

Visiting Swedenborgians in Australia in the Midst of the Worst Fires They Have Ever Seen

BY JANE SIEBERT

Since I returned in January from a lifelong dream of visiting Australia, many have asked, “How was your trip affected by the fires?” It has been almost a month since my return, and I am still trying to answer that question for myself. I traveled for three weeks through the states of New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria, and the capital, Canberra. I saw a small part of the sixth largest country in the world. I do not profess to understand what Australians went through and are experiencing as they try to recover from the fires. These are my thoughts and feelings after sharing briefly the fear and anxiety of uncontrolled bushfires that ravaged their country and wondering what this means for the future of the unique and rare wildlife, unparalleled vistas, and relaxed independent lifestyle of the people, and what lessons we should learn with our Australian friends.

Some of the worst fires were on New Year’s Eve, the night in which time disappeared for me due to the time change, leaving on December 30 and arriving January 1—Seventeen hours of travel from Dallas to Sydney and seventeen hours difference in time from my home in Wichita.

I arrived a bit dazed early in the morning on the first day of 2020 to be greeted by Joe Vandermeer, the director of the Swedenborg Center in Sydney. We drove around the stunning city, viewing the sites I remembered from photos during the 2000 Summer

Olympics, now clouded with a smoky haze. He shared stories of this city and religious life interspersed with country-wide concerns about the growing fires.

The fires, the smoke, and the trip are intertwined in my memories along with brightly colored birds, concern for the kangaroos and koalas, inspiring gum trees (eucalyptus), and wonderful Australians interested in sharing their country, their Swedenborgian heritage, and their lives.

My first stay was with Glen Hart at her home, safe in Sydney. She was providing refuge to her friend Anne, who had to evacuate her retirement home, leaving her plants and her treasured belongings, driving away with a few clothes and her budgie (parakeet). Glen’s son was in danger also and he was defending the home he had built over eight years from the fires in the picturesque forest surrounding his home. It was difficult to get updates, as cell towers were down and electricity was cut off. I waited anxiously with them for five nights as we watched the news detailing the many fires and the damage. They reported after I left, Anne’s home was spared but part of her village was destroyed, and Glen’s son was finding temporary relief as the winds had changed the fire’s direction.

During the day we would get out for coffee, drive around the national forest protected within the city, and enjoy views of the seashore. Once, we did stop for a rainbow lorikeet in the middle of the road, wondering if it was exhausted from escaping the nearby fires.

We swooped it up in a towel and took the bird to a nearby veterinary clinic; they were caring for other animals that had been brought in from the fires.

I took day trips into Sydney, met the



Roseville Australian New Church director, Joe Vandermeer

New Church ministers, toured with Joe on the many ferries in the harbor, ate fish and chips at the beach, and spent time at the Swedenborg Center meeting seekers that had questions and interest in spiritual thought. Often the subject of the fires, differing views on climate change, and our part in it came up. The conservative political landscape was discussed and whether the government was doing its part to control the fires and address the long-term problems associated with climate change.

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the Messenger

© The Swedenborgian Church of North America
Published monthly except July and August by the Standing Committee for Communication and Information of the Swedenborgian Church of North America (founded 1817, incorporated 1861 as the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America), Rev. Jane Siebert, president.

February/March 2020

Volume 243, No. 2, Whole Number 5447

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Subscriptions: free online subscription at <http://swedenborg.org>. Printed and mailed to US address, \$20/year; to Canada address, \$30/year; to all other addresses, \$35/year; single copies, \$2.00, Libraries & prisoners, free. Send check made out to "Swedenborgian Church" with "Messenger" on the memo line. Other requests, write or call Central Office.

Deadline for submissions is three weeks before the first day of the month of issue.

The opinions and views expressed are those of the authors, not of *the Messenger*, the Standing Committee for Communication and Information, or the Swedenborgian Church.

The Editor's Desk



Greetings to all of you, my spiritual family and friends!

I am so thrilled to have been selected to carry the torch of *the Messenger* forward. I have known in my heart for several years that someday this would be how I could best serve our community. When I learned that Herb was ready to move forward, I just knew the time was right.

Since becoming a mom nine years ago, I have been on the quest for the right job to be able to keep a healthy work/life balance and be the mom I want and need to be. This is no easy task! There are constant pressures on women to be the "Stay at Home Pinterest Mom" and the "Successful Business Woman Power Mom." Being both of these is nearly impossible for anyone, and certainly not possible for me. I loved my work in the New York publishing world before I had my kids but knew there was no way that I could maintain that lifestyle while being present and active in my children's lives. When they were one and three, I got a job as the technology librarian at a public library near us. I absolutely loved working there. But the struggles as the kids were getting older, going to school and getting more involved in activities and classes, made the rigid schedule nearly impossible to maintain. The way society is configured, when parents work these crazy schedules, they need to hire a daycare provider or babysitter (or be fortunate enough to have incredibly helpful family members) to get everyone where they need to be when they need to be there. Frequently, for "normal"

families, and certainly for us, paying daycare was almost my entire salary. It just didn't make sense to struggle with the increasing activity schedules, and the ongoing "Mom Guilt" of asking others to get ones kids from point A to point B and back again.

When my daughter was very small, I told Herb that whenever he was done with *the Messenger* that I wanted to do it next. I just had the feeling, even then, that this would be the best position for me to be the best mom, be a working member of society, and support the Swedenborgian Church with my skill set. He was happy to know that someone was interested in it for the future, but assured me that he was going to "be the Editor until he was dead." Fortunately for all of us (and especially for me), Herb is very much still with us, and I know he will continue to be one of my biggest supporters as I take this forward.

I have felt an outpouring of support from all around our community as they have learned that I am the new editor. I would like to publicly thank Gard Perry, Jen Darcy, Pamie Roy, and Trevor for writing letters of support to the search committee on my behalf. I welcome any of you to reach out to me with your thoughts and ideas, and I am always looking for more writers! I look forward to sharing my point of view and voice to *the Messenger* for many years to come. As my friend Rachel Madjerac said at the end of her ordination sermon a couple years ago, "Why do I want to do this? It just makes sense."

—Beki Greenwood
Messenger@Swedenborg.org



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Letter from the President



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

Dear Friends and Members of the
Swedenborgian Church,

Welcome to our new editor of *the Messenger*, Beki Greenwood. And thank you to our retiring editor, Herb Ziegler.

I wonder how many words were fashioned meticulously to open our minds and touch our hearts during the twelve years of Herb's tireless journey to produce *the Messenger*. One could tell from his personal editorials and the careful attention with which he edited articles that he was living his love. He offered each issue as a finely prepared and exquisitely presented meal of words for our pleasure. His words and his dedication will live on.

Words are a strange and provocative phenomenon. I'm reading a book by the poet David Whyte, *Consolations, The Solace, Nourishment and Underlying Meaning of Everyday Words*. The dedication to the book is to "WORDS and their beautiful hidden and beckoning uncertainties." Each of fifty-two words from *alone* to *work* are untethered from the first definition that comes to mind, unleashing a waterfall of potential bounty. His philosopher poet's mind opens each word to bring "solace and nourishment" as he takes us beyond

"everyday words" to realize each word has a life and a use for the reader.

