



For Heaven's Sake

Keynote Address Delivered at the Virtual Convention of the Swedenborgian Church

BY GEORGE F. DOLE

The vision on which our church is founded is that of the holy city, the new Jerusalem, descending to earth. This has global implications. It represents the fulfillment of the prayer, “Thy will be done: as in heaven so upon the earth.” It gives new form to the gospel, the good news proclaimed to the shepherds, the promise of “peace on earth.” We should, I believe, revere it as the herald of true globalism, and embrace it as supremely beautiful.

Globalism has deep roots. Over the millennia, empires have risen and fallen, getting larger and larger in a kind of two-steps-forward/one-step-backward pattern until the eighteenth century. Secular historians would credit the enlightenment with the quantum leap that started then—we would see that enlightenment as the effect of a *last judgment*. That is what Swedenborg witnessed in 1757; and just five years earlier, by tying a key onto a kite string during a storm, Ben Franklin proved that static electricity and lightning were the same. His correct understanding of the nature of electricity paved the way for a future that came on with a rush. The sheer speed of electricity suddenly shrank the globe. By the end of the nineteenth century, communication that had taken days or weeks could now happen in almost instantaneously.

And now? This past spring, I attended a meeting of Swedenborgian clergy that included individuals from Maine

to California—and one, Hunter Roberts, from Barcelona. I didn't know where she was physically until I asked, but she was just as *present* as everyone else. Any thoughtless resistance to globalism may be swimming upstream against the flow of providence, which seems to have tremendous momentum.

Also “now,” we are presented with another aspect of globalism, a most unwelcome and compelling one. A virus

Any thoughtless resistance to globalism may be swimming upstream against the flow of providence, which seems to have tremendous momentum.

has encircled the globe. It entered our country with no visa. It paid no tariff. It neither sends nor reads tweets. We knew it was coming and could not wall it out. It is a wakeup call, a very shrill alarm. We have known for some time that we live on a tiny gem of a planet, in an obscure corner of an immense universe, with the probable nearest star 4.3 light years away—about twenty-five trillion miles. At our present speed of space travel, it would take about 78,000 years to get there—with no guarantee that it has a habitable planet in orbit around it. I wouldn't worry too much about aliens from outer space. Let's face it: geographically, we are all alone, and all together, and our world seems vast to us only because we are so cosmically myopic.

Astronaut Edgar Mitchell saw the problem with exemplary clarity, and pointed straight toward its resolution. He reported an experience that changed the course of his life. He wrote,

It began with the breathtaking experience of seeing planet earth floating in the immensity of space—the incredible beauty of a splendid blue-and-white jewel floating in the vast, black sky. I underwent a religious-like peak experience, in which the presence of divinity became almost palpable, and I *knew* that life in the universe was not just an accident based on random processes. This knowledge, which came directly, intuitively, was not a matter of discursive reasoning or logical abstraction. It was not deduced from information perceptible by the sensory organs. The realization was subjective, but it was knowledge every bit as real and compelling as the objective data the navigational program or the communications system was based on.

Then my thoughts turned to daily life on the planet. With that, my sense of wonderment gradually turned into something like anguish. I realized that at that very moment people were fighting wars; committing murder and other crimes; lying, cheating, and struggling for power and status; abusing the environment by polluting the water and air, wasting natural resources, and ravaging the land; acting out of lust and greed; and hurting others through

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Editor's Corner



Reflecting on Heavenly Community

Shortly after completing my first full issue of *the Messenger*, all of our lives were changed by CO-

VID-19. I have felt it appropriate to continue the theme of my editorials and my personal experiences with how it has been affecting me. I do this hoping that it can somehow help any of you—even just one—not to feel like you are alone in whatever experience you may have that is even slightly similar to mine. We are all experiencing unique, turbulent times—our emotions are in a stretched place that we could have never imagined. Yet here we are, pushed to our limits, seeking some normalcy where truly almost none is to be found.

The pandemic is exposing cracks in the armor, flaws we had never even

considered, and now we need to come up with new solutions to heal them. Chaos before order. This has never felt more true or relevant. What can we do to keep moving forward? Work towards fixing the cracks—explore the new ways available to strengthen the bonds.

I have felt an outpouring of love and connection though the shared experience of our 2020 (virtual) Annual Convention. There were so many question marks beforehand: Is this what people really need right now? Is all of this work for nothing? Is everyone sick of sitting in front of a screen? (Well, maybe there are quite a few who are sick of their screen by now.) But as soon as Virtual Convention started, it was evident that, yes, our community was thirsting for each other, longing to be together, and truly experiencing each other's churches and ministries in a way none of us had before. Witnessing and participating in the comment field chat throughout the Virtual Parade of Ministries made all the work the Virtual Convention Committee put in worth it. People who normally would not have been able to experience an in person convention, were now able to be together, and strengthen the bonds of our spiritual community.

I was fortunate to be able to attend the recent virtual Almont Summer School. Going to Almont has been on my list for many years, and now, due to the pandemic, I was finally able to attend many of their events—virtually. The theme they chose was Community, covering from hellish to heavenly. I found myself able to connect with every lecture I attended; all of them hit a chord with different aspects of my life, and I found myself able to truly reflect on what it means to be in heavenly, spiritual community. They welcomed me into their virtual space and their spiritual community.

The bonds of our extended spiritual community are so special, and some

of my favorite experiences with them happen with people I've never met. So often I have met a new person from our Swedenborgian community and felt an instant connection, a powerful reminder of what we have within our spiritual community. These virtual experiences are no exception. We are able to share experiences together in a new way, at a safe distance, but closer than ever before. We have one more virtual experience coming right up with [Virtual Fryeburg New Church Assembly](#), I hope to see many of you there to continue to strengthen the bonds of our beautiful, heavenly community.

—Beki Greenwood

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the Messenger

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President's Report



The Year of the Spiritual World: 2020–21

*President's Message given during the Virtual Convention of the Swedenborgian Church
by Rev. Jane Siebert*

Watching the Virtual Parade of Ministries (Now, available on our [YouTube channel](#)) reminds me why we continue to gather together to have church. For some it is in traditional buildings—loved, built, and preserved by generations of Swedenborgians, like Wilmington, Delaware; Kitchener, Ontario; Pawnee Rock, Kansas; San Francisco, California, and many others. Or it might be in a new church building like Elmwood, Massachusetts, that was built to replace the one that was no longer safe. Many societies have decided to sell their big church buildings (most recently San Diego, California, and Cleveland, Ohio) and use the funds to support new church initiatives, our camps, retreat centers, and youth programs. We know the church is not the building, however; we still honor these sacred spaces filled with memories and the rich legacies and say, “*Thank you good and faithful servants.*” They are the foundation upon which we continue to build.

We have seen the Garden Church grow and blossom in an empty city lot in San Pedro, California. Our newest church is also in California, Agapao Church in Orange County, which means Love of Christ for Mankind. They meet in the

pastor's home.

Other churches also meet in people's homes like Calgary, Canada, and the Home Church in Byrn Athyn, Pennsylvania, or create worship space in a coffee shop like Silver City, New Mexico, or a club building, like Royal Oak, Michigan. We are also proud of our camps like Almont, Fryeburg, and Paulhaven, where people may gather only once a year, but church definitely happens, and for many it is their church.

The ministry of the Swedenborgian Community Online, established over ten years ago, has led the way to show how to connect with others virtually. Now, with the pandemic, we have all followed. Church happens via Zoom, Facebook, YouTube, or a telephone call—because we are the church.

Swedenborg lays it out in *Heavenly Secrets*: “The church, like heaven, is in us.” We are the church, and Swedenborg reminds us, there will always be a church. The external form may change, but the internal of the church, which is love to the Lord and charity toward the neighbor, will not change. This has always been and will always be, with the indwelling spirit of the Divine in each of us. “The church comes from the Lord and it exists in people,” as we try “to live according to the commandments.”

But there are many forms of external worship which guide our lives and actions. The church is not complete without both—the internal church us, which instills the desire to do good and help one another, *and* the external, experiential, sacred, spiritual community of worship which encourages us, brings us close to the love of the Divine, and shows us how to carry forth that love to the neighbor and the Lord.

Each member of the General Council has four ministries that they contact twice a year. Through these connections we hear of the good uses that our ministries are offering in their communities. This is even more evident during this pandemic where some of the members of our churches and communities

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Reflections on our 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge

BY PAGE MORAHAN AND ROBERT MCCLUSKEY

From March 30 to April 19, 2020 Rev. Robert McCluskey and Dr. Page Morahan participated in the sixth annual 21-day online challenge offered by Food Solutions of New England dealing with Racial Equity and the Food System.¹ The challenge was to absorb, process, and reflect upon an enormous amount of information, and to share our thoughts and feelings with each other every other day. There were also weekly whole group Zoom meetings.

¹ Food Solutions of New England (FSNE) 21 day challenge on racial equity in the food system (<https://foodsolutionsne.org/>; <https://foodsolutionsne.org/21-day-racial-equity-habit-building-challenge/>)

“The racism that has been present in this land since before the founding of this nation, a nation built on the forced labor of kidnapped Africans and the displacement and genocide of Indigenous people, represents America’s original sin. The history of the US is one of the halting, tentative steps toward repenting of that sin, juxtaposed against white people doubling down on racist systems, structures, and beliefs. It’s important to note that repentance does not mean feeling bad or sorry but rather stopping, turning around, and going in a new direction. We are at a moment of national decision, between repentance on the one hand and active retreat from that progress on the other, meaning the reaffirmation and reinstatement of America’s original sin.”

Jim Wallis, *Sojourners*,
April 2020

We learned that the themes of racial equity and food equity are closely intertwined; we looked sometimes at the former and sometimes at the latter, and other times at their interaction. Racial injustice has been part of American society from before there was a United States. And the production of, distribution of, and access to affordable, quality food has been affected at every stage by racist ideas and policies. Production and distribution involve a great deal of strenuous labor and low wages, with the workforce predominantly composed of low income people and those marginalized because of skin color. Meanwhile, access to quality food is limited for those very same people.

None of this, of course, is explicit. Rather, unearned advantages routinely fall to Whites, while others—notably Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans—have routinely been denied these same advantages. These disparities have evolved over hundreds of years, all stemming from the belief that some people are superior to other people, and therefore more deserving.

Each of the three weeks had an overall theme: Digging In, Healing, Regenerating and Re-Patterning. Each day we received an email lesson that started with a short introduction, followed by links to articles and videos relating to that topic, as well as numerous links to additional resources. Besides being sizeable, the material was relevant, moving, and very well-documented. Examples of daily topics include: Racial Identity; Food and Farmworkers; Whiteness and Anti-Blackness; Structural Racism & the Racial Wealth Gap; Raising the Next Generations.

