and education of African-Americans (page 140). Rev. Lawrence reveals that Rev. Giles confronted the passivity of the Church and its leaders in the face of slavery as a religious and spiritual issue.

Rev. Dave Fekete reports and reflects on the National Council of Churches' Christian Unity Gathering,

which built on a theme of the first arrival, in 1619, of enslaved Africans in Virginia, a part of what would become the United States 157 years later (page 142).

The Statement of the Swedenborgian Church on Discrimination, which was adopted as a resolution at the 2019 Annual Convention, addresses the misuse of the sacred texts in our tradition to promote discriminatory interpretations or any hateful intent (page 150). This statement applies to all discrimination, not just racism. It is the official stance of the Swedenborgian Church on that subject.

We have come a long way from the slavery of African-Americans on our shores, begun in 1619, continuing through 1863, and ending only through rending the fabric of the nation and ending countless lives through a civil war. But, even though we have progressed far from slavery, the nation

continues to grapple with the terrible effects of centuries of enslavement and continued widespread discrimination.

The difficulties of dealing with racism, within ourselves and within society, continue. Human brains are hard-wired to simplify the onslaught of environmental stimuli by simplifying, and one way we simplify is by generalizing, by, for instance, regarding people as groups distinguished by physical characteristics, language, or culture, rather than as individuals. It is incumbent upon us as Christians and as Swedenborgians to do better.

—Herb Ziegler

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Correction

On page 131 of the October *Messenger*, a quotation from *Secrets of Heaven* credits Lisa Hyatt Cooper as the translator. The wording is actually John Elliott's, and the proper section number is 8455, not 8445.

To subscribe to *the Messenger* online, scan this image with a QR reader on your cell phone or tablet.



Church Calendar

- **November 8–9:** General Council Fall Meeting, Cenacle Retreat Center, Chicago
- **December 27–30:** SCYL (ages 13–18) Winter Retreat, Almont New Church Assembly, Almont, MI
- **March, 2020:** Palestine and Israel Trip, CSS January term
- **August 28–31, 2020:** Gathering Leaves, Purley Chase, England

the Messenger

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The opinions and views expressed are those of the authors, not of *the Messenger*, the Communication Support Unit, or the Swedenborgian Church.

Letter from the President



*The Year of the Lord: 2019–20
—The Primacy of Spirit*

Dear Friends and Members of the Swedenborgian Church,

Five years ago, we began the Licensed Pastor Program to offer training to church leaders that were willing to fill ministerial needs in churches without ordained ministers. The License Pastor planning group was led by Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence. Now, after 5 years we are implementing a full review of the program by an ad hoc committee.



Rev. Siebert and the Virginia Street Church congregation laying hands on Pastor Gordon Meyer in his installation ceremony

The Licensed Pastor (LP) Program has been successful with eight consecrated licensed pastors serving throughout the country and four in training for their first module. Over the years, the program has evolved to meet the various needs of

ministries. Five of the LPs are leading ministries as the sole pastor: Paul Deming, Church of the Open Word, St Louis; Karen Feil, Swedenborgian Library and Spiritual Growth Center, Chicago; Christine Campbell, Temenos Retreat Center, West Chester, Pennsylvania; Gordon Meyer,



Rev. Siebert and Rev. Thom Mueller with Pastor Tassy Farwell following Pastor Farwell's installation at the Hillside Community Church

Virginia Street Church, St. Paul, Minnesota; and Lorraine Kardash, Portland New Church, Portland, Maine.

The need for support for part-time ordained ministers has broadened the program for LPs partnering with ordained ministers: Helen Barler, Swedenborgian Church, Puget Sound, Washington; Linda Calendar, New Church of the Southwest Desert, Silver City, New Mexico; and Tassy Farwell, Hillside Community Church, El Cerrito, California.

The training is overseen by the Committee On Admission Into the Ministry (CAM) in conjunction with the Center for Swedenborgian Studies (CSS), our seminary in Berkeley. This is the same for our ordained ministers. Rev. Dr. George Dole has been instrumental in offering helpful, accessible courses online along with Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence. The LP students are brought together with

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Chauncey Giles's Slow Conversion to His Searing Anti-Slavery Stance

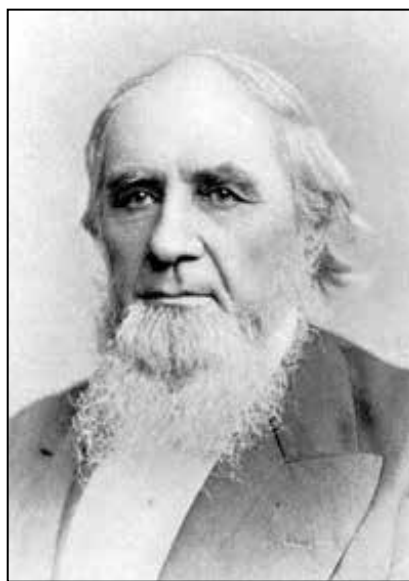
BY JIM LAWRENCE

Though commonly implied on American Swedenborgian websites that Carl Bernard Wadström's visionary Swedenborgian crusade against the slave trade in English and French colonies inspired and informed the fight against slavery on U.S. soil by American Swedenborgians, an examination of Swedenborgian discourse in Antebellum America, in sermons, pamphlets, articles, reports, and personal correspondence up through the end of the American Civil War, in 1865, exposes another picture. The accurate Swedenborgian record that can be discerned in tracts, pamphlets, articles, sermons, reports, and personal correspondence portrays a conservative religious movement in relation to the slavery question during all three American anti-slavery phases spanning the late Enlightenment through the end of the Civil War.