From his book: "Loneliness is the place from which we pay real attention to voices other than our own; being alone allows us to find the healing power in the other. The shortest line in the briefest e-mail can heal, embolden, welcome home and enliven the most isolated identity" (p. 133).

Proverbs 12:18 reminds us, "The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." How many of us have felt the pierce of reckless words? Or have been the one using the words as a sword? And in the Gospel of Matthew 12:36, Jesus' words cause us to pause, "I tell you that everyone will have to answer for all the careless things they have said."

Yes, words have power. They are our greatest tool and our worst offender. As we see in our world today, words can bring us together or push us apart. The same words can mean totally different things by the way they are said. And even written words are interpreted depending on what we think of the author, what is going on in our personal life, and even how the weather is today.

We are urged, before we speak, to ask ourselves, "Is it kind? Is it necessary? Is it true?" And I heard one more, "Would silence be better than words?"

As I think of Herb, one of the things I appreciate the most is his silence before speaking. He is careful with his spoken and written words, as he knows their power. And that is the same way he edited. We have been graced with his words as he brought wisdom and love together as our messenger to the world through *the Messenger*.

With love and care and thanksgiving,

—Rev. Jane Siebert

The Year of the Lord

A Reflection on the Glorification

BY GARD PERRY

As we are in the Year of the Lord in the seven-year cycle of Annual Convention themes, I was pleased to be asked to write a reflection on the glorification. Three ideas come to mind: the beauty of the Lord; the difficulty of seeing the whole glorification process; and Swedenborg's suggestion that we can.

The Beauty of the Lord

Many of us have heard the call to see the beauty of the Lord spoken from the chancel:

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple (Psalm 27: 4).

Some have experienced awe in that moment—a sense of the sacred, a love of truth, and the impulse to serve God and the neighbor—the inner world at the level of feeling. Feeling becomes thought, and thought moves to understanding, as it does when we turn to Swedenborg's view of the glorification:

Jehovah assumed human form according to his divine order. Now since God descended, and he is order...it was necessary—if he were to become really human—for him to be conceived, carried in the womb and born, be taught, learn one thing at a time and be brought (by means of what he learned) into a condition of intelligence and wisdom. Therefore, in his human form, he was an infant like any other infant, a boy like any other boy, and so on—the only difference being that he achieved that progress more quickly, fully, and perfectly than others (*True Christian Religion* §89.3, translation by Robert H. Kirven).

The Difficulty of Seeing the Whole Glorification Process

Students of the glorification, among whom I count myself, have wondered what the whole process looks like from the human perspective. What did the Lord experience while he lived in the world? What was it like for him to live this divine and human process from beginning to end?

I made the attempt many times to find a plausible and comprehensible answer to those questions, and failed every time. Collateral works offer a view that is comprehensible, but I find it to be implausible, as their view depicts the process occurring within a young child. Currently available translations offer a view that one hopes is plausible, but I have admitted defeat when it comes to its being comprehensible. Swedenborg's Latin abstractions are, for the most part, translated into abstract English terms.

I needed a method to highlight the text within our human scale. I did not need to look far, as the Rev. Dr. George Dole had provided just such a method years ago when he famously said, "I look it up in George." That is to say, after reading a given text within Swedenborg's writing, George tries "to live that way."

With that clue, I placed Swedenborg's Latin text about the glorification into the context of the historical Jesus, the result of which aims to highlight the interior dynamics of the glorification within a vivid portrait of Jesus of Nazareth. In this light, we meet Jesus as a student of Torah on the cusp of young adulthood. He was likely studying under a teacher in the synagogue in Nazareth, where he experienced an unfathomable shift of consciousness,

opening to the inmost level of his psyche and a direct encounter with divinity. That moment marked the birth of his inmost self (*homo internus*).

Jesus felt love for the whole human race within his inmost self, though this interior opening had not yet touched his outer self. After all, Jesus was still a student of Torah in Nazareth, on the cusp of young adulthood. The glorification process was going to require the uniting of his outer self with his newly awakened internal self, at the cost of all personal short-term gain. Each and every detail in the Genesis narrative and every dynamic element of the psyche of Jesus of Nazareth to which the narrative corresponds, falls within this general framework.

Applying this method to the Latin text in the *Secrets of Heaven* §1404 & 1407 we read,

1404. In the historical story which is about to begin, every word, and each set of events can open the reader's mind to a way of seeing that differs from the history about which one is reading. The biblical story presents the dynamics of Jesus of Nazareth's spiritual development. Abram, who enters the narrative first, portrays Jesus' inner life as whole, and, specifically, the birth of his innermost, unconditionally loving Self. Isaac also depicts characteristics of Jesus' inner life, with attention to the skill he brought to his understanding of others. Jacob brings further definition to Jesus' inner life, with a focus on the transformative impact of his teaching in the lives of his followers. The case will be made that the historical events that follow present an ancient way of learning about the inner life of Jesus, the Kingdom of God, and the birth of genuine spiritual community.

1407. Verse 1. Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will

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CSS Winter Intensive

BY KELLY MILNE

Berkeley, California, seemed worlds away as I began my journey to the Winter Intensive at the Center for Swedenborgian Studies (CSS). What was expected of me? Could I really handle all the information that was headed my way? I knew I was being called to ministry, but this made it all so real.

As I arrived at Easton Hall guest house, my home away from home for the next few days, I was warmly welcomed by Rev. Kit Billings—a friendly face after a long day of travel. As more Swedenborgians arrived, it felt like old home week. Meeting others who share the same spiritual beliefs is a heavenly experience. And this experience was about to get to a whole new level.

Sunday was spent welcoming more arrivals, from Licensed Pastor and Ordination-track Students to the members of the Committee on Administration to the Ministry (CAM). We gathered together in the main living area of the guest house for dinner and began to strengthen our relationships with friends old and new.

Monday morning arrived quickly, especially for those of us on Eastern Standard Time. Breakfast was served at the dining hall on the campus of the Pacific School of Religion. The campus was a breath of fresh

air with its bright green courtyard and beautiful gothic and modern buildings lining the campus.

At nine AM, it was time for the Winter Intensive to begin. I think there were some nerves, but overall excitement for the new adventure ahead. We began by talking about our spiritual journeys and how we got to where we are now. This allowed us to get to know each other a bit better. As the day went on we continued to bond and learn more about each other and Swedenborg's concepts. Our day continued with three more sessions and ended around 4:15 PM. We then gathered for dinner and talked about our day, played games, and headed to bed (mostly the East Coast folks!)

We learned about and discussed regeneration, the Word, providence, the Lord, uses, and the spiritual world. Our sessions were taught by top notch Swedenborgian ministers and professors including Rev. Jim Lawrence, Professor Rebecca Esterson, Rev. Kathy Speas, Rev. Junchol Lee, Rev. Kit Billings, and Rev. Thom Muller.

Their knowledge of Swedenborg and how to teach others made the material easier to understand and retain. We were blessed to be in this one place, to learn and form friendships and bonds like never before.

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Brief History of the CSS Winter Intensive

In 2008, the Swedenborgian House of Studies (now the Center for Swedenborgian Studies or CSS) made a policy decision to support Swedenborgian educational journeys at a distance from Berkeley and the Pacific School of Religion. Immediately, this opened up professional formation paths, since many who had the motivation were nevertheless not in a place where they could uproot their lives and move to California. With the new spike of learners, maintaining the farflung community was much more difficult. Participating in online courses together helped to a certain extent, but the desire to build professional relationships among other Swedenborgians led to the creation of the Winter Intensive in 2010.