In this article, we will look at a few topics which spoke to us, as white people working in predominantly white organizations.

White Privilege and Racial Identity Formation

Here we learned about racial socialization and conditioning, how each of us, from birth, absorbed the thoughts, beliefs, and feelings about race from those in authority—parents and relatives, friends and teachers, media, etc. We also learned how racial identity formation develops in distinctively different ways for Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians and Native Americans. Whites internalize attitudes of superiority, while the other groups internalize attitudes of inferiority.

The course emphasized that white privilege is *invisible and ubiquitous*; it defines our societal norms—who are Whites and others who are not—and arises *inevitably* from our society’s structures and policies.²

White privilege is not invisible to the other groups, and we learned a bit about what it is like to experience white privilege from the outside.

We were then led to explore the issue of white privilege and black disadvantage. In the sequence for white development of racial identity, the following steps occur:

1. Contact: view self as color-blind.
2. Disintegration: have guilt and shame that white European Americans did

² How many of these 12 privileges (mostly unearned) do you have? Contact Page Morahan, psmorahan@gmail.com for a 1-page questionnaire.

Racial Equity Challenge

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- such awful things, and viewed Native Americans and African Americans and Asian Americans as less than human beings.
3. Reintegration: feeling superior, I am better than others, deserve more because I work for it.
 4. Pseudo-independence: look to Blacks to educate me.
 5. Immersion/Emersion: genuine attempt to connect to own white identity and be anti-racist.
 6. Autonomy: clear understanding of and positive connection to own white racial identity while also actively pursuing social justice.

The term “racism” is emotionally charged, and different for different people.

Levels of Racism

The term “racism” is emotionally charged, and different for different people. Much of the misunderstanding and blockage that occurs when racism is discussed stems from a lack of clarity about the different forms and effects it can have. During week two, we explored four distinct levels or types of racism: personal, interpersonal, institutional, and systemic (in other words: you, you and those from different races, General Convention, USA and Canada).

Personal: Here we focused on our own experience of “growing into” white privilege. Unlike the luxury afforded to Whites, Blacks must learn to live in at least two worlds early on. Whites do not have to negotiate that; their world is white. One result is that whites live in relative ignorance of the other groups, and these groups live with a deeper wisdom of what is really happening. “Internalization” is a helpful idea in understanding how

racism generates genuinely distinct world-views.

Interpersonal: As we said, discussions about racism can be emotionally charged. This is often used as a reason to suspend the discussion, to avoid conflict or hurt feelings. The irony is that this emotional response is precisely why such discussions are needed.³ Racism is not a theoretical problem to be solved, but a deeply personal, subjective set of conflicts that need to be resolved; hence the need for dialogue. Several models were offered that are designed to facilitate such needed discussions.

Institutional: Here we focused primarily, though not exclusively, on General Convention. Several great resources were provided for analyzing where an organization might place itself along the spectrum from all white to anti-racist. Other resources were provided for determining readiness, and for analyzing power and governance issues as an organization begins exploration of such a journey.⁴

Systemic: We learned that, underlying everything, there is the societal norm that white is good, better, more beautiful than black (or other races)—a norm created through institutionally racist policies enacted and evolved by racist policy-makers during the past centuries.⁵ The reality is that “there is nothing wrong with any of the racial groups and everything wrong with individuals...who think there is something wrong with any of the racial groups.”⁶

Reparations

This issue has been at the center of racial discussions since 1865, when

³ Robin DiAngelo. *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*. Beacon Press, 2018.

⁴ See Tools to Implement, a section on webpage: <https://foodsolutionsne.org/racial-equity-challenge-resources/>

⁵ Ibram X. Kendi. *How to be an Antiracist*. One World, NY: 2019, p. 222.

⁶ Ibid. p. 227.

General William Tecumseh Sherman offered “fourty acres and a mule” to freed slaves. This offer, however, was soon reversed by Lincoln’s successor, Andrew Johnson. In our theology, as well as in the principles of AA, making amends is an essential part of genuine repentance.

And yet discussions around reparations routinely generate more heat than light, more reactive emotion than progressive reason. Common responses include, “I didn’t own slaves;” “that was a long time ago;” “life is fair now and everyone is rightly on their own.” In short, white guilt leads us to focus on wrongs in the distant past, perpetrated by others, and to ignore our *current* white responsibility to deal with the ongoing aftermath of those wrongs.

The course distinguished between transformative and transactional reparations. Transactional reparations focus on money; another topic that routinely generates more heat than light! In contrast, transformative reparations focus on the bigger picture: *racial justice in society*. All human endeavors have a financial or economic dimension, and racial justice is no different. And it is precisely this dimension that is often seized upon to the exclusion of the bigger picture. Perhaps you remember that old bumper sticker which speaks clearly to our shifting priorities: “That’ll be the day when public schools are fully funded and the Navy has to hold a bake sale to raise money.”

Reparations as transactional often narrows our focus, seeing our life together in terms of winners and losers, givers and takers, the deserving and the undeserving: with those in power deciding who is who.

Reparations as transformative sees our life together in terms of mutual inter-dependence, connected one to another.

Individual and Systemic Actions

A general theme that emerged as

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Racial Equity Challenge

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we progressed through the Challenge was a tension between the individual and the system in which the individual lives. Put somewhat crudely, we see an either/or mentality at work when we ask who is responsible for racial injustice? Who is responsible to address this injustice? Individuals or the system?

What we came away with was to move to *both/and*, away from either/or actions. On an individual level for Page: I came away with a greater commitment to support local agricultural and food enterprises as a way to help society move towards a more geographically dispersed food system that is less reliant on agri-business and long food distribution chains. On the systemic level, I have committed to various all-vote efforts, so that the voices of *all* Americans can be felt in our policy-making system.

For Robert: Individual reflection was critical. I found the discussions of white privilege, while familiar, were presented in such a way as to shed new light on the issue. I reflected more deeply on my upbringing, identifying numerous instances when white privilege was tacitly passed on to me and my siblings. I saw more clearly how I had internalized my early environment, a schizoid blend of virtuous rhetoric and unexamined privilege. I noticed that while I never intentionally set out to become “privileged,” it nevertheless happened. My responsibility now is to acknowledge and deal with it—knowing that I am not guilty and not innocent. In fact, it’s not about *me*, rather it’s about our institutionally racialized policies that have led to a racialized society.⁷

Being white is not bad; but thinking

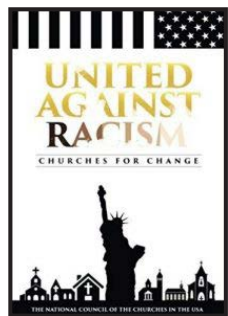
7 Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith. *Divided by Faith – Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*. Oxford University Press, NY. 2000.

that white is better is bad; i.e., detrimental to our spiritual health!

I also reflected on past efforts to be involved in systemic change, through my work with the National Council on Churches, and my attempts to bring much of that work back to Convention. I confess I was only partly successful, as most efforts are. This challenge again helped me find a balance between individual and systemic change, and to remember that we can’t do one without doing the other.

Looking ahead

1. We are thinking of how we might move forward with our learning, and are both participating in a course on how Whites can speak more effectively with skeptic anti-racist and post-racist Whites.⁸ We are continuing to learn *much!*



2. We have been active with the Social Justice Committee, which already sent two letters to many churches within Convention, encouraging them to use the National Council of Churches book *United Against Racism*⁹ and providing structure about possible processes. Unfortunately, with the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s unlikely that much has been accomplished.

3. Since we wrote this article, awareness has increased immensely about racial injustice in the US due to the deaths of several African Americans at the hands of police. This might be an opportune time offer a Zoom course using *United Against Racism*⁹ and these materials. We also note that there is now an active Manifold

8 <https://www.whiteallytoolkit.com/>

9 National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. *United Against Racism—Churches for Change*. Friendship Press, NY. 2018

Angels Facebook group within Convention seeking to address these issues; this group has published two newsletters on the issue of police brutality and the intersection of race and LGBTQ+ issues.

4. We have spoken with Rev. Cory Bradford-Watts about scheduling a Zoom interview for SwedenborgianCommunity.org.

5. Looking ahead to Convention 2021, we believe it would be useful to offer a mini-course focusing on issues raised in this article. Possible topics include: white privilege, racial identity formation, reparations, and the four levels of racism (individual/interpersonal/institutional, systemic). ☒



Dr. Page S. Morahan, has spent her career in academic medicine as a faculty member and university administrator, and creating leadership programs to advance women faculty and health professions faculty around the world. She has been a long time member and board member of the Swedenborgian Community On-Line ministry, and serves as the lay representative on the Committee for Admission to Ministry.

Ordained in 1984, Rev. Robert McCluskey has pastored churches in Portland, Maine, and New York City, and now administers rites and sacraments at the Wayfarer’s Chapel.



Correction

“The Name of the Lord” by Rev. Robert Evan McCluskey appearing in the June 2020 issue was missing several unintentionally omitted footnotes. A fully footnoted version of this article is available on the website here: [The Messenger: Corrections](http://TheMessenger.org/Corrections)

The Year of the Spiritual World

Continuing Life

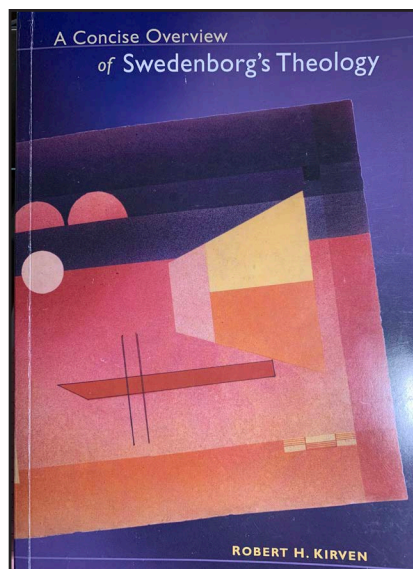
Excerpts from A Concise Overview of Swedenborg's Theology

BY ROBERT H. KIRVEN, COMPILED BY JIM LAWRENCE

I deliberately depart from the most direct translation of Swedenborg when I write of “continuing life” instead of “life after death” for the simple reason that death is an illusion. “People who talk about ‘life after death,’” the late great Paul Tillich declared in a sermon I attended in Harvard Chapel in the early 1960s, “either don’t mean ‘life’ or they don’t mean ‘death.’” Tillich’s basic beliefs on this point evolved through several stages and are too complex and debatable to be detailed here,¹ but his logic is formidable. For two or three years after that sermon, I tried to find a reasonable justification for using the familiar phrase, “life after death,” but I finally surrendered and have not been able to use it comfortably for a long time. The human soul, which continues to live after the body dies, does not die; its continuing life is not life after its death. “Continuing life” is better and maybe better still is the title that Dr. Raymond Moody gave his bestselling book, *Life After Life!*

What does survive? A formless vapor? No. The body which clothes the spirit in human life is shaped from its organic conception to fit the form of its spirit, and that spirit (called a “soul” while it still is clothed with a body) develops and matures in closely correspondential symbiosis with its body. This spiritual substance, which continues to live, has so much in common with the appearance of its body

that people who knew each other in physical life immediately recognize each other when they meet in spiritual life. The spirit’s form, features, posture, and other distinguishing characteristics are just as individualized and recognizable as the comparable characteristics of the body that grew as a correspondential reflection of the spirit it clothed.