Swedenborg was not a social reformer theologian in the modern sense and did not address specific social issues in his expansive theological corpus. This extends to the institution of slavery, even though it was prominent in the London where he spent thirteen years working on his spiritual books. There is no direct line of theological application in his writings to have guided his adherents on the slavery issue, and so, as a result, a postmodern retrospective argues that Swedenborgians in England, South America, and North America shaped a variety of arguments from Swedenborg's abstract theology quite influenced by their local context to extents they did not realize.

The preponderance of American Swedenborgians clustered in a general passivity with the result that Swedenborgians occupied a cultural

backseat in the conversation. Most Swedenborgians did not believe society could be reformed without a profound spiritual revolution. Political actions would be futile, and some went further in a common and far-reaching interpretation of divine providence as somehow having all matters under firm control until the New Jerusalem can properly descend. As a result, there were only a few strong anti-slavery Swedenborgians visible before the war, and a few more appeared after the war



Chauncey Giles

began. Some Swedenborgians worked in anti-slavery societies and in the Underground Railroad, but the evidence suggests they were a small minority in the Church. A few published anti-slavery appeals but were generally slow and late compared to major American Christian denominations.

A powerful story of a "slow conversion" involves Rev. Chauncey Giles (1813–1893), one of the most popular speakers and writers for the New Church (the Swedenborgian Church) in the nineteenth century.

The Cincinnati pastor had been one of many key Swedenborgian leaders who avoided the slavery question until the war, and who could be described as soft pro-slavery until after the war commenced. In fact, he confided to a prominent Swedenborgian in the South, William Holcombe, in personal correspondence in January, 1861, with war looming, that he was not anti-slavery and did not vote for Lincoln. Yet, as his letter to the Chicago Temple pastor and friend of Abraham Lincoln J. R. Hibbard (1815–1894) a year into the war reveals, he came to deeply regret both his own slowness to the cause as well as his church's. In 1863, he published what stands forth today as the single most lacerating anti-slavery publication written by an American Swedenborgian. The twenty-four-page pamphlet is an elaboration of a public speech Giles delivered on April 30, 1863, to honor the national fast called for by U.S. President Lincoln in Proclamation 97, "Appointing a Day of National Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer." In tough, uncompromising language, Giles excoriates the treatment of Black Africans by citizens of a country supposedly founded upon egalitarian ideals:

Both in principle and in all its effects, Slavery is directly hostile to the principles of a free government. Fire and water, cold and heat, light and darkness, are not more squarely antagonistic to each other than true republicanism and slavery; and it is a remarkable fact in the history of human progress, that these two principles so hostile to each other should have been planted side by side in the same nation.

The great evil of slavery is not that one man is enriched by another,

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Wayfarers Board Visits the Garden Church



The Garden Church in San Pedro

Members serving on the Board of Directors of the Wayfarers Chapel in Rancho Palos Verde, California, took time from their meeting to visit the Garden Church, a ministry of the Swedenborgian Church in San Pedro, California.

The following prayer was delivered at the Garden Church on October 6, 2019, by Peter Rothe, one of the original members of the Garden Church; he plays mandolin at the services each week.

Prayer of Confession

God of promise,
forgive your people
when your dreams for peace for all
are co-opted by yearnings for
earthly kingdoms.

When your call
to be a blessing to all peoples
is corrupted by grasping after
wealth
that privileges some, and
disadvantages others;
when hunger for power
brings curses rather than blessing.

When our own claim to land displaces
others,
stripping away all sense of security,
and denying their hope of home.

Give us the courage to name the things
which continue to distort our lives,
the attitudes that some are better than
others,
the complicity in systems that are unjust,
the complacency with institutions that
diminish the common good.



L to R: Wayfarers Chapel minister Dan Burchett and directors Jennifer Lindsay and Jonathan Mitchell

Make us bold to live into your vision
of a community that welcomes all.
May our life together bless creation with
your peace;
a life in which every person experiences
dignity,
well-being,
wholeness,
peace,
and justice.
Forgive us,
renew us,
transform us we pray –
that we may truly become the blessing
you have called us to be.

Amen. ☩

Chauncey Giles

Continued from page 140

and served by him. Everyone is compelled to serve others, either voluntarily or involuntarily. . . . The great evil of slavery as it now and ever will exist until man becomes regenerated is, that it keeps the slave forever a child. It strikes at the manhood in human nature; it puts muscle above brain; it arrests man in the first step of his progress, and insists upon keeping him there, that he may be made a better tool of service. It does not allow him to go beyond and become a man, for that would interfere with his forced labor.

The final several pages are devoted to the ideal and goal of a well-educated and empowered Black African-American “nationality” that would become a vital part of the American life,

and only then would white America be on the road to atonement for its sins. Like Worcester before him and as will Holcombe in his conversion experience, Giles draws upon Isaiah 58:6–12 in his concluding paragraph as a supremely relevant biblical passage:

. . . to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke. Then shall our light break forth as the morning and our health shall spring forth speedily, and they that shall be of this people . . . shall build the old waste places; we shall raise up the foundation of many generations, and we shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.

Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence is dean of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies at the Graduate Theological Union and professor of spirituality, history, and theology.



A Garden Church visitor

Fall Christian Unity Gathering

BY DAVID J. FEKETE

The annual Christian Unity Gathering is a time when all four of the Convening Tables of the National Council of Churches of Christ, USA (NCCC) unite and celebrate. The NCCC comprises four Convening Tables: 1) Joint Advocacy for Justice and Peace; 2) Interreligious Relations and Collaboration; 3) Theological Dialogue and Matters of Faith and Order; 4) Christian Education and Faith Formation. A Convening Table is a study group which produces material useful to Christian Churches and American society. I am our Denomination's representative to the Theological Dialogue and Matters of Faith and Order Convening Table.

