

Angels Windows Hit the Road and Multiply

BY SUSANNAH CURRIE

The Touring Museum Exhibition

It has been five years since the creation of the angel committee at the Swedenborgian Church at Temenos, which eventually developed into the non-profit organization In Company with Angels. Since its inception, this small arts organization has attracted the attention of many people around the globe who have been inspired by the exquisite beauty, artistic and historical significance, and spiritual meaning of the Tiffany stained-glass window series, “Angels Representing Seven Churches,” that the organization is sharing through its museum exhibition. To fulfill its mission of sharing these unique art treasures with the world, the board of directors has worked diligently and is proud to announce the fourth museum venue at Florida State University’s Museum of Fine Arts in Tallahassee, where the angel windows can be seen from February 12–March 28. See www.sevendaysfestival.org for more details.

Previous exhibits were held at the Glencairn Museum in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania (January–June 2007), the Delaware Art Museum in Wilmington (September 2007–February 2008), and the Newcomb Art Gallery at Tulane University in New Orleans (March–June 2009).

Here are some of the comments

captured in a “Responses and Re-

flections” book at the Tulane exhibit:

“The angel windows take my breath away with their awesome beauty.”

“Exquisite art! Thank you for making this treasure available to us.”

“An absolutely inspiring display!”

“Tremendous and worth dreaming about.”

“Beautiful, amazing . . . words can’t express the impact of this exhibit.”

“There is hope when humanity expresses its best innate possibilities through art.”

Other Venues Sharing the Angels

In addition to the museum exhibition of the original stained-glass windows, two Convention churches are sharing the angels and the Swedenborgian theology of angels through representations of the windows and using the CD “Meditations on the Seven Angels of Revelation” by Ken and Laurie Turley, inspired by the angels of the seven churches. The San Diego Swe-

denborgian Church has canvas interpretations of the angels on display, and the Lansing Swedenborgian Church has mounted posters in its sanctuary.

Here are some comments from people who have experienced the angel images in these churches.

Reflecting as a pastor, one of the most remarkable things about the angels is that they were an answer to a prayer. Shortly before receiving the canvases, we prayed in worship to be able to satisfy the needs of those seeking a deeper understanding of angels. These angels provided the answer to our prayers and met our stated need, the perfect visual vehicle and beautiful art to help us share our (Swedenborgian) angelology with a wider audience.

For me personally, having the angels icons in the church is the next best thing to real stained glass windows. The dynamics are classic. I am often able to point to a visual representation of the deeper truths of life and soul-work found in Scripture, and the congregation has an immediate visual reminder, even in casual moments, of that secret of heaven—a review of sorts of experiences with our lessons. This has the effect of reinforcing spiritual growth.

It helps bridge a gap with our Christian Ethiopian Orthodox community, who love icons and use our church on Saturdays.

continues on page 26



Angel window reproductions in the nave of the San Diego Swedenborgian Church

In This Issue:

2009 SCYL Winter Retreat • New Wineskins: Proving God
Nearer to Each Other—Nearer To God • George Dole *Festschrift*
Bath Man Set Early Pace for First 4-Minute Mile • A Farewell and a Phone Call

The Editor's Desk



First Signs

As the teens of the SCYL recover from the deep freeze of their winter retreat (page 19), we see the first signs of spring snuggled onto page 31 in "Seek and Ye Shall Find." "What signs?" you might ask, looking around: information about the annual convention, of course. It's not too early to begin planning your attendance in St. Paul, Minnesota, sponsored by the Virginia Street Church. Having at-

tended the 2002 Annual Convention in St. Paul, I can report that the campus and accommodations at St. Thomas University were pleasant and comfortable, and that the host committee provided a wonderful program of activities for time outside of meeting.

Books

It is exciting to see two book announcements from Swedenborgians (Pages 20 and 25). Look for reviews in future *Messengers*.

A Request

I receive communications from time to time by mail, email, or telephone. I recently had a call from a *Messenger* reader on my phone answering machine that I did not respond to immediately. The next day, a power outage erased the message forever. So, if that was your call, or if you ever contact me and don't get a timely response, please try again. I value highly feedback, requests, and submissions from readers, and it is never my intent to ignore a message. If you have to try twice, I apologize, and I appreciate your patience and perseverance.