The inaugural Winter Intensive was hosted by one of the students, the now Rev. Janie Lemole, and her husband, Dr. Gerald Lemole, at their beautiful home in Maine. In addition to faculty and students, area ministers were invited, and the new Winter Intensive course—that year titled “Constructive Swedenborgian Spirituality”—was a smashing success. Building a professional community and forming spiritual bonds thrive in intensive retreats, with sessions diving into Swedenborgian spirituality and warm gatherings around food and conversation. An annual tradition was officially launched!

Several years later, the Committee on Admission to the Ministry (CAM), who oversee and walk with learning professionals on the road to their consecrations and ordinations, also began participating. Then, five years ago when the licensed pastor as a new category of religious professional training was launched, “LPs” became an important new cadre of learning professionals. This year’s Winter Intensive, titled “Core Swedenborgian Themes,” was the eleventh one and had a total of fifteen participants (students, faculty, CAM).



Top: Kelly's new friends Robbin Ferriman, Jae Hyon Chung & Colin Amato; Below: Pacific School of Religion

How Did This Happen, Anyway?

BY MERRILEE PHINNEY

During the last week of November 1821, Dr. Artemas Stebbin (1788–1872), formally a Methodist minister of Swansea, Massachusetts, introduced the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg to Seth Washburn, Esq. (1776–1891) of Bridgewater, Massachusetts, who received the doctrines “with avidity, and drank them in as an ox drinks water.” (*New Church Magazine*). Soon Dr. Cyrus Benson joined Mr. Washburn in reading and discussing the doctrines.

Dr. Cyrus Benson (1784–1858) was my great great great-grandfather. (His grandfather came to America in 1638 on the *Confidence* from Carversham, Oxfordshire, England). In 1806, Cyrus married Lydia Wood (1786–1862), and they had four children. Dr. Benson practiced medicine for thirty years and, in later life, worked only on his farm in Bridgewater. They were among the first members of the newly established Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church, joining the church on May 29, 1833. Their son Cyrus Jr., (1821–1854) was a teacher. In 1842 Cyrus Jr.



married Lydia Washburn (1817–1879), and they also had four children. Their first son, Zeno (1846–1916), was a farmer. Zeno married Sybil Edson (1845–1924), and they had five children. Their son, Nathan (1882–1915), was my grandfather.

Emery Brown (1804–1898) was born in Kensington, New Hampshire. (His grandfather, John Brown, sailed on the *Whale* to Hampton, New Hampshire, in 1636 and was the first settler there). Emery Brown was my great great great-grandfather. He married Hannah Lock Grove (1804–1892). Emery was a farmer specializing in butter and cheese. Often referred to as “Butter Brown,” he operated a butter and cheese stall in Quincy Market in Boston. However, his business transactions extended to the Far West and in 1845 he moved his family to Cincinnati, Ohio. Emery and Hannah had five children. Their first son, Asa (1827–1907), married Anna Wagner (1830–1856). Asa, educated in Boston, Massachusetts; Brooklyn, New York, and Cincinnati, Ohio, “had no taste for commerce.” He was a music teacher in Cincinnati for thirty-five years. Both Asa and

Anna were



Swedenborgians. They had only one child, born in Rockport, Ohio, Albert Emery (1858–1910), who was always referred to as A.E.

A.E. (1858–1910) married Sarah Louise Stearns (1858–1920). They had five children. Their first, a daughter named Pearl Olivet, was my grandmother. Pearl moved with her family from Rockport, Ohio, to Kensington, New Hampshire, in 1895, and then on to Bridgewater in 1896. Church records show a transfer of membership from Lakewood, Ohio, to the Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church in 1897. Records further show that Nathan Benson and Pearl O. Brown joined that church in 1900. (Family history record, that A.E. died of lock-jaw (tetanus) in April of 1910 after stepping on a pitchfork used to move horse manure.)

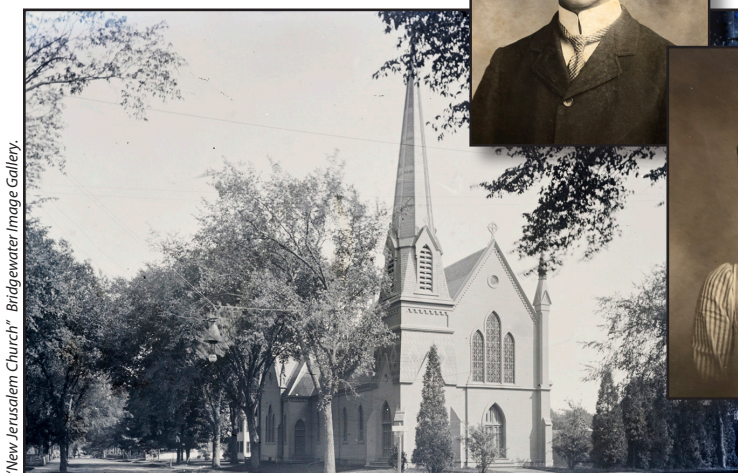
In 1903 Nathan Benson purchased the property and built a house at 138 Park Avenue, Bridgewater, Massachusetts, and on September 25, 1903, Nathan and Pearl were married by the bay window in that house. My mother, Dorothea Pearl Benson (1910–1982) was born in 1910 in that house and, in 1932 she married Harold Francis Flood (1909–1992), a member of the Elmwood New Church, by that same bay window. Harold and Dorothea were my parents. I grew up in the house my grandfather built and am a member of the church my grandparents and parents loved.

I was born a Swedenborgian. 

The Lord’s church is spread over the whole globe, and so is universal. All who live a good life according to their own religious beliefs are members of it (*Heaven and Hell* §328).

Merrilee Phinney is the facilities manager and treasurer of the Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church and an active member of the Fryeburg New Church Assembly.

**Why are you a Swedenborgian?
We want to know! Send your story
to Messenger@Swedenborg.org.**



The Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church, circa 1890; Nathan Benson & Pearl Brown, 1903



THE MASSACHUSETTS NEW CHURCH UNION WELCOMES YOU TO BRIDGEWATER!
 SATURDAY, JUNE 27TH – WEDNESDAY, JULY 1ST 2020

The Annual Convention of the Swedenborgian Church is excited to be returning once again to Bridgewater State University, an accommodating and favorite campus for us, conveniently located on the Boston Commuter Rail for easy access. The beautiful Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church is located within easy walking distance and will serve as host to many services and events, including a reunion tour of the crowd favorite Grateful Dead cover band *The Participants*.

Be sure to arrive on Saturday, June 27, in time for the welcome reception on Saturday, 3–5 PM to reconnect with your spiritual family and meet new friends.

The opening of convention, on Saturday evening, will include the church banner procession (bring your banners!) and focus on our *20/20 Spiritual Vision* theme with keynote speaker Devin Zuber, Associate Professor of American Studies, Religion, and Literature at the Center for Swedenborgian Studies. Throughout the convention, worthy and inspiring mini-courses, including one led by Rev. Dr. George F. Dole, will be offered. (See the April 2020 issue of *the Messenger* for more details on mini-courses.)