Does that suggest that the body’s death is of little or no significance in the life of the spirit? It should not suggest that, but we do need a sharper conception of the relationship between a human spirit and its body. The body serves the soul much as tools serve the body. It is obvious that tools are lifeless and impotent on their own: hammers do not drive nails, saws do not cut wood. A human being who controls a body through mind and affection creates effects through tools and so can fashion wood into a box or a house. It is just as obvious that a body can do things with tools that it could not do

without them. Without tools, the most experienced carpenter, the most skilled cabinet-maker, couldn’t even make a simple box out of a tree! For very similar reasons, a soul could not develop a character—most specifically, it could not develop a ruling love in its life—without a body. The soul uses the body to meet the temptations of the spiritual world and to actualize its intentions.

A person’s chief, central, dominant, overriding life’s love is developed in the tensions between the spirit and the body. Temptations—an important concept in Swedenborgian theology—are tensions between spiritual and physical desires and goals. Spiritual formation involves living out faith effectively in concrete actions that benefit the neighbor. Regeneration, and the consequent life of charity involve transforming spiritual intention into physical acts that are good for someone—acts of use. The life’s love that is molded and built out of those tensions and opportunities develops strength and definition continuously throughout human life (that is, throughout a whole, physio-spiritual life). After death, the spirit no longer has a body to use in its character-building in the same way, and continuing spiritual formation occurs in a different environment, but the physical body was fundamental for being able to develop spiritually in the first place. ☩

Rev. Dr. Robert Kirven (1927–2004), taught historical theology at the Swedenborgian School of Religion for thirty years.



¹ My wife wrote her Master’s thesis at Andover-Newton Theological School comparing Tillich and Swedenborg on this very matter. See Marian Kirven, *A Study of the Nature of Spirit in the Theologies of Emanuel Swedenborg and Paul Tillich* (1968).

Our Journey in South Africa

BY ANNETTE WOOFENDEN

“Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu.” —Zulu proverb. “A person is a person because of people.” In other words: Every person is who they are because they are part of the body of humanity.

☞ Dang it, Gideon! Where are you? I can’t save Swedenborg until I find you!”

By “Swedenborg,” I meant my husband’s most valuable rare books, portraits, and other Swedenborgian artifacts that we kept with us in the cottage where we’re living.

Realizing that I had better change my tone, I tried a different tack. “It’s okay, Gideon. Everything’s okay. Come on out.”

But Gideon is a cat. He has other ideas about what constitutes “okay.” And a smoke-filled burning building is not one of them. I had already flung my other pets into our rental car. I was panicked. Our cottage was on the verge of burning down. As I overturned furniture and pulled out boxes searching for Gideon, the fire’s yellow flames danced against the windowpanes in the orange glow of the setting sun. Behind the veil of hazy white smoke, it was perversely beautiful.

The fire had raced up the hill to us from neighboring shacks seventy-five yards away. By God’s grace, we happened to see the wave coming. We watched in horror as it consumed the desiccated thicket of five-foot high

reedy stalks that separated us from our neighbors. It’s winter here. Everything is brown and dry.

As Bishop M.E.J. Montsho (“the Bishop”) and my husband, Lee Woofenden, wrestled with a hose that kept falling apart, I ran for our valuables inside. Just when I was beginning to despair about Gideon, the heat subsided. The flames shrank from view. Lee, the Bishop, and the water had denied the hungry flames access to our

term for “township.”)

In the aftermath of the second fire, I cried to him, “Is this normal?” The Bishop shrugged his shoulders and smilingly answered, “*Kasi* life.”

Two weeks later, there would be a third fire that passed within five feet of the Bishop’s parsonage on its way towards the church and library. Rushing past the Bishop, I muttered, “I know, I know—*Kasi* life.”

Between the second and third fires, a massive flood threatened the foundation of our nearly 100-year-old church. A water main on Mooki Street had burst, sending a fifty-foot arc of water into the air for five hours before the city addressed it. Gravity pulled that water onto the church property, flooding wide swaths of it. On



Rev. Lee Woofenden emerges from the smoke of the third fire.

home. The charred debris would later give evidence that the flames had made it to within five inches of our back wall.

This was the second fire in less than one week that had almost burned down our home. The first we managed to stop ten feet from the cottage—and we thought that was stressful. At the time, as the Bishop scrambled to affix hose clamps onto three lengths of mismatched tubing to create one long hose, I asked if we shouldn’t call the fire department.

“They won’t come till tomorrow,” he said, his hands working quickly. “This is *Kasi* life.” (*Kasi* is a local

the positive side, the lingering floodwaters protected the dormitory from the third fire.

All three fires started elsewhere and moved onto the church property. In winter, the sky fills with smoke from fires burning all around Soweto. There is minimal trash pickup in the area so people burn their own trash. They also scavenge wood for fires to fend off the bitter chill at night. When the fires get away from them, no one pays any attention unless it threatens their own homes. *Kasi* life.

Unlike other churches and neighboring businesses, the New Church of

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Journey in South Africa

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Southern Africa doesn't have a secure perimeter, nor does it use the services of a private security company for its headquarters in Soweto.

At one time, a wire fence anchored by steel posts surrounded the property. It was stolen. The church replaced it. It was stolen again. We are now on the third replacement fence where less desirable wooden posts have been employed instead of steel. However, sections of the wire fencing were recently stolen.

Cows, goats, and wild dogs are regular visitors to the property. And we must deal with burglars and robbers who view us as a soft target. In 2016, after attending a distant church function, the Bishop and his wife returned home to a vacant parsonage. In their absence, burglars had broken in and carted off all their furniture and personal belongings.

Indeed, the very night our container of books and belongings arrived from the U.S., the Bishop and one of the residents here confronted and chased off would-be burglars—but not before they succeeded in tearing the burglar bars from the main door of the library. The books were saved, but the entire next day was spent repairing the damage and re-securing the library. The church has suffered two break-ins since.

It would be nice to say that South Africans lived happily ever after following the end of apartheid twenty-five years ago. However, over seven million people in this country live in one-room corrugated metal shacks, fifteen million people do not have access to running water, twenty-three million people have no access to a flushing toilet, and all of South Africa's fifty-nine



The beginning of the new wall around the church property, under construction.

million people live with intermittent electricity from rolling black-outs. Also telling, the life expectancy of males is sixty-one and a half years.¹

South Africa has the highest rates of HIV/Aids and HIV-associated-TB infections in the world. Twelve million people, or over twenty percent of the population, live with HIV/Aids.²

COVID-19 is hitting South Africa hard. As I write this, the country is on day 113 of its national lockdown—one of the strictest in the world. The lockdown was successful in delaying COVID-19, but it is wreaking havoc on an economy that was already in trouble. South Africa entered the lockdown with a thirty percent unemployment rate nationwide.

A significant percentage of the population lives hand-to-mouth from daily work in the informal sector. They do not possess stocked cupboards and freezers to tide them through when there is no work. Nor do they possess any assets of value that could be sold in an emergency. Reuters recently reported that South Africans were waiting in queues two and a half miles long to receive food parcels. Indeed, people

¹ Whitfield, Bruce; *The Upside of Down, How Chaos and Uncertainty Breed Opportunity in South Africa*; 2020 Pan Macmillan South Africa

² UNAids.org; Stats 2018, *South Africa Overview*; Cole, Kenneth: *The Great Work I Saw in South Africa*, 2017

often knock on our own door asking for food.

Food insecurity and stunting due to malnutrition is evident everywhere. Unfortunately, the food that is affordable is often nutrient-poor.

Shortly after the lockdown began, I went to our local Pick n Pay for groceries. I queued up for over two hours before gaining access to the store. Despite the long wait and the uncertainty of life under the new lockdown, I noticed that on average families were leaving

the store with only three plastic shopping bags in their carts—evidence of hard choices.

When I got in, however, I overfilled two shopping carts, without considering the optics of what I was doing as the only white person around. Granted, I was shopping for three households and two car guards in the parking lot. But I was also shopping with the privilege of being an American. In addition to nutrient-rich food, I also piled my carts with treats and comfort food.

As I left the store and filed past the long line of people still waiting to enter, nobody said anything. But I saw it in their eyes: fatigue, fear, envy. Lugging my two heavy carts past that line of township residents was the most obnoxious thing I have ever done in my life.

South Africans were also yearning for spiritual sustenance. Since church services were banned under the lockdown, the Bishop created videos of himself delivering sermons, which he disseminated to parishioners via a variety of online platforms. He also assisted other ministers in this endeavor so they, too, could reach their flocks.

Despite great interest in these video sermons, the Bishop became aware that viewership in the largely rural North West Province was down. When he

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Journey in South Africa

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inquired why, he was told that people there had to choose between buying Internet data or buying food for their families. The townships in that province had been hit hard with job losses.

It was during this time, that some angels came to the rescue. We were contacted by Rev. Glenn Alden, of the General Church, through Ian Woofenden. (Ian was also instrumental in the success of our move to South Africa.)

Rev. Alden emailed, stating that he and his wife, Mary, had been trying to find ways to get help to people in the townships whom they suspected were struggling for food.

The Aldens donated a sum of money, which Lee and I matched, to give to the Bishop for the creation of food parcels. After doing the research, buying in bulk, getting volunteers to help create the individual parcels, and arranging a vehicle and trailer for transport, the Bishop, his colleague the Rev. R.F. Sejesho, and Lee set off for the two-hour drive to the Tsitsing New Church in North West Province.

At the cost of about six USD per parcel, each family received enough food to last a week or two, taking a little pressure off their finances, letting them know that they are loved, and giving them hope.

Living in a township is not for the weak-willed, even if you are an American with a can-do attitude and a little bit of money. There are enormous obstacles that impede productivity. Basic infrastructure and services that we took for granted in the First World do not exist here. Daily goals are regularly sidelined by sudden “situations.”