—Herb Ziegler

Church Calendar

April 1, 2010: Association statistics due at Central Office

April 10: General Council spring teleconference meeting

April 23–24: SHS spring meeting • Berkeley, California

June 23–27: Annual Convention St. Paul, Minnesota

July 8–11: Gathering Leaves Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania

Contents

Angel Windows Hit the Road.....	17
The Editor's Desk.....	18
Letters to the Editor.....	18
Controversies Abound at 2009 SCYL Winter Retreat.....	19
New Wineskins: <i>Proving God</i>	20
2010 SCYL Officers.....	22
Nearer to Each Other— Nearer To God.....	24
George Dole <i>Festschrift</i>	25
Gathering Leaves 2010.....	25
Bath Man Set Early Pace for First 4-Minute Mile.....	27
2009 Donors to <i>The Messenger</i> ..	28
Passages.....	31
Seek and Ye Shall Find— Annual Convention 2010.....	31
A Farewell and a Phone Call.....	32

Accepting the Call

Several ministers have accepted calls to ministry recently.

- The Rev. Susannah Currie, Bridgewater (Massachusetts) Society of the New Jerusalem
- The Rev. Ron Brugler, Swedenborg Chapel (Cleveland)
- The Rev. John Billings, West Chester (Pennsylvania) Church at Temenos
- The Rev. Sage Currie, Fryeburg (Maine) New Church
- The Rev. Junchol Lee, Calgary (Alberta) New Church and Western Canada
- The Revs. Erni and Paul Martin, Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound ☩

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Thanks for publishing my email letter in the December edition of *The Messenger*. I've been giving some thought to James Lawrence's article in the November edition, and other articles in the December edition have helped further to crystallise certain of my ideas.

I have been reflecting on the value of biographical study of Swedenborg. I should perhaps say at the outset that, as an erstwhile student of literature, I have always tended to have reservations about the biographical approach (including questions of sources) when looking at an author's work. Although this approach has a value, I feel it can be accorded too much importance and

continues on page 30

the Messenger

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Controversies Abound at 2009 SCYL Winter Retreat

BY KURT FEKETE

There is nothing like controversy to stir up emotion and conversation. And there was serious controversy at the 2009 annual Swedenborgian Church Youth League

winter retreat at Almont New Church Assembly and Retreat Center—biblical Controversy. Twenty-nine teens descended on Almont to ponder perplexing passages and confusing subject matter in the Bible. The Rev. Sage

Currie, The Rev. Dr. David Fekete, The Rev. Alison Longstaff and The Rev. Jennifer Tafel took on these contentious Biblical themes and presented thought-provoking and informative sessions to teens hungry for intelligent



Winter retreat this year started off just as every year has; a giant van pulling up to my house. After picking up almost enough people to fill this van, and having to play Tetris with the luggage to get that one last seat we needed, we were off. The ride consisted of reacquainting chatter, games, singing grace at rest-stops, and sleep.

Upon arrival, we were quickly acquainted with the beloved tap water we had managed to forget. From this point on, everything was one giant blur; once other people arrived, we were on retreat time, which means that an hour feels like three. On a daily basis we would pack ourselves tight by the coma couch to hear about the Bible's view on current, try to figure out who was missing before we could start eating our meals,

and just hang out and have fun with people we rarely see or in some cases, have just met. Finding out that the roller skating rink we usually go to had burnt down was a hilarious tragedy. After our substitute activity of bowling, the quest to stay up all night began. And the next thing we knew, it was time for us to get back into the van and head home.

The ride home was pretty much all sleeping and just wishing to be able to teleport home to avoid getting stopped at the border and getting neck cramps from trying to sleep against a cold window. All in all it was a typical winter retreat, and I'd say the amount of fun and everlasting experiences can be measured by the number of people who keep coming back and the new ones who have been convinced into coming.

—Rachel Madjerac

discussion and unique answers to age-old questions. The youth engaged fully and provided much wisdom of their own on these divisive topics. It was extremely inspiring to be among teens and adults that listen and respond intelligently and sometimes humorously to thorny and weighty issues in a relaxed, comfortable setting.

The retreat opened with an evening session on creation versus evolution (Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."). Rev. Jenn talked about the history and politics of creationism, litigation concerning separation of church and state, intelligent design theory and then how perhaps God's hand in creation may work in tandem with science and evolution. The session closed with a presentation on the inner meaning within the Biblical creation story and how it reflects our life.

continues on page 22

New Wineskins: *Proving God*

BY EDWARD F. SYLVIA

Right now, the Swedenborgian “movement” is experiencing a second burst of evangelical energy. I do not mean to imply that there is a new wave of people stampeding into Swedenborgian churches on Sunday mornings (although it could happen). Rather, the tip of the spear of the movement is now focused on promoting the relevancy of Swedenborg’s ideas in the post-modern world by interfacing with science—why?