An active youth program for

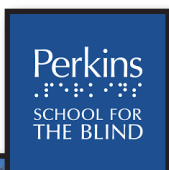
children (ages 5–12) and teens (ages 13–18) will be offered. For details on scholarship and travel assistance please contact Central Office. (Manager@Swedenborg.org or 617.969.4240)

On Sunday, June 28, we'll be offering multiple outing choices. Take a ride on the Cape Cod Canal Friends & Family Music Cruise! This man-made canal, a National Civil Engineering Landmark, is the widest sea level canal (without locks) in the world. It



was built to create more efficient nautical trade routes, opening in July, 1914. Passage through the canal is safer than having to maneuver around 160 miles of dangerous shoals and unpredictable currents, surrounding Cape Cod.

You are invited to take a tour of



Perkins School for the Blind followed by refreshments at the Swedenborg Chapel. Helen Keller was the most famous student to attend the Perkins School for the Blind, and one of the most famous women of her generation. She is well remembered, but some of her story is less well known. Helen was a radical, a socialist, a pacifist and she was devoted to the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg, who was, as she put it, “The light in my darkness.”

After we enjoy a historical tour of the Perkins Institute we will travel to Swedenborg Chapel in Cambridge to enjoy afternoon refreshments and a presentation on the initiative to build the Helen Keller Spiritual Life Center.

Live music and dancing at the Bridgewater New Church or Game Night at the new Elmwood New Church will be a fun way to conclude our outing day and kick-off Convention 2020!

Registration for Convention 2020 will open April 1st. ☪

Book Review

Distant Voices Clearly Heard

Distant Voices: Sketches of a Swedenborgian World View

by John S Haller, Jr. Foreword by Devin Zuber

BY GARY LACHMAN

John S Haller, Jr.'s *Distant Voices: Sketches of a Swedenborgian World View* is an impressive testament to the influence the eighteenth-century Swedish scientist and religious thinker Emanuel Swedenborg had on the modern world. To be sure, Swedenborg's presence has already been noted in several areas, for example, in the impact his work had on poets such as William Blake and Charles Baudelaire, on composers such as Arnold Schoenberg, and even on environmentalism, in the form of John Chapman, better known as Johnny Appleseed, who spread both apple trees and the doctrine of the New Church across North America in the nineteenth century. But like Swedenborg's *Maximus Homo*, or Grand Man—a central theme in the book—the work of the Enlightenment polymath loomed large across practically the whole of the last two centuries, and can be found in some (at first glance) unlikely places.

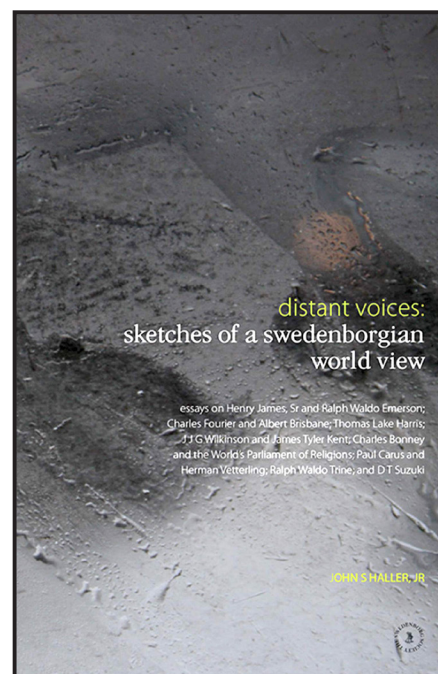
Haller's work goes beyond the familiar examples of Swedenborg's impact, and places him in the context of a wide-ranging progressive sensibility, too diffuse to be called a movement, yet whose disparate elements were nevertheless infused with some common fructifying influence. As Haller shows in these elegant biographical essays, the common catalyst inspiring them all and linking them together is Swedenborg.

Haller's range is considerable, taking in utopian visions of social reform, the metaphysics of New Thought, the rugged individualism of American Transcendentalism, the dark abyss of "vastation," religious pluralism, and

the *satori* of Zen Buddhism, along with several other cultural ports of call. The overall idea informing the free-standing but linked chapters is that of an optimistic vision of personal regeneration and social improvement, which embraces the positive elements of the modern world while rejecting those that deny the validity of the spirit.

Unlike that of our own time, the intellectual milieu of many of the figures in this book did not see science as an opponent of religion, nor was religion seen as an obstacle in the path of our intellectual growth. The unitive vision running throughout the book, which sees science, religion, culture, and morality as all part of the same pursuit—that of a brotherhood of man and union with the Divine—may seem today like a very distant voice indeed. For us, science and religion are radically opposed, and in their most extreme forms fall prey to fundamentalism, a strict literalism that does not unite but sharply divides. Haller's comprehensive survey reminds us that these two human pursuits, each offering its own enlightenment, which Swedenborg himself embraced, were not always so antagonistic. Knowing this, we are justified in the belief that a future union may be possible.

The common themes corraling Haller's suggestive collection are: curiosity about Asian philosophies and religions, the belief in a regenerated society, an experience-based individual spirituality and, of course, Swedenborg. This net of interests allows him a rather eclectic catch. Here we find the social reformer Henry James, Sr. (father to two illustrious sons, Henry Jr. and William), whose presence as a spiritual



pragmatist underscores much of the book; the utopian socialist Charles Fourier and his American advocate, Albert Brisbane; the New Thought philosopher Ralph Waldo Trine, whose namesake, Ralph Waldo Emerson, is another overall guiding spirit; the spiritualist prophet Thomas Lake Harris; Charles Bonney, who made the World's Parliament of Religions of 1893 a reality; the homoeopaths J. J. G. Wilkinson and James Tyler Kent; the Theosophist, Swedenborgian, and Buddhist Herman Vetterling; the theological popularizer Paul Carus; and the apostle of Zen Buddhism Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki, who started his career as a Swedenborgian and remained one throughout it.

This roster gives an idea of the diversity of character and personality that Haller presents and to which this brief review can only allude. The reader is treated to an assortment of creative, influential individuals who, in different but related ways, brought Swedenborgian ideas into a productive mix with notions of world-betterment and the belief in the fundamental unity of all religion. Key to this theme

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Distant Voices Clearly Heard

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is the possibility of personal regeneration, a necessary step in the larger regeneration of society that is not without its perils. Haller's account of the "vastation" of Henry James, Sr., an existential ambush that sent the theologian into a nihilistic tailspin, shows how the start of one's regeneration may begin with a very dark night of the soul. Like others who had been waylaid by such bleak visions—the Swedish playwright and novelist August Strindberg comes to mind—Henry James, Sr. began his recovery through a reading of Swedenborg.

Yet, although Swedenborg's calm voice guided James through the darkness, James himself was unable to say exactly what he had learned from him. As Haller shows, James's many formulations of the insight he had gained all fall short of relating explicitly what it was, and this painful inarticulateness led to splitting several Swedenborgian hairs with his friend Ralph Waldo Emerson.