Would we do it all over? Absolutely. We love it here. Despite all the hardship, or perhaps because of it, there is an infectious vibrancy and spiritual energy in the *Kasi* air. We have never felt



Bishop Montsho (left) and Rev. Sejesho (right) in the sanctuary of the Home Church in Soweto after a hard day's work assembling food parcels.

more alive! While it would be understandable if township residents resented us due to the history of this country, the opposite is the case. They've welcomed us, look after us, and are forgiving when we say or do stupid things.

We came here thinking we would get straight to building up the seminary and its library. And yes, we are still seeking books for the library. But we realized that basic infrastructure must come first. A secure wall must be built around the property to protect the headquarters of the New Church of Southern Africa. Only then can the church and seminary move forward in doing their good and much-needed work here.

So we took a leap of faith and decided to start work on securing the perimeter even though we didn't personally have enough money for the entire project.

We decided we would start building the wall—and the United States would pay for it. Well, at least the first few sections of it. The timing coincided with the US government's issuance of stimulus checks.

Church members here are also contributing what they can in these hard

times. Each ten-foot section of wall costs up to 500 USD to build. It's a spacious property. If it takes two years to gradually build the wall, so be it.

Meanwhile, South Africans frequently express to us their concern for the plight of Americans suffering from coronavirus. Back when he was assisting with the food parcels, we asked Rev. Sejesho if he had a message for North American Swedenborgians. He paused for a moment before answering.

“Have faith,” he said. “This will not last forever. The time will come when we will get together again, and we will smile again. To us it may seem like one year, two years, five years. But to God it was just yesterday.” ☪



Annette Woofenden lives in Soweto, South Africa with her husband, 3 cats and her dog. She can be reached at kgalalelo.w@outlook.com. For recent video of the New Church property and wall, please see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5986KGUVuM>

For progress on the wall, please see its GoFundMe page here <https://www.gofundme.com/f/build-a-new-church-wall>

My Gratitude Attitude

BY LON ELMER

Several years ago, when my life seemed to be going to hell in a hand basket, I realized that every time someone greeted me by saying, “How are you?” and I answered, “Fine,” I was lying. I didn’t feel fine. My knee hurt. I was feeling the physical and mental changes that a man feels when he approaches retirement. In other words, I definitely was not “Fine.” And I doubted that the person asking me how I was really wanted to hear my litany of complaints. So, I’d say “Fine,” not so much to be telling a deliberate lie, but to put them off so that they wouldn’t get too close to my personal cesspool of complaints. I’d want to get to the core of our conversation as quickly as possible—to cut to the chase, as they say—and get away from how I felt. Afterwards, I’d still be disturbed by their question and how I heard it as an automatic greeting, not a sincere inquiry into how I felt, and how my response was equally insincere.

Next to my computer is a bulletin board on which I attach various notes and sayings that I gather along the way. One day, an obscure little note caught my eye. It read, “Attitude is everything, so pick a good one.” Later that day, I

ran into someone who asked, “How are you?” Before I automatically blurted out, “Fine,” I stopped and thought about that note—“Attitude is everything, so pick a good one.” What was my attitude at that moment? My knee hurt. I was not happy about our government starting a war instead of dealing with domestic problems, and I was anxious to get where I was going. I did not have a good attitude. What I needed was a good attitude and I needed it quickly. The word that finally slipped out in response to my friend’s greeting was, “Grateful.” She looked at me quizzically, “Grateful? For what?” “Well (I stalled as I was thinking since I was on the spot), “Grateful for waking up this morning,” I said. “Grateful for the next breath and grateful for this conversation.”

That evening, I reflected on that chance encounter and what I had said “Grateful.” Yes, I am grateful to be on top of the grass and not under it, because life is a precious gift, and if I were dead, I would not feel the pain and the joy and all the other feelings that one feels when alive. And, yes, I am grateful for the next breath, because each breath is a gift from God,

and death is only a breath away. And, yes I am grateful for the conversation because friends teach us that no two people think alike. I resolved then and there that from now on when anyone, no matter who—friend or stranger—asked me how I was, I would answer, “Grateful.”

Making the change from an automatic “Fine” to a sincere “Grateful” was not easy. It took a year before I felt totally at ease with saying, “Grateful.” At first I would get a lot of startled looks, like I had received from my friend, and would have to explain what I was grateful for. But, occasionally I would meet someone who got it, and he or she would respond, “Me too.”

Now, when I meet people, I get a lot more “Me too” responses than I do questions, and for that I am truly grateful. ☪

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Virtual Convention Donation Financial Aid

Thank you to all who donated to us during our Virtual Convention to help churches financially struggling through the pandemic. *You can still give* by going to our website, [Swedenborg.Org/Donate](https://www.swedenborg.org/Donate), specify Pandemic Relief, or send a check to,

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All funds will go directly to the needs of our churches.

The General Council authorized an additional \$15,000 from funds budgeted for Convention 2020 to also be utilized for this purpose.

If your church is in need of assistance, please write a request to the Executive Committee of the General Council, including,

1. Amount requested.
2. Specific details on how your budget was negatively affected with specific examples of rental income lost,

reduction in regular giving, loss of planned income from cancelled events.

3. Activities that have been employed to help during this time: applying for small business loans (PPP), letters written from your church for help, and amount received to date.

Please complete your request and send by 8/15/20 and email to president@swedenborg.org. ☪

For Heaven's Sake

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intolerance, bigotry, prejudice, and all the other feelings that add up to man's inhumanity to man.

As I survey the challenges facing humanity today, I see only one answer: *a transformation of consciousness*. And finally, the value-free, rational-objective-experimental mode of Western science, based on materialism, is not sufficient by itself for coping with the ever-increasing planetary crises besetting civilization (*Saturday Review*, February 22, 1975, pp. 20f.).

The Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl knew "man's inhumanity to man" all too well, and had good reason to love the Statue of Liberty on our East Coast. He saw with like clarity the need to balance this with a Statue of Responsibility on the West Coast. Liberty without responsibility is anarchy, in which might makes right and winner takes all.

I can think of no more profound and provocative image for Frankl's statue than that of a nursing mother. The imbalance of power is virtually absolute: the mother is the very source of life, and the infant is helpless. The result for the mother is not unlimited privilege but an immense, intimate, twenty-four-seven responsibility, with the survival of the human race at stake.

I would call special attention to that inequality of power. I question Baron Acton's familiar statement, "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Banks do not make crooks rob them. Crooks rob them, as Willie Sutton is said to have observed, "because that's where the money is." Corrupt people crave power. The power of the presidency did not corrupt Jimmy Carter. It didn't go to his head—or to his heart. He was then and still is trusted by friend and foe alike.

The association of power with

privilege is toxic. Folk wisdom says that pride goes before a fall, and the gospel concurs—whoever exalts himself shall be humbled (Matthew 23:12), if for no other reason than that self-exaltation, otherwise known as megalomania, is delusional, and delusions are fragile things. Reality does like to have the last word.

In this connection, the usual translation of Genesis 12:2 is sadly wrong: "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing." There is no excuse for this: the last verb is not a future, a prediction, but an imperative, a commandment, a *mitzvah*.

Things are a real mess these days. It's as though everything has spilled out of our closets (and the cellar and the attic) and is lying scattered on the lawn. Now we have to decide what we really need and what we would be better off without.

The message is "Be a blessing, and I will make you great." Translate that message from the past to the present, and it says clearly, "Make your country a blessing, and I'll take care of making her great."

My own generation, the generation now departing, actually seems to have heard this. By our victory in World War II, we established ourselves as a world power, in fact as *the greatest*. Our military victory by itself could well have embittered our enemies, as the seeds of World War II were planted in Versailles. However, we heeded the wisdom of General George Marshall and helped our battered enemies recover. The result was that those vicious enemies, Germany and Japan, became trusted allies, and we found ourselves surrounded by nations that we had no reason to fear. We had been a significant blessing, and our national

greatness was the inevitable side effect.

The Marshall Plan, though, was only one step toward *global* peace; and I find it almost mythically significant that our present turmoil erupted in the Near East, the only place on earth where three continents meet. Isaiah's vision is bittersweet:

On that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. On that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the Lord of hosts will bless, saying "blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance" (Isaiah 19:23f.).

Certainly, today is not "that day"—the "highway" has yet to be built. COVID-19, though, has all the markings of a game-changer. It has erased all the superficial differences that we have used to divide ourselves from each other. We are all in this together, regardless of race, creed, age, gender, education, sexual preference, or wealth. COVID-19 has found its way into slums and Mar-a-Lago alike, into prisons and into the White House. We are all equal in its sight, and we know it.

There is a world of painful wisdom in *Secrets of Heaven* §842:3:

Before anything is brought back into order, it is quite normal for it to be brought first into a kind of confusion, a virtual chaos. In this way, things that fit together badly are severed from each other, and when they have been severed, the Lord arranges them in order.

Surely, the time for such a rearrangement is here. Things are a real mess these days. It's as though everything has spilled out of our closets (and the cellar and the attic) and is lying scattered on the lawn. Now we have to decide what we really need and what

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we would be better off without. If we are attentive, we can discover that we have been glossing over some very important things, and attaching unwarranted importance to things that don't really matter, blind to the immense meaning that lurks in apparently trivial events.

We can see this as an effect of that last judgment. The judgment we all face after death consists merely of having all our hidden contents, good and bad, come out of hiding. There is nothing new on Mitchell's list. We



The full length video of Rev. Dr. Dole's Keynote Address may be found on the [Annual Swedenborgian Church Convention Facebook page](#) or [The Swedenborgian Church YouTube Page](#).

have simply been disguising our lying, cheating, and struggling for power and status, our lust and greed, our intolerance, bigotry, and prejudice. Try wrapping your mind around the notion that the meek are going to inherit the earth.

A lot of the stuff on the lawn is trash from the cellar, but there are also some treasures from the attic. A foundation for new construction is already in place—a foundation of good will. It showed itself powerfully in the outpouring of support on 9/12/2001, a global wave we unfortunately chose not to ride. It showed itself more durably after the Indonesian tsunami when three thousand doctors volunteered to serve on the mercy ship (five hundred were needed). It has been showing itself

day after day now, in the voluntary acts of caring that seem to represent a most welcome kind of contagion. Is this perhaps the face of the *deep state*, the true silent majority? Someday, we may look back on this pandemic and say, "Thanks, Lord, we needed that."

We actually have a lot going for us. One of the first things we are told in *True Christianity* §1,

People in the church who love what is good because they believe what is true and believe what is true because they love what is good are angels of heaven as to the inner levels of their minds.