Gathering in Hampton, Virginia, this year, we remembered one of the founding events of the United States. When we think of founding events of the United States of America, what comes to mind? Perhaps the landing of Columbus in 1492. Perhaps the founding in 1607 of Jamestown, the first English Colony. Perhaps the arrival of the Mayflower Pilgrims in 1620. It is often an overlooked fact that one of the most significant events in American history is the institution of slavery. This year marks 400 years since the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in 1619. In remembrance of that foundational event, the Gathering was entitled: Ending Racism: Confronting Our Past, Revisiting Our Present and Naming God's Preferred Future.

The Faith and Order Convening Table met on Monday, October 14. Our first consideration was the completion of our previous years' work on Climate Care. We agreed to release a printed anthology of the work of our members. The completed volume would



contain liturgies, stories, and articles all relating to Climate Care. My contribution is a dialogue between a Swedenborgian minister and a college professor in which Biblical passages, Swedenborg quotes, and theological reflection arise in their conversation. The projected length of the anthology of all our work would be about 125 pages. We hope that the work will be a useful resource for clergy and laity in Sunday School or other adult study groups. The Executive Board of the NCCC has allocated \$5,000 toward the publication of our work.

We proceeded to begin work on our next project. Under our five-year mandate on racism and anti-racism, we brainstormed about questions we would research. We have three general categories of interest: 1) Awakening to the Reality of Racism as "America's Original Sin"; 2) Confronting White Supremacy as the "Defining Myth of America"; and 3) Transforming the Church and Humanizing the Public Square.

Under these general themes, we asked questions about how to proceed. Would we proceed serially, taking on one question at a time? Would we break into smaller groups (there are twenty-seven of us) and take on the themes concurrently? We decided that we would proceed serially, with the

whole group moving together through the themes.

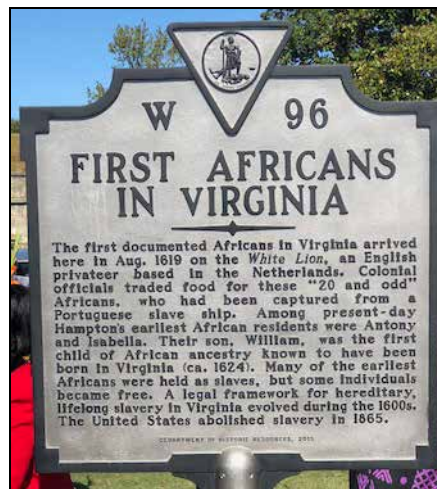
We brainstormed about specific issues that these themes raise, including 1) The beginnings of the ecumenical movement in the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference were rooted in missionary ideologies; we see missionary actions as related to Empire ideologies which, in turn, underlay colonization, genocide of Indigenous Peoples, and the slave trade; 2) What is race, and when was it defined? 3) The Great Commission and colonialization; 4) Who is my neighbor? Who isn't my neighbor? 5) Talking about race in communities that don't recognize or want to talk about

race; 6) Christian privilege and manifest destiny; 7) Structural and personal racism and sin; 8) Doctrines of personhood and being human; 9) LGBTQIA issues and race; 10) What is white supremacy?; and 11) What would repentance and reconciliation look like? We

also noticed that very few voices at our Convening Table were from minority and/or traditionally African-American churches. We talked about ways to invite a more diverse population to the table. We decided that for preliminary work we would write a 1,500-word essay about racism and our tradition, from a personal perspective.

After our day-long work we were treated to an awards dinner. It was a time to renew old acquaintances, meet

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Site where first Africans brought to British North America at Old Point Comfort, Virginia

Christian Unity Gathering

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with fellows in the greater Christian tradition and our own, and recognize notable persons who have advanced the voice of the NCCC in American culture. The dinner came to a close with a deeply moving song/sermon/poem/prayer by Dr. Ruby Sales. She intoned a litany of wrongs born by Indigenous and African-American Peoples with the recitative, "But they did not die." Nearly everyone, including me, was moved to tears with her half-hour recitation. That brought the long day to fullness for me.

We didn't break into our Convening Tables on Tuesday. Instead, everyone met for a plenary session in the morning. This day was dedicated to a remembrance of the 400 years since first twenty-plus enslaved Africans were brought to the US in 1619. We opened the day with worship, speeches, and sermons. Unfortunately, the day became bifurcated into the different ways that the descendants of enslaved Africans and descendants of enslavers would experience the memorial—as if those two categories were the only ways to experience the memorial.

We boarded busses and drove to Old Point Comfort, the site of the first slave ship to arrive in the colonies. There we worshipped. We were treated to the beautiful and passionate violin renderings of Dr. Melanie Hill. Then we walked to the marker where the White Lion, a pirate slave ship, landed and sold the first enslaved Africans to English colonists. There we worshipped, laying down twenty-one Gladiolus flowers in memory of the enslaved Africans. We then walked to a 400-year-old tree. There, we worshipped, hearing readings from Genesis, Psalm 137, Isaiah 11, Matthew 12, and concluding with Revelation 22, with its poignant reference to the tree of life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. We lay down Black-Eyed Susans, which represent justice, making an altar at the tree.