On a lighter note, Haller's long essay on D. T. Suzuki, which is almost worth the price of admission alone, goes far to show how Swedenborg's radical Christian vision shares much with the sudden illumination of the "Zen experience." An approach to enlightenment that depends more on anti-logic and what is often called "crazy wisdom" than rational persuasion seems far afield from the meticulous and often notoriously dry arguments of the one whom Suzuki called "the Buddha of the North." But when laid out in detail (as Haller does), the meeting points between the two, which Suzuki charted early in his career, seem obvious. Swedenborg spoke of the insights and illuminations he had received from spirits hailing from what he called Great Tartary. Haller shows how in his seminal works on Zen, whose impact reached the Beat and

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show you."

This verse and those that follow describe ancient history. However, the account is now symbolic, and every word points to developments in Jesus of Nazareth's inner life. Here we see Jesus' heart open for the first time to vast love for the whole human race. The immediate consequence was his need to withdraw from engagement with the religious rituals of his community and to step back from the social standing he enjoyed as the result of his achievements. He was also to let go of the pleasure and satisfaction that accompanied his involvement in those practices. The reason was that he was going to need all his physical and mental powers to face what was now happening. For Jesus of Nazareth was about to witness an infinite expansion of his love for all human beings, with limitless insight into their inner states, and with knowledge of their need for salvation.

An overview of the whole process, seen from the human side of the divine-human interaction,

hippie scenes of the 1960s, Suzuki brought the Swedenborgian word to an audience that might otherwise have missed it. ☩



occult. His recent publications include *Dark Star Rising: Magick and Power in the Age of Trump* (2018) and *Beyond the Robot: The Life and Work of Colin Wilson* (2016). Gary was a founding member of the pop group Blondie and, in 2006, was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

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includes the following six stages: **Genesis Chapters 12–15**

1) Jesus' mind opened to its deepest level, within which he felt as God feels and saw as God sees. This introduced Jesus to the central task of his life: to join the inmost of his being, which (uniquely) was God, to his (ordinary) external self. A staggering amount of inner work and outer change would be required.

2) Jesus set out from his formal relationship with the religious community in Galilee to learn how Torah (Genesis in particular) told an ancient story about the gradual rebirth of human beings, and of genuine human community. He knew that divinity was at the heart of his own inner being in a special way, and had an outline of a path to follow (the literal sense of scripture). The first step on the path that lay ahead was his return to a childlike state of innocence, though now as an adult.

Chapter 16–20

3) He saw the vast difference between his vision of the meaning of scripture, and the narrow, parochial application of Torah within religious communities in Galilee and Jerusalem. He argued for more depth in their interpretation of Torah, and for more inward methods of addressing the oppression of his people by outside forces (Rome), as well as the injustice within the Jewish community (at the hands of Herod Antipas). He found himself in one argument after another, unable to change the course of prevailing practices.

Chapters 21–25

4) Jesus returned to practices of prayer and contemplation and to a deeper level of consciousness, through which he realized a state of "oneness with others." Jesus became an immensely attractive human being, noted for his powerful teaching and healing, and prophetic voice. Others came to him to whom he introduced more

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A Reflection on the Glorification

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inward attitudes toward daily conduct: how to love the neighbor, in particular, with a resulting renewal of spiritual community within the Judaism of his day.

However, Jesus was left with a question he could not yet answer: How was his life and teaching going to fulfill the task he realized he had been given, namely, to save not only his own people, but the whole human race? His not knowing the answer to this question was the source of profound grief and doubt at that time in his life. Swedenborg calls this “his most grievous temptation.”

Chapters 26–36

5) Jesus continued to elaborate the quality and content of his teaching. The result was that he discerned that a deeper source of love to the neighbor was going to operate within the heart of those who followed his teaching. He discerned that this was the answer to his previous doubt about the efficacy of his life and teaching: genuine love to the neighbor, grounded in the love of God, along with his ongoing interior transformation, was going to be sufficient for the salvation of people in his community, and beyond.

Chapters 37–50

6) That realization signaled the moment that Jesus could retreat (as he had done periodically) from his public ministry. He entered states of intense study of Torah, prayer, and contemplation to prepare himself for his final journey to Jerusalem. By that time, Jesus experienced oneness with God and humanity, with no separate sense of self. He was ready for what lay ahead.

Swedenborg’s Suggestion that We Can See the Process

According to Swedenborg, our regeneration mirrors the process that Jesus underwent, though on a vastly more limited scale. He writes that we

can understand the glorification process when we see it through the lens of our regeneration.

In order that the Lord might make the human Divine by the ordinary way, He came into the world; that is, it was His will to be born as a human being, was instructed, and was reborn; but with the difference that we are reborn of the Lord, whereas the Lord not only regenerated Himself, but also glorified Himself, that is, made Himself Divine; and further, that we are made new by an influx of charity and faith, but the Lord, by the Divine love which was in Him and which was His. Hence it may be seen that the regeneration of human beings is an image of the glorification of the Lord; or what is the same, that in the process of our regeneration may be seen as in an image, although remotely, the process of the Lord’s glorification (*Arcana Coelestia* [Potts Edition], n. 3138).

When I consider the possibility of seeing an image of the glorification through the lens of regeneration, I am left with a question. Really? How can that be? *Whatever I know about regeneration does not come close to an image of the glorification, not even remotely.*

To discover what I have missed in the dynamic process of regeneration I wondered if I had underestimated the depth of the “inner level” of the mind. Swedenborg suggests this can be the case:

Few if any today know what the inner self and outer self are. They consider the two selves to be one and the same, primarily because they do good and think truth on their own (*Secrets of Heaven* [NCE Edition] § 978).

Swedenborg’s “today,” of course, is in the middle of the eighteenth century; however, I believe this might be as true for me, and perhaps others, in our “today.” Jacob Needleman, the author of many books on the rigors of authentic interiority, lends support

to this notion:

The inner and the outer world have been misunderstood, and this misunderstanding has had disastrous consequences for both Christianity and modern culture. The outer world is not the world of things “out there” in space. The inner world is not the world of thoughts and emotions “inside the psyche.” On the contrary, it is the world of “thoughts and emotions” that is the outer world (*Lost Christianity*, 1980, p. 217).

Elizabeth Boyden Howes, author of *Jesus’ Answer to God*, conveys a telling idea:

Christianity has stressed loving God and the neighbor, but has forgotten and set aside the love of Self. Today the love of Self as the dynamic operative center, intentional in the psyche, reflecting God within the psyche, as a pre-requisite for loving the neighbor, must be carried forward (p. xv).

For many years I have thought there must be a step missing in the command, as I have heard it, “to love God and the neighbor.” Might our looking more deeply for a path to a true self be a necessary pre-condition for genuine love for the other? I believe it is the missing clue to our seeing, as in a mirror, the process of the Lord’s glorification.

Reflecting on the glorification—its beauty, difficulty, and relevance—brings me to observe that a special disposition toward an in-depth search may be required to see the glorification mirrored in our lives. There is, after all, a kind of thinking that serves the phenomena of interior process, that does not dominate them, and that opens to wholeness in our lives and to hope for our beautiful but troubled world. ☸



Rev. Dr. F. Gardiner Perry lives in New Hampshire, he is a regular lecturer at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly, in Fryeburg, Maine.