The Lord's exquisitely beautiful life is flowing into each one of us at all times, even on the worst of our "bad days." In this respect, it is as non-discriminating as the virus.

Strange as it may seem, we don't have to do anything to let that beauty out into our words and deeds. *Heaven and Hell* §302 says this very clearly:

If we believed the way things really are, that everything good comes from the Lord and everything evil from hell, then we would not take credit for the good within us or blame for the evil.... But since we don't believe in any inflow from heaven or from hell and therefore believe that everything we think and intend is in us and from us, we make the evil our own and defile the good with self-righteousness.

Helen Keller put it wonderfully clearly and simply: "There is joy in self-forgetfulness." Robert Frost spoke to the heart of this in his poem, "Two Tramps in Mud Time." He is enjoying

splitting wood in his yard when two lumberjacks come by. They stop to watch him, and Frost realizes that one wants to be hired to finish the job, professionally.

Nothing on either side was said.
They knew they had but to stay their stay
And all their logic would fill my head:
As that I had no right to play
With what was another man's work for gain.
My right might be love but theirs was need.
And where the two exist in twain
Theirs was the better right—agreed.
But yield who will to their separation,
My object in living is to unite
My avocation and my vocation
As my two eyes make one in sight.

Only where love and need are one,
And the work is play for mortal stakes,
Is the deed ever really done
For heaven and the future's sakes.

It's done for heaven because it is loved, and for the future because it answers a need. So much meaning in one prosaic incident—and in so few words. Here we have the key to peace on earth—the oneness of love and need—brought down to earth, and to some pretty muddy earth, at that.

The microcosm/macrocosm principle takes us straight to the New Jerusalem, to global peace. Swedenborg boils it down to a little series of chapter titles in *Heaven and Hell* (§59, 68, 73).

The Whole Heaven,
Grasped as a Single Entity,
Reflects a Single Individual.
Each Community in the Heavens
Reflects a Single Individual.
Therefore (emphasis mine)
Every Angel is in a Perfect Human Form.

Lao Tse agrees. His vision of world peace was similarly holographic.

If there is to be peace in the world,
There must be peace in the nations.
If there is to be peace in the nations,
There must be peace in the cities.
If there is to be peace in the cities,

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There must be peace between neighbors.
If there is to be peace between neighbors,
There must be peace in the home.
If there is to be peace in the home,
There must be peace in the heart.

We are one, all and each in the single image and likeness of our Creator.

Frost saw the union of love and need as his “object in living,” as the work of a lifetime. Impossible? No. An encouraging parable happened to me during my work on my thesis. To make a long story short, I spent the first year gathering the necessary information, primarily from four-thousand-year-old clay tablets, and wound up with a classic case of information overload. I had a briefcase stuffed with facts, and no idea what to do with them. I resolved to sort things out over the summer, but found no place to start, and returned in the fall feeling utterly defeated. The task was simply impossible. I went to my library carrel because I had to, opened my briefcase, pulled out the first sheet that came to hand, looked at it once, and knew exactly where it belonged—in fact, as it turned out, where everything belonged. It took decades for me to understand that throughout that first phase, the Lord’s inflowing wisdom had been silently filing every detail in its right place; but I had been totally focused on the critical messages from my physical senses, with those dumb facts coming at me day after day after day in no coherent sequence.

That is what your deeper mind is doing right now and always—filing the confusing facts of your everyday experience exactly where they belong. Each of us is full of “AHA!” moments just waiting to happen. “By birth,” Swedenborg tells us, “we are all gifted with the ability to discern what is true even to that deepest level where angels of the third heaven are” (*Divine Love and Wisdom* §258). Remember what

happened to Edgar Mitchell.

The present wake-up call is a call to transformation of consciousness, and transformation of consciousness is what our theology is all about. We are called to see it as a lifetime process; and it is here, I believe, that the parish church is uniquely well positioned. I cannot think of any other institution that intends to serve people from cradle to grave. This is something “lying there on the lawn” that I never gave much thought to, but now that it is lying out there in plain sight, I certainly do not want to discard it. No question, it’s a keeper. In the process of transformation, the years of childhood are

Someday, we may look back on this pandemic and say, “Thanks, Lord, we needed that.”

formative importance. They lay the foundation on which character will be built. I find our church called to foster peace in the home—which comes only when there is peace in the heart.

It is grotesque to demean homemaking because it doesn’t pay. I would remind you that if a nation loses faith in its currency, that currency is utterly powerless to defend itself. It becomes virtually worthless. Wall Street isn’t really about money. It’s about faith—faith in money. Homemaking is priceless, so Wall Street can’t even see it. Without it, though, we have domestic disfunction all the way to domestic abuse. We have rot at the foot of Lao Tse’s ladder, and the current quarantines are shining a spotlight on it.

These days, I am finding myself coming to believe that an emphasis on fostering peace in the home would address the questions young adults are asking now and will continue to ask, as they enter the unexplored territory of marriage and parenting. *Secrets of Heaven* §2978:2 comes to mind:

Then too, it is well worth

knowing that when a church goes out of existence...and a new one is being raised up by the Lord, rarely if ever does this happen among the members of the dying church. It happens rather among those who were of no church before, that is, among gentiles.

Today’s most receptive “gentiles” may well be those who classify themselves as “spiritual but not religious,” good-hearted souls who are turned off by the apparent self-righteousness of hardline evangelicals and by the thought of sitting in rows and being preached at every Sunday. I don’t blame them.

As a church, then, where do we go from here? Step one is to figure out where we are. From a distance of three centuries, I find it sad that those Swedenborgians who founded the organized *new church* made it a virtual carbon copy of the old. Henry James Sr. wasted no words on this matter. Addressing the Swedenborgian Church in 1870, he wrote, “...I know of no sect so young that gives such unequivocal proofs of senility as your own.” I think we need to face the fact that that old order has fallen apart, and trust that the Lord is bringing the parts into a far better order.

One of these parts, surely, is worship. I find it too often confused with its cousin, instruction, with a consequent loss of both awe and beauty. Psalm 27 keeps knocking at my consciousness: “Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.” “Spiritual beauty is the affection of deeper truth” (*Secrets of Heaven* §5199), and remember, “By birth, we are all gifted with the ability to discern what is true even to that deepest level where angels of the highest heaven are” (*SH* §258). The “beauty of holiness” is within each one of us. We bring it to church every time we bring ourselves to church. Formal worship at its best, I believe, awakens

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us to the Lord's infinitely loving and thoughtful presence. That presence is constant, and it comes to us constantly from within—silently, it seems, unless we listen for it. The more clearly we hear it, the more we find it overpowering not by its might but by its sheer beauty. It says, "Yes!"

That, to me, is the exquisite beauty of the "as if" paradox at the heart of our theology. It is stated most bluntly in the heading of *Divine Providence* §191: "Our Own Prudence Is Nothing—It Only Seems to Be Something, As It Should." It occurred to me recently that we have an illustration of this paradox that was not available to Swedenborg. The astronauts in the space lab may not actually have lost any weight, but it certainly seems as though they are weightless, and they had better face that apparent fact. We are heavy with our self-concern, but the Lord's providence is holding each of us suspended between heaven and hell, in apparent freedom to choose between them, and we are advised take that apparent freedom seriously. Perhaps it was no coincidence that Edgar Mitchell was weightless when the presence of divinity became "almost palpable" to him—a virtual definition of true worship.

Our theology offers no resolution. Far from it: "The more closely we are united to the Lord, the more clearly we seem to have our own identity, and yet the more obvious it is to us that we belong to the Lord" (*Divine Providence* §42). *Heaven and Hell* §302 offers a simple way to accept it, so simple that it seems like a shortcut. "If we believed the way things really are, that everything good that we have is flowing in from the Lord and everything bad that we have is flowing in from hell, then we wouldn't take credit for the good or blame for the bad." In effect, we don't



Rev. Dave Brown (Wayfarer's Chapel) asks Rev. Dr. George Dole questions from the live stream comments on Saturday, June 27, 2020

have to do anything. We just have to stop some of our thoughtless doing, stop taking credit and stop blaming ourselves.

Psalms 27 advises us to "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;" and I am coming to believe that if our worship is not beautiful, it is not holy. The setting should be as beautiful as we can make it, the music should touch the heart, the spoken words should be loving and lovely. We bring our needs with us when we come to church. They are to be recognized and met with understanding and love, and that oneness of love and need is supremely beautiful. It is heavenly, which means that it is essentially divine, in things least as in things greatest.

As to more pragmatic concerns, I would call attention to the way in which "support groups" come into being when troubled individuals discover that there are others who share their troubles. I would ask us to look seriously at the possibility of developing skill as facilitators of discussion, learning how to ask liberating questions. Each word in Cal Turley's phrase, "supportive peer supervision," is loaded with meaning.

For skill development, I would suggest a thoughtful study of developmental psychology, both secular and Swedenborgian. This demands that we see ourselves and each other as being constantly in process, with unrealized possibilities. It also calls us to

recognize and rejoice in our ignorance, in an awareness of how much we have yet to learn. Might we not do well to become known as the church that has the best questions?

Penultimately, then,
Peace in the heart is the seed of spiritual beauty.

Peace in the home is spiritual horticulture.

Peace between neighbors is a spiritual harvest.

Peace in the cities is spiritual citizenship.

Peace in the nation is spiritual patriotism.

Peace on earth is spiritual globalism.

Lastly, I recall a student (named Di-ana Kirven) once remarking that we need a theology of loose ends, and I trust I have offered an ample supply of them. What questions has it raised for you? Remember, the Lord's first message to Adam after the Fall was not a reproof or a command, but a question (Genesis 3:9)—"Where are you?"

Addendum

My keynote address was outdated before it was delivered. The final draft was completed by May 25, and the video was recorded and submitted shortly thereafter. Then came the appalling George Floyd scene, the video that went viral, and the global reaction. I could not help but think of Edgar Mitchell's hope for a "transformation of consciousness," and had vague thoughts of this as gradually spreading

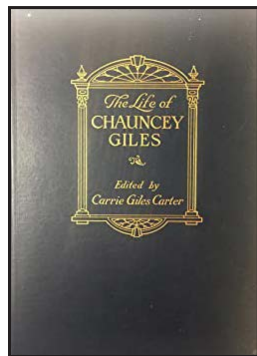
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The Life of Chauncey Giles

Chapters One and Two

SUMMARIZED BY LOIS DOLE

Somewhere I found a small pamphlet by Chauncey Giles titled “The Blessedness of Death,” and I found it so comforting. When rearranging a bookcase,



I came across his biography, written by his daughter Carrie Giles Carter; I thought I would look into it. I found it so fascinating: it's mostly letters

written to and from him that tell how important finding New Church teachings were to him, but also capture the feelings of the times about church beginnings in this country.