Luncheon was at First Baptist Church Hampton. Our keynote speaker was Dr. Ibram Kendi. He spoke about two ways to understand Christianity: Liberation Christianity and Civilizing Christianity. Civilizing Christianity sees groups of people as a whole and seeks to reform whole groups. Liberation Christianity sees the bonds that social structures



Dr Melanie Hill's soulful violin



Remembrance worship service at 400-year-old tree

Edmonton Church "Challenge '59"

The Edmonton Church is experiencing new challenges. A reliable source of income has dried up, necessitating reducing Rev. Dave Fekete's employment from full- to half-time. Compensation and necessary repairs and renovations to the church (for services and for rental income) continue to threaten financial viability.

The Edmonton New Church Society is appealing members and friends for contributions to a funding campaign called Challenge '59. The church was opened sixty years ago in 1959, so the request is for a contribution of \$59 (or any amount you can contribute).

Send checks (checks in US currency accepted) to Church of the Holy City, 9119 128A Avenue NW, Edmonton AB T5E 0J6, Canada, or email wcc-treasurer1967@gmail.com for other options—and thank you. ☩

impose on peoples and works to free people. Dr. Kendi concluded that only liberation as the true expression of the Gospel.

That afternoon, Rev. Rich Tafel and I met to explore issues in our individual parishes and in the Swedenborgian Church at large. Being a small church, isolation is too often a reality for members and clergy. So processing our issues together was a valuable experience for both of us.

The conference came to a close. I came away aware of the vast amount of learning I need. My Faith and Order Convening Table is just beginning its work combatting racism. We have much work to do, as does the Christian Church and American Society—indeed as does the world. ☩

Rev. Dave Fekete, Ph.D., is pastor of the Church of the Holy City in Edmonton, Alberta, and represents the Swedenborgian Church in the NCCC, along with Rev. Rich Tafel.

SCYL Summer Camp in England

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them dearly. I will treasure these memories for the rest of my life.

Josh

My trip began, as many do, with a several hour-long car ride. I was trying to sleep in the backseat, but I struggled with anticipation. The possibilities of what might happen in England were keeping me alert and awake, as



Fun skits were performed on the Revelation letters to the seven angels.

if they were already happening. Sleep was not really an option. At O'Hare Airport, we were assigned numbers to easily keep track of us; I was #11. I really loved meeting everyone again, even though it had only been a week or so since we last had seen each other.

We discussed the fun things we would do when we first met the people there. Perhaps we would put on extreme



A quick spin on the playground on the way to Atherstone.

regional accents and pretend to be like every foreign stereotype of Americans. Maybe we would put on fake British accents and pretend we were from England but new to Purley. We had a lot of funny ideas that we never carried out. I was okay with that, as most of them would just be too much work for our little jetlagged brains to bear.

I had a terrible time trying to sleep on the plane, but not from anticipation as before. Planes are just really

uncomfortable, and that's how it is. I had been awake since 5:30 EDT that morning, so I had already been up for a very long time.

We arrived at Heathrow and found Jack (who had arrived on a different flight). We assigned him a number and got on the train to Paddington Station in London. I really loved how international the city was. The merging of cultures was visible in nearly every aspect of the public transportation system. We came to a place for us to buy food, and I was ready for something other than airplane food. We split into groups for safety, and I went over to a little cafe. Then came the social aspect that I knew would be difficult to face. I went up to the cashier with the things I had picked up, unsure of whether I should speak with an accent and try to fit in, or just use my normal voice to avoid the risk of being caught with a fake accent (and then have to explain myself). The thing that I did was neither of those two, and it is a thing which I recommend the least. I let my nerves get the better of me and spoke with the most disgusting in-between, hybrid mess of an accent you could possibly imagine. Once more I repeat: I do not recommend this strategy! The cashier was polite and did

not give me a funny look (perhaps she had heard worse), so that made me feel better at least. In the end, I did come to find that it is best to use your normal voice, as London is such an international city that you are not likely to be judged based on your accent alone.

We walked to the London Eye, not to go inside but to the left of the shore side of the Eye to the London Dungeon. When we entered the London Dungeon, at first I couldn't quite



Teens race in "the worm" at the Olympic lawn games

tell whether it was meant to be educational or just a historical-themed haunted house, but my answer eventually came to me in the form of a sign which described the attraction as "110 minutes of edgy entertainment." Go figure. An actress with pet rats set the scene for us and told us in vague terms what to expect.

We entered a room with a jester who called us traitors, setting the scene for us to be executed for treason. I do not recall every attraction, but I can list the ones I remember. We entered a plague hospital, pretended to be in the London fire, assisted Guy Fawkes in his attempt to blow up Parliament, witnessed an old-timey autopsy, evaded Jack the Ripper, watched a girl in an



Hanging out in the rec room

insane asylum do a haunted thing (that one was pretty weird), and went on a boat roller coaster.

The most memorable moment of the dungeon was in the courtroom,

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SCYL Summer Camp in England

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where some audience members were put on trial. Lauren was chosen. The judge asked her name and where she was from. Almost immediately after she answered, “The United States,” the judge smacked his gavel onto the desk and declared her guilty of being an American.



Skills competition in the Olympic lawn games

Our next adventure was a boat ride on the Thames. It was a nice double decker boat, but all I could do was force myself to stay awake while trying to enjoy the view. I saw many famous monuments, but the most notable one that I can remember was the Globe Theatre. We made it to the next stop, did a count, and headed to a marketplace. In the marketplace was a huge mixture of various cultures selling food. I ended up getting a smoothie, because I knew I would be having a big dinner later.

The Purley Chase Centre has many things going for it. There is plenty of space for recreation, which is where I spent most of my time if I wasn't eating, sleeping, or in a session. I was rather surprised that nobody there had brought a Frisbee. Luckily, Shauna had an Amazon Prime account, so I bought a Frisbee. The game we played with it was loads of fun, especially with all the friends I made there. I eventually decided it was worth donating it to the Centre, to ensure that future

generations can play with a good Frisbee and, I hope, remember that time the Americans came over. I don't think that's such a bad legacy.