Under the Broom Tree

BY SHADA SULLIVAN

Sometimes it can be hard to relate to the Bible. Without historical context, many of the stories seem strange to us. But chapter 19 in I Kings is one of those chapters in which the millennia that separate us and the time it was written just fall away. Who cannot resonate with the heart of Elijah's experience? We may not personally be under threat of an evil queen; we may not have a wilderness to which we might flee or a broom bush under which we might pray. But we know what it is to feel like there is something that might destroy our life or happiness, some loss that will devastate us. We know what it is to feel like we need to run away. We know what it is to say, "I have had enough, Lord." We know that feeling of weariness, emptiness, and aloneness.

These feelings are a part of being a human being. Jesus felt all these things, too, in the garden of Gethsemane, on the cross, in being rejected by his hometown, in all those times the disciples just could not understand what he was trying to do. These are truths of our human experience; they are real and we honor how difficult they are.

But, as valid and as real as these truths of *our* personal experience might be, they do not necessarily tell us the truth about God. The ultimate truth is that we are never alone. God is always with us and never withdraws.

Likewise, angels are with us in every moment and always desire to benefit us and do their best to help us. But, the truth is that sometimes, like Elijah, we just don't feel it. At all. What does Swedenborg teach us about these times?

First, it is important to note that not everyone experiences connection to spirit and to God in the same way. We are all unique and, likewise, we will all have unique and different forms of spiritual experience, different ways that we perceive the presence of spirit, different ways we are moved by spirit. Some of us might feel the movement of spirit through music, or prayer, or nature, or silence. Some of us might feel the presence of spirit through ideas, through insight, through words put together in a way that illuminates, through story. Some of us might notice the presence of spirit more literally in sight or sound, or more diffusely through feeling, perception, intuition, or dreams. One kind of experience is not better than another.

Second, Swedenborg teaches that we are not generally supposed to be able to feel our connection to spirit in a way that encroaches on our freedom. Sure, it might seem like it would be comforting to have a literal angel by our side all the time, giving us whatever we need, or an angel showing up in times of challenge to give just the right advice, but the nature of that kind of occurrence can also be somewhat coercive.

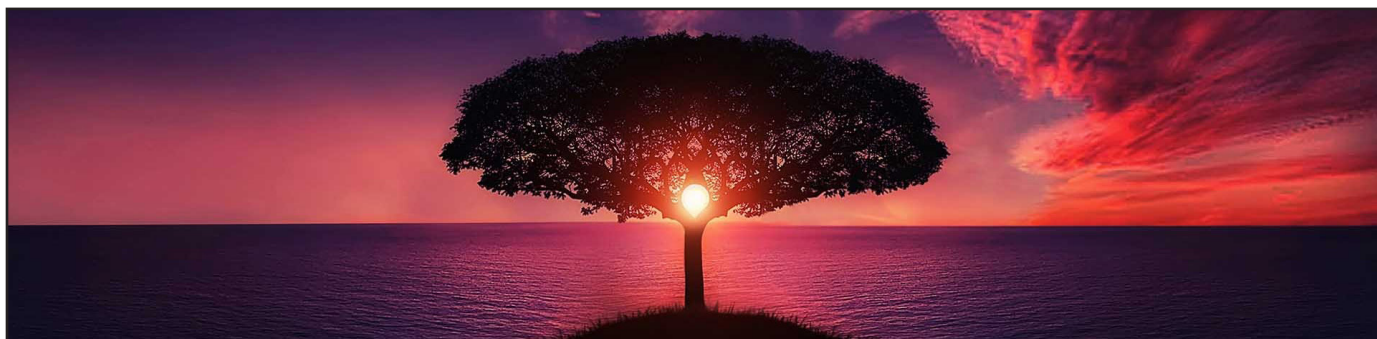
We are not supposed to feel the connection in a way that gives us no choice in acknowledging it. The natural power and transcendence of angels cannot help but naturally influence us, and might well force us into belief, erasing our ability to doubt.

And we need to be able to doubt. Swedenborg writes that doubt is extremely important to our spiritual process:

In addition it should be recognized that it is in accordance with the laws of order that no one should become convinced of the truth instantaneously, that is, should instantaneously be made so sure of the truth that he is left in no doubt at all about it. The reason for this is that when truth is impressed on a person in that kind of way, they become so fully convinced of it that it cannot be broadened in any way or qualified in any way. Truth like this is represented in the next life as that which is hard, not allowing good into itself to make it pliable. This goes to explain why in the next life as soon as some truth is presented through plain experience to good spirits, some opposing idea giving rise to doubt is presented. In this way they are led to think and ponder over whether it is indeed a truth, gather reasons in support of it, and so introduce that truth into their minds by the use of reason. This enables their spiritual vision in respect of that truth to be broadened, seeing even into the ideas that are opposed to it (Emanuel Swedenborg, *Secrets of Heaven* §7298:2).

Angels would never want to take

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Under the Broom Tree

Continued from page 27

away our ability to doubt, to influence our process in a way that ultimately does not serve us over time. So, angels typically work with us in a gentle and nuanced way, using that which is already within us to provoke feelings of hope, positivity, and strength. Swedenborg teaches that there are two reasons for feeling such a separation.

First, we ourselves might have turned away. Angels can only work with what we give them. If we are making choices that are evil and unkind, if we are entertaining and defending false notions, and if we do these things to serve our own selfhood and self-preservation, it is harder for angels to be present and useful to us. Think of it like turning our cell phone off, or literally turning our back towards a friend and plugging our ears.

We all make choices, and sometimes those choices will privilege our egos, our self-absorption, and our defensiveness. These states of mind are less open to spirit and more naturally closed and inward-looking. We can't receive calls with our phones turned off. We can't hear our friend with our fingers in our ears. Yet, there is nothing permanent about this. We can always choose to turn our phone back on or turn around. A friend, even the best and most compassionate, might at some point leave if we ignore them for too long, but God and angels never will. They continue to work as best they can for us, as closely as they can, even if we are not letting them in.

The second reason that connection to spirit might feel faint is if we are actively experiencing temptation. The Swedenborgian notion of temptation is a little more robust than our current cultural one, which generally seems to be about either seduction or an irresistible piece of chocolate cake. But really, true temptation is nothing other than a situation that exposes a

challenge to our spiritual or moral conscience. We might just call it "spiritual struggle." We come across these situations all the time, in lesser and greater forms, whereby we experience varying levels of agitation, confusion, sadness, and anger. There are too many examples of spiritual struggle to list, and all of them deeply personal. We can all remember times we have been tempted to walk by, withhold love, give up hope, discount ourselves, make an assumption, lash out, close our eyes. We think of Elijah, standing up to an evil regime, but empty, afraid, not sure what to next or how to move forward, doubting that anything he did mattered. This is temptation and it isn't fun.

Not that it is much of a comfort, but it is through these experiences of temptation that we are forged, that we are propelled forward in our spiritual journey. Through them we shed notions and ideas that do not serve love, we let go of desires or fears that hold us back from doing good in the world. Temptations of many kinds are necessary, so that we might become progressively more heavenly.

But this is difficult and challenging work, and in those times when we are consumed by our own feelings, when it feels like we are fighting for survival, it can be hard to notice how God and angels are present with us. It is like having the phone on but not being able to hold it to our ear, or letting our friend hold us but crying so hard we can't hear what they are saying. This is okay. Angels have nothing but compassion for us in this state. And again, there is nothing we can do that would make them leave, for they have been through all of it just as we have, and they know how hard it is.