Chapter One: Ancestry and Early Life

Chauncey Giles was born in East Charlemont, Massachusetts, on May 11, 1813.

Edward Giles of Salem founded the family in the United States. Many ancestors served in the Revolutionary War, one at the battle of Bunker Hill. On his mother's side, the Averys, there were many tales of bravery during that war. Other ancestors engaged in various trades but there were no clergymen until the sixth generation.

His father, John, was brilliant and attempted work as a schoolmaster, but the family was poor and Chauncey's boyhood was one of work for his family. He did neighborhood chores: chopping wood, which earned him his first slate, and haying.

His father must have been his tutor. Chauncey read and reread Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Cowper's *Task*, two

of the few books available to him. Early on he wished to become a minister and he loved to read the Bible. He attended Mt. Anthony Academy in Bennington, Vermont, where his Greek teacher taught him how to study and imparted a love of learning.

In 1832 at the age of nineteen he entered Williams College, where he enjoyed the debating society and became one of its best speakers. He paid his tuition by tutoring, haying, and any other work he could get. His friends said he was shy and friendly but did not make fast friendships. His father hoped he would enter the law after college, but Chauncey said, “If I do, it must be the law of God.”

In his junior year, his intensive studying brought on trouble with his eyes, and he had severe headaches and heard a buzzing in his ears that lasted intermittently for the rest of his life.

When he left Williams, he taught for a while at the academy in Bennington. While there he began a struggle to understand church dogmas, something that plagued him mercilessly until he found the New Church.

Chapter Two: Wanderings Through New York and Pennsylvania

After leaving Williams, Chauncey taught in Vermont, Pennsylvania, and New York, enduring a period of ill health and melancholy due to his inability to follow his desire to become a clergyman. His daughter, writing the biography, says that no one who knew him afterwards would recognize these dark sentiments as his. She says that “these clouds were all dispelled by the light of the New Church.”

His scholars often vexed him and his head pain was constant. He strove

for good order in his school. For a time he attempted dentistry, with disastrous results. Then he gave lectures on chemistry, “a subject about which I know little.” He worried about his shyness, fearing that it rendered him ineffective.

In 1838, at the age 25, he returned to teaching at a high school in Palmyra, New York, hoping for success. He came to the conclusion that he should explain the reasons for school regulations to gain students' better acceptance of them.

He read Coleridge, whom he later cites as starting his understanding of New Church doctrines. He thought about a system of fundamental principles that, his daughter mentions, became the foundation of his New Church teachings. He compared the differences in approach of the preachers he was hearing. And he wrote the first of his papers to be published, on education.

In his diary he writes of a Miss Lakey, “a worthy and interesting young lady of sound mind and good sense,” one of his students, who later became his wife. Her uncle, Dr. James Lakey, became an influential factor in their married life and his medical skills were of paramount importance to the family.

In January of 1839 he writes, “Have been unwell for some time. My head much worse. The present term has commenced very favorably. Oh, if I can have strength to perform my duties aright—wisdom and patience and perseverance!”

He read Shelley's poetry and called it beautiful. He writes, “I labor hard and accomplish as much as most teachers perhaps, but still I am out of my

Continues on page 97

Life of Chauncey Giles

Continued from page 96

element.”

In May of 1840 he returned to Palmyra to a new school. His health was better. He was lonely, missing his sister, who had recently married and moved away. He mentioned listening to a dry and hard preacher who “seems to manifest but little brotherly feelings for man. Such not the way to win souls. Fear may drive some from sin, but I doubt very much whether it leads many to Christ.”

In the fall of that year he was found in a new school in Hamilton, Ohio, saying that he will find another occupation if he is not successful there.

Sometime during this period he became engaged to Eunice Lakey, writing, “I now contemplate forming one of the most intimate relations in life with one whom I have long-loved and esteemed.”

In January of 1841 Chauncey was teaching at a young ladies’ school in Hamilton, Ohio, but believed that the plan of study there was erroneous in making the lessons too long. His headaches were so severe that he thought he might have to give up teaching. But he writes of his betrothal, “I have entered one of the most interesting engagements of my life... with one who is in every way adapted to make me happy.” He hoped he had made improvements in his life and that the new year would bring him closer to other people and the world.

He did not like what he heard from the pulpit, that ministers do not know what truth is. “They talk of heaven, hell, of life, death, and eternity, but they do not seem to know what those words mean.”

In March, Eunice asked to break her engagement. Chauncey writes that he will overcome his disappointment by study and exercise.

However, any misunderstanding

had been cleared up by August and he was on his way to Palmyra to be married. He traveled by steamer and stage coach (riding outside), traveling at times “at the good rate of five miles an hour.” From Cleveland to Buffalo he was onboard the *Robert Fulton*, often seasick, and then on a packet boat to Palmyra.

Chauncey, twenty-eight, and Eunice, nineteen, were married on September 8, 1841, in Palmyra, and immediately set out back to Hamilton. Their trip was the reverse of the one Chauncey took east. They encountered rough weather and were both seasick on the boats.

Chauncey writes, “From the loneliness and desolation that have been my lot for many years, I now have a companion, the chosen one of my heart, to sit with me, cheer me in sadness, to comfort, to sustain and guide.... May I have the wisdom to fulfill all my duties aright; to be careful of her feelings and

to guard her interest and welfare as my own, as dearer than my own.”

He spoke about his marriage as shining “a healing light and an enlivening warmth over my heart.”

At their boarding house he picked up a copy of *Conjugal Love* from a table. After reading the Memorable Relations he writes, “Well, if the crazy man has written nothing worse than that he is not so crazy after all.” ☒



As a child, Lois and her family attended the Church of the Neighbor (Swedenborgian) in Brooklyn, New York, where she felt it was her job to wait for Mr. Wunsch in the

robing room and take his hand to walk to do his greetings at the back of the church. While in nursing school in Manhattan, she babysat for Louise Dole Woofenden. One day Louise said, “You must meet my brother.”

For Heaven’s Sake

Continued from page 95

from person to person as the message of regeneration was shared more and more widely. Now, though, it seems that much of the human race may have had an “Aha!” moment—striking testimony to the reality, power, and promise of a single global mind, of our little planet’s share in the *Homo Maximus*, traditionally translated as the “Grand Man.”

Our present situation calls to mind first an image from William Butler Yeats’ visionary poem “The Second Coming:”

Things fall apart: the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and
everywhere

The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the
worst

Are full of passionate intensity

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.

This in turn calls to mind the title of philosopher Susan Haack’s elegant disrobing of postmodernism: *Manifesto of a Passionate Moderate: Unfashionable Essays*. Are we seeing Yeats’s “centre,” his “best,” becoming at least somewhat impassioned, centrist moderates impassioned enough to lie down together in protest? Juneteenth is also “New Church Day,” which *Last Judgment* §73 might call us to observe in celebration of our spiritual emancipation. Robert Frost said it characteristically briefly and well: “Something there is that doesn’t love a wall.” How much more fully emancipated we are when we are drawn together by love than when we are confined by walls. ☒

Rev. Dr. George F. Dole was ordained by the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in 1960 and has since served it as both a pastor and teacher.

President's Report

Continued from page 83

are needing a little help: with groceries, doctor visits, loneliness, boredom, and money. Some of our ministries are suffering as donations lag and rentals fall off. We can [donate](#) to support these ministries during or after this Virtual Convention. All of the donations will go directly to the needs of our ministries.

While we are all sad that our camps will not have in-person sessions this year, they are looking for ways to reach out. Almont New Church Assembly has started a virtual food bank to help those in need financially. Fryeburg New Church Assembly is reaching out to families with virtual game time for kids each week. Paulhaven Teen Camp plans a virtual camp to support the many teen campers that rely on their week of experiencing “church” each year. Each of the camps are working to go virtual this summer.

Our churches are also discovering new ways to offer support: the Pretty Prairie Church is contributing to a fund to help neighbors in the community that cannot afford their utility bills. LaPorte New Church is making hundreds of face masks to help caregivers in their town and has opened their garden next to the church for people to walk and meditate.

Temenos Retreat Center makes good use of online connections to help people get through this time with three different private Facebook pages for people to chat and keep in touch and “virtually keeping the doors open” with worship services directed to the community.

The Garden Church continues to offer pack-and-go meals to the food insecure members of their community. The New Church of the Southwest Desert offers socially distanced rides to doctor visits or other appointments. Pawnee Rock Church supports

the local schools that are still trying to provide school lunches to children who need them.

These are just the things I am aware of—I am sure there are many more instances of our ministries assisting their communities, during this pandemic, where needs are diverse and ongoing.

While this is an uncertain and painful time, it is also an important time for our church to rethink what our real message and mission is.

We are the church and it does not close when buildings close.

While this is an uncertain and painful time, it is also an important time for our church to rethink what our real message and mission is—both to those who chose to gather in time and space and those that prefer or may need to transcend time and space and still hear the good news. It is time to be innovative and inviting, reaching out to the larger world that is hungry for what we have to give. It is an even more important time to be “church.”

These videos shown at Virtual Convention were finished and sent to our film editor before George Floyd was murdered by a police officer. Our world has turned upside down and it is even more essential to look at the church within us and come face to face with the need to change. As Rev. Cory Bradford-Watts said in his message after the protests began,

Ultimately, it comes back to the economics of greed and selfishness exemplified by the money changers (that Jesus had to drive out of the temple).

Selfishness drives the fear of insular and dominating thinking, the hoarding of wealth, and hate. We have allowed these motives to drive our complacency and ignorance toward the abuse of others and it's corrupted our

environmental, physical, mental, and spiritual temples, just as it had in Jesus' day, It's time that we flip those tables to find that the temple is still salvageable, if we're willing to work for it.

The words of Swedenborg written in *Arcana Coelestia* §3263, 6637, 10765, three hundred years ago remind us,

The church of the Lord is with all in the whole world who live in good according to their religious principles.”

I want to read portions from the first page of our *Annual Journal* “The Faith and Aims of Our Church,” which was recorded fifty years ago in the 1970–71 Journal.

The Swedenborgian Church believes that a new era is opening in the spiritual life of mankind. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, as he promised to do, has come again, not indeed in a physical reappearance, but in spirit and truth; not in a single event only, but in a progressive manifestation of his presence among people. The Lord is everywhere at work, moving to the reestablishment of the kingdom, and specifically to the renewing of Christianity with the power and understanding to serve and speed the coming of the New Jerusalem.