I will dearly miss the people I met. We are so lucky to live in a time where we can maintain contact through social media. I love hearing from them, and we continue conversing, and I hope that continues.

Though it doesn't mean as much to me as the people, I will also miss the beautiful building. The rooms were clean with very nice beds and large windows for sunlight and air. Window screens would have been nice, because moths and other insects were a bit of an issue, but I blame that less on the building or location so much as I do on the heat wave that had hit a week earlier.

I didn't find myself drinking much more tea than I usually do, but I was introduced to something new that I have brought home with me. Earl Grey with tea biscuits is



Picnic lunch at Warwick castle

now my absolute favorite snack. I was sad to find that the “Nice” brand of tea biscuits was not stocked at any supermarkets near me, but at least there are other brands. If there is one thing about food that they have better there,



Trivia night!

it's the creative ways to prepare and consume tea.

On the subject of food, I had some fish and chips and I must say they did



A giant hug circle before departure home

not disappoint. The chips (French fries) were, by far, the best I have ever had. However, the fish was not the best.

I learned a few games that I intend to play at home. My favorite was by far the cereal box game. A circle of players took turns clockwise. Each turn consists of the player picking up the cereal box with their mouth, and ripping off the piece that their mouth touched. You are only allowed to let your feet touch the ground, however. That is where it becomes challenging, especially when the box becomes a flat piece of cardboard on the ground.

The theological aspect of the sessions were also very well done. I learned much of the older Swedenborgian theology and read much of the story of the New Jerusalem. I must give Steve an

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SCYL Summer Camp in England

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honorably mention for carving a wonderful Alpha and Omega outside of the firepit area.

Leaving was bittersweet. It is difficult to say goodbye to the people you



Strategizing at the Crystal Maze games

care deeply for but you never see again. I hope that I do see them again one day. This was an experience that I shall never forget.

To all those who funded and made my trip possible, thank you.

Liv

I keep finding parts of my soul in strange places. This time, it was at Purley Chase. There's something so amazing about meeting new people and instantly feeling part of their community, and that's exactly what happened at the International Summer Camp. I got the chance to meet some amazing people, see some amazing places, and form so many amazing memories.



Waiting for the next skit at the Talent Show

I never knew that I could grow so attached to so many people within a single week! Aside from seeing

the beautiful English countryside and visiting an absolutely awe-inspiring castle, I think what will stick out to me forever are the little moments of community that I had with my new friends. Seeing their faces as they tried American candy, singing hymns together, sweet and slow, sitting in the sunlight and simply enjoying each other's company—these are the moments imprinted on my heart. I am so incredibly thankful to have been a part of something, however fleeting, that meant so much.

McKenna

Going to England was an amazing experience. I went with the best people that I could have and I met so many amazing Brits; they were so welcoming and warm to us. They shared their customs, and we showed them ours. I would love to go back just to visit my friends. I've bonded so closely with all of the Brits. It's beautiful how you can go from not knowing someone and letting your first impressions do the talking but by the end of a week have an emotional connection to many people. I'm so beyond grateful that I got to have this beautiful one-of-a-kind experience.

Scout

Going to England was an amazing experience I will never forget. When we started walking through London and I saw the London Eye, I just grinned. I was so happy to be there and see the way people in another country lived in the past and all the

wonder London held. But I was also exhausted from being up for over twenty-four hours. So that first day in London



Walking to Atherstone.

is a little blurry. I remember what I saw and how happy I was but I couldn't wait to sleep in a bed.

When I woke up the next day (at noon), I was much better prepared to take on the rest of the trip. As I sat down for lunch, people started arriving and I got to meet them. Learning

about where they lived and how school worked for them (I think I understand it now) made me feel close to them immediately. Playing rounders in the yard is a memory I will also cherish. I was confused on when to run and where to throw the ball, and that led to many laughs.



Jousting at Warwick castle

I miss seeing everyone and I hope it won't be too long until I see everyone and laugh with them again. I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to go on this amazing trip to meet people and learn amazing things.

Oliver

During my time at Purley Chase I had a variety of activities, conversations, and experiences which all make me think one thing: I wanna go back!

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SCYL Summer Camp in England

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I got to enjoy the British countryside during our walk to the nearby town of Atherstone, see a real castle when we went to Warwick castle, and meet tons of amazing people in a friendly and



Dark clouds gathers over Warwick Castle

comfortable environment. I also got to try some of the best cakes and pies I've ever had, courtesy of the cooks at the retreat center. This trip will be one of my favorite memories for years to come.

Gillian (Gil)

Purley Chase was pretty cool to say the least. I will be honest: at first I was really scared I wasn't going to like any of the British people or they weren't going to like me. But instead, I met a group of people who were like us but English and a little bit less touchy. Looking back on my memories at Purley I'm not remembering the pool or the castle, but rather the memories of 4 AM,



"You're the one!"

all the inside jokes made in the game room, and all the tea with milk in it. (Who knew it was so good?) I'm really bittersweet about the whole experience because as much as I loved it, I'm still trying to wrap my mind around

the fact that I might not see some of my new friends ever again. So I guess, to keep all of us happy, we just have to have another ISC at Almont for 2020. Thanks. See ya next year, guys.