But even more, they are not simply passive during times of temptation. Swedenborg teaches that angels and spirits are connected to our thoughts and feelings. When our selfish feelings

and our false thoughts are in conflict with our good feelings and true thoughts, then the spirits and angels with us are in conflict as well. The angels are fighting for us. We heard in our reading that the angels defend us from within. That reading continues:

As stated, temptations arise primarily when a person is becoming spiritual, for at that time we are gaining a spiritual understanding of the truths of doctrine. The person themselves is often unaware that this is happening; even so, the angels present with us see spiritual concerns within our natural ones since our interiors at this time are open towards heaven (*Ibid* §5036:3).

What is most amazing is that the angels are not only fighting for us as we are now, they are fighting for who they know we can become. The angels present with us see spiritual concerns within our natural ones, since our interiors at this time are open towards heaven. The angels know something about us more deeply than we ourselves know it. The angels see us truly, they see what is still obscure to us yet they see the best of us and they draw that forth and protect it. What faith! Within our natural concerns they see the infinite and eternal, they see the heart of the matter, even if we can't see it. They see our yearning and our deepest hoping, they see the cracks where the light can get in, they see our openness and they fight for it, even as we fail and stumble and fall. They bring us food and water, love and insight, nourishment for the journey. They believe in us. They say, "Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you" (1 Kings 19:7). They don't fix our problems for us, but they give us the sustenance to make it to the mountain of God. And most of the time we don't even know they are doing it. ☩



Rev. Shada Sullivan is the pastor of The Church of the Holy City in Wilmington, Delaware.

Swedenborgians in Australia

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Lecture at the Adelaide New Church Retreat

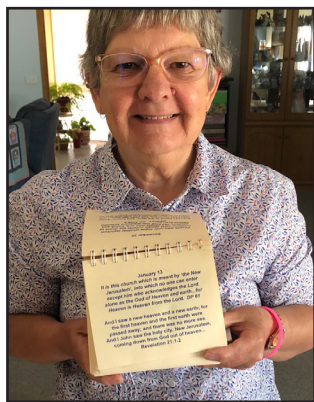
The next leg of my trip was a flight to the New Church Family Retreat in Adelaide. I was hoping to see some of the landscape from the plane, but it was mostly smoke. The retreat center was nestled in the hills overlooking Adelaide. We only had one smoke scare when the wind changed directions one night, and we awoke with concern. The fire was twenty miles away and no current danger. The views were variable dependent on the wind, and the magpies were known to mimic warning sirens for the fires. The trees and lawn were graced with laughing kookaburra, crimson rosella, cockatoo, pink galah, myna, and other smaller birds that wouldn't stay still long enough to identify.

The best part of the retreat was conversations with the Swedenborgians gathered from all around Australia and New Zealand as we shared meals, tea, lectures, singing, sitting on the veranda, and worship. They asked about retreats and camps in the US and were envious of the numbers of children and teenagers that are attending. I shared Rev. Sage Cole's video about the proposed Helen Keller Spiritual Life Center, and they were interested in partnering. Many picked up the wrist bands she had sent and commented

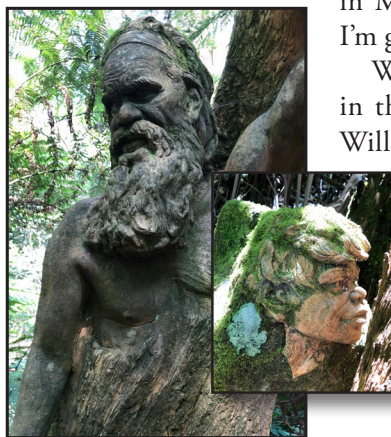
about their esteem and love of Helen Keller. One woman remembered when Helen came to Australia and visited her Swedenborgian church. Some members talked about their love and interest in *Logopraxis*, a type of meditative reading, commitment, and sharing of personal insights from the Bible and Swedenborg's writings. Like here, their church attendance is declining, but they are trying new ways to worship and increase interest in living a spiritual life of use. When five are gathered it is called a group, and for a society there needs to be twelve.

At the end of the weeklong retreat I joined the Robinsons for a two-day road trip to Ballarat. They know how to enjoy road trips, and whenever we saw something of interest we would stop and explore. I was thoroughly enthralled with the wide variety of trees, towering with beauty and inspiration. To attract tourism, there is a route where the grain elevators have a variety of pictures painted on the huge columns. And the wheat fields reminded me of Kansas.

When we arrived at their home, Judy Robinson showed me the calendar her family uses daily for devotions. She did not realize it had originated from Kansas. In 1996, members of the churches in Pawnee



Judy Robinson with the Swedenborgian perpetual calendar made by members of the Kansas Association in 1996



William Ricketts Sanctuary

Rock and Pretty Prairie had each taken one month to write their favorite Swedenborgian quotations and a Bible verse for each day, and we had put together this perpetual calendar—small world connected with love.

I had the opportunity to travel to the true Australian outback with Rev. Shada Sullivan's parents to their home in Majorca, Victoria. Her father, Barry Rabone, shared stories of living in South Africa, where his grandfather was a trustee of the New Church Mission, and his life as an art teacher in Australia. Shada's mother fixed us a typical Australian lunch complete with Pavlova, meringue filled with fruit and whipped cream. I had only drooled over pictures posted on Facebook by Shada.

Next, the Rabones drove me to Melbourne, where I was entertained and hosted by Neville and Alexis Jarvis. Neville had arranged my route around the country for three weeks so I could see as much and meet as many Swedenborgians as possible. It worked splendidly. We took three day trips, touring the city, up mountains, along the ocean, and a couple stops for tea, and yes, it was a bit smokey here also. We had a picnic along the coast, and I took, what seemed to this landlocked girl from Kansas, some gorgeous photos of the coastline. When we got back to their home, they showed me what the views had looked like from photos in March 2019, before the fires. I'm going to have to go back.

We did find an amazing stop in the Dandenong Range at the William Ricketts Sanctuary. In the midst of lush ferns and towering trees, we experienced the harmony between art and nature. The artist lived amongst the Aboriginal tribes to understand their way of life and connection with

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Passages

New Members

The Cambridge Society of the New Jerusalem joyfully welcomed **Carl von Essen** into Society membership on Sunday, February 2, 2020. Carl has been a longtime friend of Swedenborg Chapel and a contributor to *the Messenger*.

Deaths

Mary J. Dysinger Perry of Fryeburg, Maine, entered the spiritual world, January 16, 2020, at her home, with her devoted husband, Lawrence Perry, by her side. Mary was born March 17, 1942, in Arlington, Massachusetts, the daughter of John H. and Ellen (Twitchell) Jordan. Her greatest personal achievement was to become an intermediate cello player in her later years. She stated, "The cello is the light of my life." She was a grateful member of the Fryeburg New Church.



CSS Winter Intensive

Continued from page 21

During the week all the students met with the CAM committee to discuss our course work, ministerial path, and what plans we had for the future. CAM had several meetings during the week, as this is one of the times they are all able to meet face-to-face.