Today in a world that has contracted into a neighborhood, the responsibility to the neighbor makes its demands on all people of good will.

And to support that demand to all of us, people of good will, Terrie Crenshaw and Dr. Rebecca Esterson brought the most recent addition to our *Annual Journal* a year ago at our annual convention. It was affirmed and added to our Standing Resolutions by those in attendance, Standing Resolution 14. I will read the first and last paragraphs.

As Swedenborgians we affirm the core truths of our faith that

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The Virtual Parade of Ministries Was a Big Success.

One of the highlights of Virtual Convention was the Virtual Parade of Ministries

You are now able to watch the entire opening night of the 2020 Virtual Annual Convention on [Facebook](#) or view pieces individually on our new [YouTube Channel](#). Take a journey around North America and enjoy tours of thirty-four different and inspiring Swedenborgian ministries. Our thanks to all the producers listed below, moderators and teams who put together their videos, and to Nick Izzi for assembling them together for viewing. This is a keepsake for generations to come.

Ministry	Location	Producers
Agapao Church	Orange County, California	Jae Houg
Almont New Church Assembly	Allenton, Michigan	Heidi Neuenfeldt Barnaby
Bath Church of The New Jerusalem	Bath, Maine	Rev. Reuben Bell
Boston Church on the Hill	Boston, Massachusetts	Rev. Kevin Baxter
Calgary New Church Society	Calgary, Alberta	Harmuth Lipski
Church of the Good Shepherd	Kitchener, Ontario	Rev. Cory Bradford-Watts
Royal Oak Church of the Holy City	Royal Oak, Michigan	Rev. Renee Machinak
Church of the Holy City	Washington, DC	Elfa Halloway
Church of the Holy City	Wilmington, Delaware	Rev. Shada Sullivan
Church of the Holy City	Edmonton, Alberta	Rev. Dr. David Fekete
Cambridge Society of the New Jerusalem	Cambridge, Massachusetts	Rev. Sage Cole
Church of the New Jerusalem	Pawnee Rock, Kansas	Carl & Megan Helm
Church of the Open Word	St. Louis, Missouri	Pastor Paul Deming
Church of the Open Word	Newtonville, Massachusetts	Rev. F. Robert Tafel
Fryeburg New Church	Fryeburg, Maine	Martha Richardson
Fryeburg New Church Assembly	Fryeburg, Maine	Beki Greenwood & Trevor
Hillside Community Church	El Cerrito, California	Eleanor Schnarr
New Jerusalem Church	Bridgewater, Massachusetts	Kelly Milne
Home Church	Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania	Rev. Roslyn Taylor
LaPorte New Church	LaPorte, Indiana	Barb Halle
The New Church of Montgomery	Montgomery, Ohio	Maggie Panyko
The New Church of the SW Desert	Silver City, New Mexico	Rev. Carla Friedrich
Portland New Church	Portland, Maine	Pastor Lorraine Kardash
Swedenborgian Community On-Line	Everywhere	Rev. Cory Bradford-Watts
New Jerusalem Church	Pretty Prairie, Kansas	Joyce Barker
Temenos Church at Broad Run	West Chester, Pennsylvania	Pastor Christine Campbell
Swedenborgian Church at Puget Sound	Redmond, Washington	Rev. Paul Martin
San Fransisco Swedenborgian Church	San Francisco, California	Andrew Dodd
Swedenborgian Church Youth League	Everywhere	Kurt Fekete
The Garden Church	San Pedro, California	Rev. Dr. Amanda Riley
The Swedenborg Library & Spiritual Growth Center	Chicago, Illinois	Pastor Karen Feil
Urbana Society of the New Church	Urbana, Ohio	Rev. Betsy Coffman
Virginia Street Church	St. Paul, Minnesota	Pastor Gordon Meyer
Wayfarers Chapel	Rancho Palos Verdes, California	Rev. Rachel Madjerac

Book Review

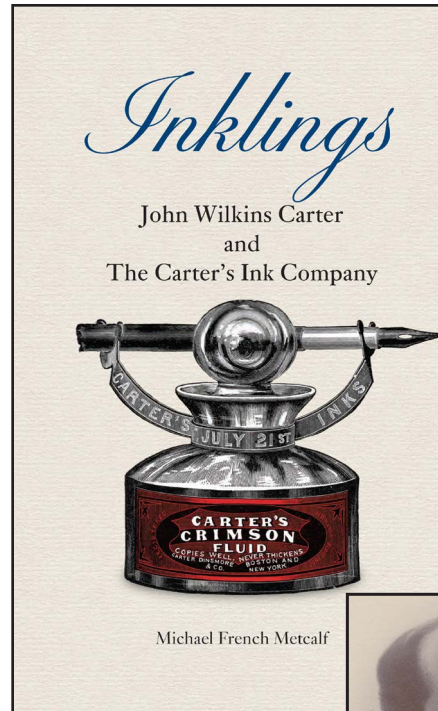
Forthcoming Book Weaves an Astounding Swedenborgian Business Story

World's Largest Ink Manufacturer Was a Swedenborgian Company—and that Mattered

BY JIM LAWRENCE

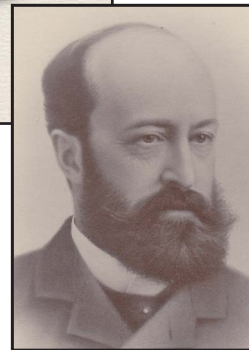
Inklings chronicles a long saga that culminated in a family business that was once the largest ink producer in the world. Michael Metcalf's meticulous research and passion for recovering, interpreting, and telling the story of The Carter's Ink Company shapes a complex tale of tragedies and triumphs. With insightful care, sometimes family business stories transform into useful lenses for seeing broader cultural stories, and this is the case with *Inklings*, which reveals interwoven histories of an extended family, a major industry, science and technology, and religion. An English lineage in first-generation European emigration to an incipient New England, the Carter story sprawls across the survival and early development of Colonial America, the Civil War, the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, WWI, the Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression, WWII, and the postwar economic expansions up to the American Bicentennial.

Through these passages, *Inklings: John Wilkins Carter and The Carter's Ink Company* portrays remarkable people who displayed vision and grit, creativity and patience, humanity and a certain spirituality, while along the way cultivating an extraordinary family business enterprise that attained distinction as the world's largest ink producer during the first two decades of the twentieth century, at a time when printing technologies revolutionized communication systems and furthered democratization of speech and expression.



Michael French Metcalf

The industry that undergirds this story is itself an iconic cultural artifact. Dating to the earliest known cave drawings, ink production is at least 40,000 years old. The desire for an indelible and permanent substance arose from creative aspirations to express thoughts, experiences, and visions in words and pictures. The strength and resilience of the four generations that formed the long peak of Carter's Ink is central to the drama: the ability to foresee a multiplication of ink's uses, with new and improved products for achieving those uses, and to press for excellence in accomplishing high standards for those uses, all unfold in *Inklings*.



John Wilkins Carter
ca. 1890

A distinctive element in the family leadership arises from their deep involvement and leadership in their church, Swedenborgianism, which lay upon the fringe of culture. Pillars in a marginalized sect that was larger than the Shakers but smaller than Christian Science, the family played a key role in building its church with no less determination than it applied to its business. When I was a Swedenborgian seminarian during the 1980s, the Carters were still legendary and commonly invoked for not only their generosity but also for their leadership. They served on governing boards for local churches and the seminary during their rise to a heyday for the tradition. They, largely built the New Church Theological School campus adjacent to Harvard Yard that includes the much lauded "pocket Gothic" chapel at Kirkland and Quincy streets, and they likewise underwrote the jewel in Newtonville, Church of

the Open Word, designed by the renowned English Arts and Crafts architect, Ralph Adams Cram.

But as Michael Metcalf discovered in his many months of research in the Swedenborgian archival collection with its several linear feet of Carter family archive papers and its plenteous store of Swedenborgian discourse in that period, the Carters were far more than benefactors. They saw themselves

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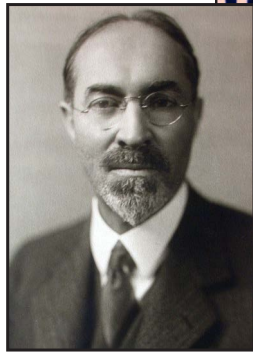
Inklings

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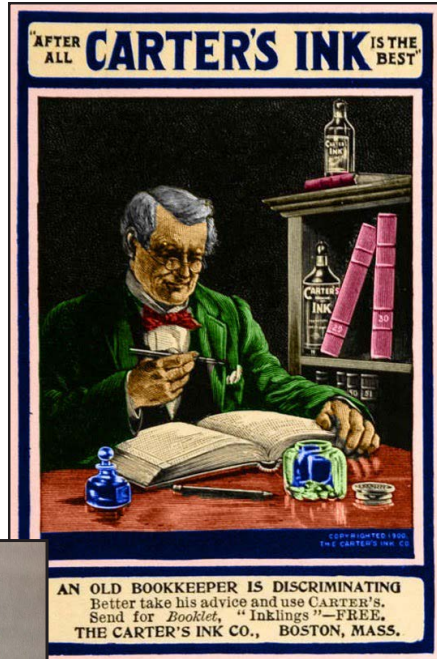
as beneficiaries of a way of understanding how life actually works—from the inside out; they believed they received such vision and foundation from their uncommon Swedenborgian faith. The concept of usefulness ferries special cargo in Swedenborg’s thought. It speaks at once to both the goal of the divine operation and to the blueprint of not only a satisfying and successful way of living but also of a joyful one.

A scientist before he was a visionary, Swedenborg’s earliest prowess appeared in mechanical engineering and how machines could be built to actually work and perform a use. Successful engineering led to usefulness and thus to goodness. The Carter files indicate that they relied on navigating their business through times of both success and trial by adhering to principles gleaned from their faith. The search for usefulness for the end user appears in play as they developed better science for indelible inks, stamping inks, drawing inks, colored inks, liquid paste, ink eradicator, typewriter ribbons, carbon paper, writing pens, and, in later phases of the company, felt-tip pens and Hi-Liters.

The Carters were also influenced by their faith to view their workers as angels in the making, and their care for worker well-being shows in the company’s penchant for being ahead of the cultural curve by providing employee benefits—such as a week’s paid vacation, a half day on Saturday when most companies worked six full days, shorter work hours in winter, \$10 Christmas bonuses, free medical advice, and full coverage for work-related injuries.