Ivy

My experience in England was absolutely incredible. Everything about the trip was better than I ever could've hoped. The people I got to meet there and the people that I got to go with just filled my heart with happiness and joy. I am ever grateful to have had this experience and I hope I can visit Purley again. Nothing makes me happier than to be able to share these amazing experiences with the people I love the most. Learning about the culture in England and comparing it to America was so cool. Maybe someday all of our friends at Purley can come visit Almont to see how we do things here in America. England is a beautiful country and I'm pleased to have been able to explore it with all these lovely people. Thank you to everyone who made this possible. I love you all.

Nathan

The International Summer Camp was definitely the best part of my summer. I loved meeting everyone and learning about each other's countries and what makes them different or similar. But the best part of the trip, I think, was going to Warwick Castle. I loved climbing to the top of the tallest tower and looking out over the rest of the castle and the surrounding countryside. It was a beautiful experience that I will never forget. I loved watching the jousting matches with my friends as well, as we all chanted "White Rose!, White Rose!" while also learning so much of the history behind the castle and what happened within its walls hundreds of years before us. I loved learning the history and joking

with my new friends the whole time I was there.

Wyatt

After going on my trip to England with my church, my favorite experience was when, as a group, we went to Warwick Castle and were able to explore the entire place. The experience



War of the Roses reenactment at Warwick Castle

was amazing, and learning about the history of the castle was fascinating. This trip also allowed us to spend time with each other and bond with our new friends. The Church gave us an amazing opportunity to travel to another country and learn about different cultures. It was the best trip I've ever been on, and I'm so glad I was able to go.

Callum's Vespers Closing Prayer

Lord, open our hearts to your wisdom and strength,

As we all continue on our spiritual paths after the week of enlightenment to your teachings.

Help us stay loving and true, and allow that shining star of truth and knowledge to lead us closer to you.

As we all depart from this holy place, keep us humble in our ways so that we always know that good and truth comes from you.

Keep a watchful eye over all of us as we depart tomorrow, keep us in your loving care. May we return home more thankful, more generous, and more mindful of your blessings—and of course, safe and sound. 🙏

Spring Gathering of the Faith and Order Convening Table—NCCC

BY DAVID J. FEKETE

The spring meeting of the Faith and Order Convening Table of the National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC) was held June 30–July 1 in Hampton, Virginia. This was the concluding session of a three-year process. The way the Faith and Order Convening Table operates is to take on an issue relating to faith and order and reflect theologically over a three-year period, coming up with a finished product at the conclusion of the three-year period. There were three study groups this past three years: Climate Justice and Conflict (Creation Care); Violence in an Age of Genocide; and Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World. I participated in the Climate Justice study group. All three groups were concluding their work on their themes. After a plenary session in which we heard progress reports from the three study groups, we broke into our respective study groups.

The Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World group produced a new policy statement on this issue, revising and replacing a previous statement from 1999. The group on Violence in an Age of Genocide generated a significant number of articles, which will be placed in an issue of a theological journal dedicated to their work.

In the Climate Justice group, most of the participants had finished their work, and the editors of our group had made final suggestions for the finished product. We have short stories relating to creation care, liturgies, and scholarly essays. Our main intention is to have a finished product that churches can use.

We spent much of our time discussing how to make our work public. We first thought of the publishing arm of

the NCCC, Friendship Press. However, there were some issues with this publishing source, so we considered other publishers. We also contacted Creation Justice Ministries, which began as a sub-group of the World Council of Churches, but have since become their own organization. They have a web page which could accommodate our work. We also considered shortening our articles and stories into blogs for online posting. But we are most invested in the idea of a short book.

My contribution is a dialogue between a Swedenborgian minister and a college professor as they amble around New England delighting in the fall colors. This story was printed in *the Messenger*. The story was enthusiastically received by the Creation Care group and will be placed in the forthcoming book, if that is how we decide to present our work.

Since the work of all three study groups was concluding, we thought about future issues to reflect on in the light of faith and order. The general body of the NCCC will be devoting the next five years to “ACT to End Racism.” So Faith and Order decided to reflect on this theme theologically. Early in our discussion, the idea that our Convening Table is Faith and Order was emphasized. That means that our work should proceed in terms of faith, theology, and religion. So when we discuss racism, our unique perspective is to reflect using theological terms like heresy and sin.

Also, we were made aware that racism isn’t only an African-American/White issue. Latino/a, and Asian voices spoke up to remind us that many races are involved in the inequities of American society.

As we were exploring this issue, a range of ideas were brought up. One voice asked precisely what was meant by the white race. Another interesting idea was about myths of racism. The idea that racism began in America with White Protestant men in the East and worked its way west was shown to be a myth. That narrative ignores the Spanish conquistadors who moved up from South and Central America into Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and California—even to Colorado. As they moved northward, the Spaniards decimated Indigenous peoples such as the Inca, Maya, and in the US, Aztec Nations. How are we to understand this narrative? Spaniards are Europeans. Yet we often think of Hispanics as an ethnic Spaniard minority race contrasted with the Northern Europeans who landed at Plymouth Rock. The narrative of racism in the United States is complex, more complex than we might imagine.

One issue that came up seems particularly relevant today. One of the delegates observed that we live in a world with a fractured public square. We are losing our ability to discuss issues in a civil manner. The public square is characterized by sharply opposing points of view, sometimes hate language, often visceral contention. Instead of civil discourse, we are witnessing protests and rallies, some of which turned violent. So, one of the topics we may take up is how to speak civilly in the public sphere. Issues arose in which we asked how to love the bully while standing up to their attempts to oppress—healing the bully.