The last session of the week was titled, Workshopping Personal Ministries. Many of us spoke about our current places of ministry, what challenges we face, our strengths and weaknesses, and where we see ourselves in the future. Again, this allowed all of the students to learn more about each other and our churches. There were many churches represented including The Garden Church, Chrysalis

Swedenborgians in Australia

Continued from page 29

nature. His clay carved creations of the people seem to emanate from the rocks and trees in the sanctuary, expressing and honoring their tradition.

From Melbourne, I flew to the capital, Canberra, and was met by Cor Visser-Marchant. We talked a lot about what it is to be relatively new to Swedenborg; how it opens a more inclusive and loving God that makes

Retreat Center and Swedenborg Sanctuary, Urbana Swedenborgian Church, Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church, a home based Swedenborgian group, and Hillside Community Church. All of these churches have a common doctrine in Swedenborg's teachings, yet each student brought something unique and special to the Winter Intensive.

Our last night together had a special energy about it as I watched everyone sitting together in the main living area, talking and laughing. As I observed groups of students and ministers conversing, I thought to myself that this is what heaven must be like: all of us like-minded individuals together, enjoying each other and just being happy.

I know that lifelong friendships were made through our week together and that we are looking forward to being together again. As we all departed on Thursday morning, there were hugs all around. It seemed as though we all had a better sense of our part in the world of ministry. The Winter Intensive is appropriately named. I know that many of us are looking forward to the next time we gather in Berkeley, California, to once again tackle the world according to Swedenborg. ☩



Kelly Milne is lifelong member of the Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church and a Licensed Pastor student through CSS.

sense in this diverse world. Cor loves to talk about life and Swedenborg and is trying to find a way to bring others to the words that opened his mind about God. His wife, Sally, has a long tradition within the New Church in Australia and shared her concerns and joys as we toured the zoo and surrounds of Canberra. Their sweet daughter Holly made a list of all the "Australian specialties" I had to try before I left. We went to the supermarket for Tim Tams, Anzac biscuits, and caramel slices. When we got home, she made me fairy



Fairy bread - recipe included above!

bread, which you all must make for your kids—white bread, spread with butter, sprinkled with rainbow sprinkles, and cut into triangles. All this, and I was only there for a day and half.

Rev. David Moffat, the president of the Australian New Church, took a day to show me around the countryside looking for kangaroos. We found a mother and her joey. As we were driving to the government buildings, the sky literally opened up and poured rain and hail on us. The rain was appreciated, but the hail took out his back window and smashed the front windshield. We huddled together under a blanket, being pelted with glass and hail, waiting for it to stop. What a way to make a friend for life!

This is just a beginning attempt to share this trip as the first president of the General Convention to visit the New Church in Australia, at least that anyone there remembers. The smoke may have dampened some pictures and clouded the views, but in no way interfered with the discussions, friendships, and the understanding of fellow Swedenborgians living a half a world away. We are all one and connected in more ways than separate us. Thank you, Australia. Please take care as we all work to take care of our planet. ☩

What's Happening

Church Calendar

- **March, 2020:** Palestine and Israel Trip, CSS January term
- **April 24–26, 2020:** SPLATz Spring Retreat, Allenton, MI
- **May 22–25, 2020:** SCYL Spring Retreat, Allenton, MI
- **June 27–July 1, 2020:** 196th Annual Convention, Bridgewater, MA
- **July 19–25, 2020:** Paulhaven Summer Camp, Upper Mann Lake, Alberta
- **July 18–26, 2020:** Almont Summer School, Allenton, MI
- **August 1–16, 2020:** Fryeburg New Church Assembly, Fryeburg, ME
- **August 28–31, 2020:** Gathering Leaves, Purley Chase, England

Free* Hosanna Hymnals

Does your church, camp, or retreat center need more *Hosanna* hymnals? Central Office has a surplus (400) of the beloved hymnal at its remote storage facility, Iron Mountain. Contact Central Office email at Manager@Swedenborg.org or phone 617-969-4240.

*You will receive an invoice for the cost of shipping and handling. Central Office will pay for the cost of retrieving the boxes from Iron Mountain.

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Helen Keller Spiritual Life Center Lecture Tour

Join Rev. Sage Cole to learn more about the amazing story of Helen Keller's life and faith!

- **Friday, March 20** at 7:00 PM
Lord's New Church, 1725 Huntingdon Road, Huntingdon Valley, PA
- **Sunday, March 22** at 2:00 PM
Church of the Holy City, 1118 N. Broom Street, Wilmington, DE
- **Wednesday, April 14** at 7:00 PM
Swedenborg Memorial Library at Urbana University, 579 College Way, Urbana, OH
- **May 18–21** *Institute on Theology & Disability at Western Theological Seminary*, 101 E. 13th St., Holland, MI

Find out more about HKSLC events:
www.hkslc.org/events

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

Gathering Leaves

Swedenborgian Women's Event
 August 28th – August 31st 2020

A gracious benefactor has confirmed that they will pay all deposits and balances to Purley Chase for *all women* attending Gathering Leaves 2020!

Because of this generous and amazing offer, over half of the 50 reservations available have already been booked.

Be sure to register soon to ensure your registration!
<https://tinyurl.com/PrlyChsBook>

There are three things that hang together and cannot be separated: love, wisdom, and useful life endeavor.

— Emanuel Swedenborg

Calligraphy Quotes by Myrrh Brooks
 @myrrhbrooks on Instagram

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The latest "signature" dinner at the FNCA is new:

Jumble by Jason Greenwood
 Answers will be printed in the next issue.

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.

Celebrate Helen Keller Sundays with Your Congregation this Spring!

Rev. Sage Cole, in her efforts to develop and build the [Helen Keller Spiritual Life Center](#), at Swedenborg Chapel in Cambridge, Massachusetts, invites you to hold a Helen Keller Sunday this spring at your church!

What is a Helen Keller Sunday?

Helen Keller was one of the great saints of our Swedenborgian tradition, and her life and faith continue to inspire. A Helen Keller Sunday would be a time in worship to lift up and celebrate her life and to be inspired by her faith—a time to tell her story to a new generation and an opportunity to join in supporting the development of the Helen Keller Spiritual Life Center.

What support will we receive to plan our Helen Keller Sunday?

We will send you a packet of material for planning your worship service, including

- The children's book *Helen's Big World: The Life of Helen Keller* by Doreen Rappaport to use for a children's talk or Sunday school lesson
- A video presentation by Rev. Sage Cole on Helen Keller and her faith that can be used in place of a sermon or shown before or after worship with the congregation.
- Sermon resources
- Hymn suggestions

How will holding a Helen Keller Sunday be able to help the development of HKSLC?

The creation of the Helen Keller Spiritual Life Center is not going to happen in isolation. It is an initiative that includes people across the Swedenborgian movement to work together. We believe that the work of raising up Helen Keller's legacy is one that can both reach back into our Swedenborgian history, while taking forward a legacy that calls us to bringing a little bit more heaven here on earth. By holding a Helen Keller Sunday you will help to spread the word and invite more involvement! We would ask that

- Schedule your Helen Keller Sunday and let us know when it is so we can promote it, too.
- Share the pamphlet and materials about the HKSLC with your congregation.
- Have a sign up sheet for people to join [Helen's Circle](#).
- Take an offering and invite people to give financially to the work of the HKSLC.
- Send us photos of your event!

Contact Rev. Sage Cole at Sage@SwedenborgChapel.org to plan your Helen Keller Sunday today. ☪