Richard Burrage Carter
1930



Inklings: John Wilkins Carter and The Carter’s Ink Company paints an American microhistory that becomes at last an inspiring macrohistory, as it speaks to family and community values, to character building, to ingenuity and innovation, and to spiritual vision. The witness and evidence for this large history exudes not only in these pages but in our desks, our shelves, our art, our libraries, in iconic buildings, and now, masterfully told, in our imagination. ☒

Inklings: John Wilkins Carter and the Carter’s Ink Company can be purchased from the websites of Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Genealogy House Publishing.



Jim Lawrence, Ph.D., D.Min., is Dean of the Center for Swedenborgian Studies and both Faculty Associate in Spirituality and Director of the Doctor of Ministry program at Pacific School of Religion.

This article has been culled from the foreword he has written for the book.

Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism

Dear Convention Friends,

We know that we cannot be the only ones who have been feeling like they would like to deepen their commitment to learning about anti-racism, and pursue actions that support anti-racism. There is so much information out there, and sometimes it is overwhelming to tackle these issues alone. We felt a clear desire to engage with our larger community of faith on this learning path. So, we decided to create a biweekly newsletter called *Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism*. Our goal is to offer various ways for people to learn new perspectives and find out ways to support anti-racism in action over the long term. Once a month, the newsletter will provide resources for learning and action around one particular issue. (Previous issues have covered police brutality and the intersectionality of racism and LGBTQ+ rights). The alternate issues will be more personal/devotional, to help us build stamina for the ongoing work of racial justice in our everyday.

Many people are waking up to the realities of racism in the United States, but it is important to continue doing the work even after the headlines have faded. We hope that this newsletter will help to provide focus for that work in the months and years to come. If you would like to be added to the list to receive this newsletter, please email revshada@gmail.com

In conjunction with the newsletter, all are invited to join the [Manifold Angels Facebook group](#), for community and support in doing this work.

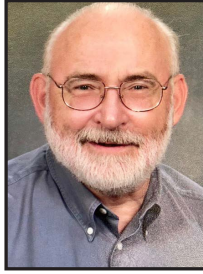
Sincerely,

Rev. Shada Sullivan
The Church of the Holy City,
Wilmington
Lori Gayheart
LaPorte New Church

Passages

Deaths

Rev. Dr. Robert “Bob” E. Bossdorf, 79, of Ossipee, New Hampshire, returned to his heavenly home on



January 19, 2020, after a valiant battle with a long illness. Born in Brooklyn, New York, on April 18, 1940, to the late Gustave and Erna Bossdorf. Bob was a loving son, brother, husband, father, grandfather and friend. Bob had most recently been the pastor at the First Christian Church in Freedom, N.H., until retiring in 2011. He had a long and successful history in preaching throughout New England.

President’s Report

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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 encourage one another to advocate for those who face discrimination and to 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 can be greater vessels for Divine Love in the world.

We are all connected. We are connected to our past and, connected in our hope for the future, and the way to honor both is to be of use, to stand for justice, and to care for one another.

From words of Rev. Gladys Wheaton shared with me:

Virtual Fryeburg New Church Assembly

Saturday, August 1 – Sunday, August 9

VFNCA 2020 is going to be an educational, social, entertaining, and absolutely packed event! Running Saturday, August 1 through Sunday, August 9, the Fryeburg New Church Assembly online camp session allows you to join “our little slice of Heaven” wherever you may be. This is an opportunity for everyone who’s never been able to attend the FNCA, or who hasn’t for a long time, to participate.

The program will run on a variety of platforms including Zoom, Facebook Live, and Jitsi. Much of it will be available for viewing later on on our [Facebook page](#). Everything is in the afternoon and evening Eastern Daylight Time so that Swedenborgians further west can participate fully. [The full schedule of events](#) includes everything you need to know to participate. There is also a link to it in the top left corner of every page of our website.

The [Opening Weekend Program](#) will be presented by Rev. E. Kent Rogers who will open the camp session with a Saturday presentation about Nepal, where he and his family lived for seventeen years. His second presentation, Sunday afternoon, is titled “Hearing God’s Call” and will discuss methods to open the heart and mind to spiritual experience.

The FNCA lecture themes this year are “The Tabernacle” for the first part of the week and “The Three Essentials of the Church” for the second part. Our lecture staff includes both old hands and newbies from around the continent. We are pleased with the



return of Rev. E. Kent Rogers, Rev. Hugh Odhner, Rev. Lee Woofenden, and Dr. Devin Zuber; delighted with the return after a long absence of Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence and Rev. Ken Turley; and are thrilled to welcome into the fold Rev. Jonathan Mitchell and this year’s [Rev. Everett K. Bray Visiting Lecturer](#), Dr. Rebecca Esterson who will give our first lecture on Monday and facilitate the Afternoon Book Club throughout the week.

The Afternoon Book Club meets three times a week and will be studying Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey’s book [The Holy Center: A Biblical Path to the Center Within](#) which is available to read free online at the link above. On alternate days is Afternoon Arts & Crafts, an open craft project for all ages. Following that will be a daily themed social hour.

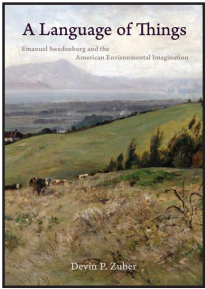
Wednesday is Outing Day! Instead of regularly scheduled activities, we’ll be showing video tours of various places around the globe that have been sent in by campers.

Each night, it’s Sparks Games for the kids, Evening Activity for all, and most nights, either Flames Games for the teens and college age and/or a nighttime activity for adults.

There are also activities spanning the whole week: the [Virtual Dole Three Miler Road Race](#) and the [Sales Table Auction](#). Visit [Fryeburg.org](#) for details on participating. Join us for vFNCA 2020—you will be glad you did!

The golden pathways of the New Jerusalem are the walkways of the Golden Rule which leads us into beloved Community.

May it be so. AMEN ☪



Swedenborgian Book Club

Anyone is welcome to join us, whether you've completed the book or not.

Wednesday, September 16, at 8:00 PM EDT

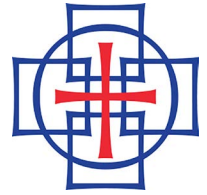
A Language of Things: Emanuel Swedenborg and the American Environmental Imagination
By **Dr. Devin Zuber**

By tracing the ways that Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Muir, and Sarah Orne Jewett, among others, variously responded to Swedenborg, Zuber illuminates the complex dynamic that came to unfold between the religious, the literary, and the ecological. Dr. Zuber will be joining our discussion.

If you would like to join us via Zoom and have suggestions for future books to discuss, please contact: Robbin Ferriman at RobbinCats@gmail.com or Beki Greenwood at Messenger@Swedenborg.org.

Annual Swedenborgian Church Convention

facebook



Follow *the Messenger* on Facebook!

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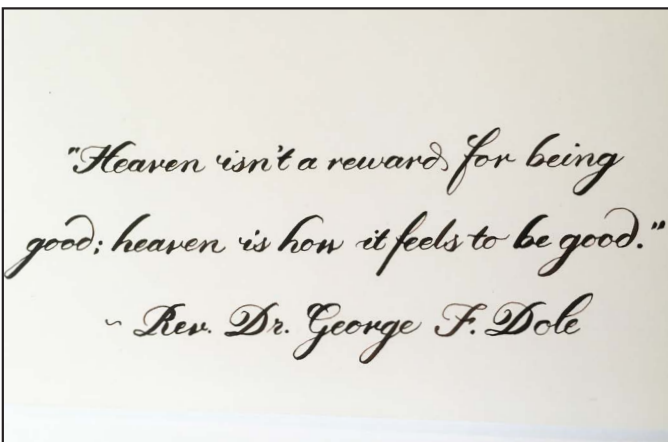


SwedenborgianCommunity.org

With broadcasts every Thursday & Sunday, Swedenborgian Community Online is your affirming, interfaith, Swedenborgian community—with a presence on YouTube, Facebook, and your favorite podcast platform. We seek to uplift God(dess) in all people's diverse ways of living.

Our Daily Bread at SpiritualQuesters.org is your resource for recent sermons, meditations reflections, lessons, interviews, and original content from within and beyond the Swedenborgian Church of North America.

Answers to the June Jumble:
Enjoy, Until, Mayhem, Honest
The newest candy bars to hit the Midwest are called: "Almont-Joys"



Calligraphy Quotes by Myrrh Brooks
[@myrrhbrooks](https://www.instagram.com/myrrhbrooks) on Instagram

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Where Newman and Simon go to unwind:

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

Pandemic Relief Funds Available

A Message from the Treasurer

As we continue to enjoy the summer months in our various locations, please keep in mind that the Swedenborgian Church has available financial resources established and built over many decades through a variety of gifts and bequests. These financial resources are designated to assist our societies and other affiliated entities. We are grateful for the generosity of these previous generations whose gifts continue to be a legacy of usefulness.

The Standing Committee for Financial Accountability (SCFA) is charged with distributing grants from a few of these financial resources as described below.

Augmentation Fund

Purpose: the support and extension of the New Church ministry and missionary field. Established by vote of the Swedenborgian Church in 1912.

- To provide grants to ministries to augment the salaries of ministers ordained by the General Convention and serving General Convention ministries.
- To fund theological student ordination expenses as required by the

Committee for Admission to Ministry (CAM).

- To support salaries of ministers driving initiatives which facilitate the health and sustainability of Societies of the Swedenborgian Church.

Mission Funds

Purpose: to facilitate and encourage regeneration and creation in the ministries of our church. A mission shall be any ministry whose focus is facilitating activities that increase the number of individuals and groups consciously committed to spreading the Lord's New Church through such activities as church planting, satellite ministries, resurrecting formerly active ministries, or other initiatives that promote and support the spiritual well-being of persons within the Swedenborgian perspective.

New Directions

Purpose: an extension of the Mission Funds to facilitate new directions in church growth. Includes initiating new programs or establishing new ventures within existing programs, special events, community outreach and growth opportunities.

Jungerich Publication Fund

Purpose: to aid in providing the theological works of Emanuel Swedenborg, at no cost, to the Protestant clergy of the United States and Canada, including theological students and instructors in theology. (Established in 1882.) In more recent years, the purpose has been expanded to include supporting the digital distribution of the theological works of Emanuel Swedenborg and the written contemporary exposition of same.

Each of our societies and other affiliated entities should have received the application documents by an email distribution in early July 2020. The SCFA will be meeting in September to make its granting decisions for the calendar year 2021. If your Society would like to apply, please keep in mind that the submission deadline is August 15, 2020. All inquiries and submissions should be sent to both manager@swedenborg.org and treasurer@swedenborg.org.

May you and your community continue to be well. ☪

Jennifer Lindsay
*Treasurer and Chair of the Standing
Committee for Financial Accountability*