I brought up the idea of Biblical witness to the issue of racism. I

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Faith and Order

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mentioned how often Jesus used Samaritans—a despised foreign race—to illustrate righteousness. The Good Samaritan was from a despised, foreign, heretical race from the perspective of the Jewish orthodoxy of Jesus' day. I also brought up the Covenant Code in Exodus 20:22-23:19. In this section, among the oldest in the Hebrew Scriptures, special protection is given to the resident alien who sojourns with the Israelites, as well as to the vulnerable in their society such as widows and orphans. Then, further, there are the examples of genocide and racism against the Indigenous Peoples in Canaan, from the Israelites—sometimes commanded by God.

Much of this discussion happened in the hotel lounge outside the formal meeting room. For this reason, it is important for our delegates to stay in the hotel that the NCCC reserves for us. We want to remain in the conversation which often takes place in the hallways and lounges, going for walks, and, in general, outside the formal meetings.

After the first long day of meetings ended, I remained in the meeting room with a delegate from the Greek Orthodox Church and one from the Christian Science Church. Our conversation meandered over about a three-hour span. Issues that came up were the nature of the incarnation and the connection between the created material universe and Jesus' body. We pursued this question into the very nature of matter, materialism, and spirit. One of us thought everything was material, including the soul and brain. Another said that all was spirit, including what we take to be matter. I asked if there weren't a *tertium quid*¹ and brought up Cartesian dualism—that reality is both matter and spirit, soul and body.

1 A third thing that is indefinite and undefined but is related to two definite or known things

We drifted into a discussion of the sacraments. At this point, I brought up Swedenborgian correspondences and the symbolism of the wine and bread as wisdom and love. My Greek Orthodox friend, who said that the incarnation redeemed the whole created material world, wasn't sure what to make of the idea of spirit and matter joining in the correspondences of Holy Communion. My new acquaintance from the Christian Science Church said that she eats the bread and drinks the wine as she learns and prays, but the bread and wine are not material; it is all spiritual. Here, I brought up the Swedenborgian doctrine of God as divine love and wisdom. At first, this idea was met with some suspicion, but as our discussion progressed, I, if not my Swedenborgian ideas, found acceptance.

We all agreed that discussions such as we were having outside the meeting rooms were as important as the structured meeting time. When a Greek Orthodox priest, a Christian Science practitioner, and a Swedenborgian minister could discuss our churches' doctrines for three hours as friends, something remarkable was happening. In fact, some might say that the very founding idea of the National Council of Churches is for the member Christian denominations to meet as friends in the name of Christ.

As the conference was winding down on our last evening together, we socialized in the lounge of our hotel. This afforded another time for friendly discussion with the Greek Orthodox priest. He observed that the past saints were among us. Since I knew him to be a thoroughgoing materialist, I asked if he meant that their presence was through the relics which were preserved in church altars and reliquaries? He said that, no, their presence was all around us. I pointed out that this must mean something like a spiritual world. He paused in thought, and said that something like that must be true.

Rev. Dan Burchett Installed at Wayfarers

Rev. Dan Burchett was installed as a Minister at Wayfarers Chapel by Rev. Jane Siebert. Wayfarers senior minister Rev. Dave Brown participated in the ceremony. Rev. Burchett is the director of finance at Wayfarers Chapel. ☪



Revs. Dave Brown, Jane Siebert, and Dan Burchett

As the evening got even later, I mentioned to a tenured Washington diplomat among us that I had made a CD of my original music. We were now talking about music—music past, music present. Then the diplomat told us about being stationed in Hungary, and about his performing in a band there, including his several performances at the Hard Rock Café Budapest. He is the only person I've met with the credentials of performance in the Hard Rock Café, Budapest in his resumé.

After intense discussion, hard work, reading, writing, editing, and brainstorming, the Spring 2019 meeting of the Faith and Order Convening Table ended. Some of our work will lead to NCCC policy, some of our work will find expression in academic worlds, and some will be in the hands of priests, ministers, and congregants in the pews. In all these audiences, we feel, and the NCCC affirms, that our work is a valuable contribution to Christianity and the greater culture in the United States of America. ☪

Statement of the Swedenborgian Church of North America on Discrimination

At its 2019 Annual Convention, the Swedenborgian Church of North America passed the following resolution. The statement had been developed over the preceding year by a committee composed of academic and lay Swedenborgians. (See page 111 of the September 2009 Messenger for background information.)

As Swedenborgians we affirm the core truths of our faith that honor the diversity of both heaven and Earth, and recognize that loving people who are different from us is integral to the practice of a religious life.

We also acknowledge that broad generalizations of races, nations, genders, sexual orientations, physical abilities, and religions can be found in our sacred texts when interpreted literally, and that these texts have been used on occasion to promote opinions that run counter to these core truths.

We hereby affirm our responsibility to interpret our texts in the light of love and inclusion, in heaven's light, and categorically reject interpretations of the Bible or of Swedenborg's writings that promote any discriminatory viewpoint. Where any translation or interpretation appears to invite the reader to engage in exclusionary or hateful thinking, promote stereotypes, or justify discrimination against anyone for any reason, regardless of the source, we stand against this. If any member, clergy, employee, or other affiliated person indicates by word, deed, works, writings, affiliations, or any other means, racism, anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim bigotry, gender bias, heterosexism, ableism, or any other expression of prejudice, they do not reflect nor represent the practical doctrine of the Swedenborgian Church.

We encourage one another to advocate for those who face discrimination

and to actively address these expressions of bias in our personal interactions and in the larger society. We also acknowledge that forms of discrimination come in many subtle shades, and that we have a

responsibility to regularly investigate our actions and beliefs, both individually and collectively, to align them with these truths, so that we may all be greater vessels for divine love in the world. ☩

“Live and Learn” with Professor George Dole

For spiritually curious and questing people, the Center for Swedenborgian Studies (CSS) offers an opportunity to participate in an online, real-time video-conference class with Prof. Dole called “Live and Learn”

Dates: Seven weeks starting mid-October, including one 90-minute “live” online video-conference session each week. Final days and times are negotiated between those who sign up and the instructor.

No Cost: This is a CSS outreach offering to the church and the world.

If interested, reply to the CSS dean, Jim Lawrence, at jlawrence@psr.edu.

Description: Not all circles are vicious. There's a most benevolent one involving living and learning. The doctrines teach us how to live, and living by them is most definitely instructive. Swedenborg begins “The Doctrine of Life” by telling us that “If we lead a good life, we think good things not only about God but also about the neighbor, which is not the case if we lead an evil life.” It may explain why Swedenborg titled his first theological overview *The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Teachings* (NJHT) and why he devotes most of the little book to what it means to be human and how to become more so, before he concludes with a chapter on the Lord. This semester's online seminar is designed to follow that strategy, taking doctrinal principles in the order they appear in NJHT and introducing each one with a “story” that embodies it. Participants will also be asked to bring to each session something they have observed in themselves or in their lives that they have found particularly instructive.

Questions? Please email us at info@css.gtu.edu

Happy Anniversary to Us

On October 6, the LaPorte New Church celebrated our 160th church anniversary with our organist and LaPorte County public librarian and historian, Mary Hedge, who presented our church's early history which also coincided with early



LaPorte history, since some of our town's founding fathers were also instrumental in

bringing the New Church here. Mary shared the following:

- The first New Church congregational meeting in LaPorte was in 1851, eight years before the church was built.
- On July 7, 1859, James Andrew donated the land our church sits on, at a value of \$550.
- Rev. Kit, Penny, and Julia live in a portion of the large old house that James Andrew bought for \$10,000 in 1869, just a block from our church.
- Just two months and four days after James Andrew donated the church land, the first worship service was held in the newly constructed church, on September 11, 1859.
- The total cost of the church was \$3000 to 4,000; \$500 was donated for it.
- Between 1908 and 1911, the church was stuccoed (over its original vertical board and batten exterior) and the basement, pipe organ, and the side and chancel stained glass windows were added.
- The Tiffany-style "River of Life" altar window was donated in 1916 by the children of Mary Relief Niles Scott, a devoted and beneficent New Church member.

- Our church had several parsonages throughout its history, none of which are still owned.

- Isamu Noguchi, famous Japanese-American artist and landscape architect (1904–1988) lived in LaPorte with New Church minister Rev. Charles Mack and Dr.

Edward Rumely and graduated from LaPorte High School in 1922.

- Ours is the oldest church building in LaPorte still being used by its original denomination.

- Our church has never been large but, according to Mary, it has had



a profound and beneficial influence on our community.

Following Mary's talk, while still together in the sanctuary, we felt the almost palpable presence of those historical people and all that they had accomplished so that our church and its faith still lives after

160 years. And many also felt a renewed desire and responsibility to carry forward this legacy for the New Church here in LaPorte. ☪

Reprinted from the November 2019 *LaPorte Report*, the monthly newsletter of the LaPorte New Church.

Letter from the President

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Master of Divinity students once a year for community building and in-person training.

The success of the Licensed Pastor Program depends both on the applicant and the ministry site. They must work closely together and both accept responsibility for and work towards the success of the ministry. In many instances the LP has another job besides the church.

The materials for application are reviewed by CAM, and a personal or online interview is conducted. If approved, the ministry site is reviewed by the Executive Committee of General Council. After acceptance into the program, the applicant, CAM, and the dean of CSS propose individualized training in areas such as Swedenborgian theology, preaching and teaching skills, sermon preparation and delivery, interpersonal and pastoral care skills, and more. The training consists of four learning units for Module One and four units for

Module Two. A module can be completed in one or two years. The LP is consecrated as a pastor to serve their home church or ministry after Module One is completed and then continues to complete Module Two. Following the completion of Module Two, the LP is required to take one continuing education unit each year and the ministry and LP complete a yearly evaluation.

Current LPs in training are: Carolyn Salyer, Chrysalis Retreat Center, DeLand, Florida; Robbin Ferriman, Urbana Society of the New Church, Urbana, Ohio; Kelly Milne, New Jerusalem Church, Bridgewater, Massachusetts; and Connie McOsker, The Garden Church, San Pedro, California.

The LPs are filling important leadership and pastoral roles in the churches or ministries they serve. The Council of Ministers welcomes them as participants in their yearly pre-convention meetings. And we all join in thanking them for their service and willingness to step up when needed.

—*May all manner of things be well,*
Rev. Jane Siebert, president

About the Swedenborgian Church

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 fifteen years after his death. American groups eventually founded the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches.

As a result of Swedenborg's spiritual questioning and insights, we as a church 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.

In his theological writings, Swedenborg shared 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 said, "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.

Gathering Leaves

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT



28th - 31st
August
2020

Purley Chase Centre

Purley Chase Lane, Mancetter, Atherstone,
Warwickshire CV9 2RQ UK

Book online at www.purleychasecentre.org.uk



Price available
shortly.

Workshops

Music, Dance, Art,
sharing.....

A day trip
out

SISTER
CIRCLES

Worship

For further information and updates please keep an eye on the Facebook pages - 'Gathering Leaves' & 'Purley People' as well as the Purley Chase website (see above)

Contact for further information: Rev Alison Southcombe
Email: alison.southcombe@purleychasecentre.org.uk
or via enquiries@purleychasecentre.org.uk