Today, science has become the main religion of the world. Faith has taken a back seat to reasoning. More and more people are demanding that things make rational sense and are rejecting traditional faith-systems.

What about Swedenborg’s theology? Unfortunately, offering the world a better theology has had a modest effect. Too few people readily accept the relevancy of New Church teachings to modern religion and personal salvation. Two and a half centuries of history have shown that the amazing claims of Swedenborg’s visionary insights present too big an intellectual hurdle for even serious thinking individuals.

I had learned from my long advertising career that you go where your audience is (heart, mind and body). Simply put, Swedenborg’s theology must not only allow human reasoning to enter into the mysteries of faith but also treat the post-modern world to a breathtaking encounter with science. Traditional theology offers no serious response to the new paradigm science, which has captured the world’s imagination. So if it could be shown that Swedenborg’s works are relevant to the new physics, that would turn some heads!

This is a new cerebral door for Swedenborgianism to walk through. But the New Church must find new ways (new wineskins) to display the poten-

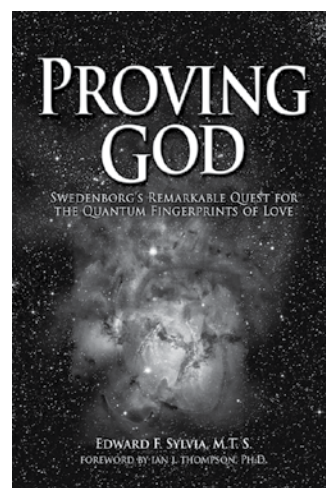
cy of its ideas. I intend to walk through this door with my new book *Proving God*. Swedenborgians already understand that the Lord’s “return” will bring about a new heaven (internal man) and new earth (external man). However, the external in humans includes scientific knowledge—so a new “earth” will also represent a science that is *compatible with New Church doctrine and worship*. I believe that a paradigm shift in *both* theology and science will be needed to help usher in the descent of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. Even the Swedenborgian Church will be challenged to look beyond the normal ecclesiastical mindset and acquire novel skills and creativity to be a real force in the world.

A Challenge within a Challenge within a Challenge

Several brave writers have correctly grasped the importance of drawing parallels between Swedenborg’s visionary insights and the new physics. This is fertile ground for effective New Church evangelism. Traditional religion cannot adequately respond to the new paradigm of science nor can it allow reasoning to adequately interface with faith. But science also has a problem. Science will be ultimately challenged to embrace a *spiritual* principle ruling the universe on the fundamental level. Thankfully (and providentially) scores of pioneering non-Swedenborgian thinkers and physicists are now actually moving in this direction by correctly sensing that primary things are psychical, and *alive*.

The big challenge of trying to unify science and theology is that both must start from correct assumptions. There is no point trying to unify flawed theology with flawed science.

While Swedenborg offers a rich-



er Christian theology that allows faith to be put into scientific language, current scientific models do not reciprocate by offering us real insights to God’s nature and divine action.

Quantum

physics, relativity theory and string theory, while quite sophisticated, were not designed with a soul-saving God in mind. So the new Swedenborgian movement must be careful not to force a square peg into a round hole in its attempt to show parallels between New Church doctrine and scientific models. I do applaud all such scholarly attempts at unification, but a red flag for me is that scientists cannot reconcile the two pillars of modern physics—general relativity theory and quantum mechanics, causing some scientists to speculate that these theories are either flawed or that some essential part of physics has been left out.

This points to a deeper theory. So where does the Swedenborgian movement turn for an appropriate scientific model from which to apply its superior theology?

If I could show in my new book that Swedenborg offered potent clues to this deeper theory, it would put the Swedish sage on the radar screen of the academic world. Swedenborg himself admits that the Lord guided his scientific career (1710–1745) in a way that would most help him explore and accurately interpret the unique non-physical phenomena of the spiritual realm. So rather than simply find parallels between Swedenborg’s theological discoveries with those of modern science

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(which are subject to change) I decided to write a book that offered new insights into his own scientific discoveries and demonstrate how they were superior to modern secular approaches for portraying divine action (spiritual causality from a scientifically plausible model).

This strategy may be a surprise to much current thinking about Swedenborg, which assumes that Swedenborg was limited by the science of his era. I disagree. I believe he tapped into a higher cognitive level of the mind through the Lord's help even before his spiritual eyes were fully open. His science was spiritually based (theistic) from the outset and his *Doctrine of Forms* provided rational causal links between inert physical matter and non-local spiritual substance—by lawfully removing geometrical constraints and adding new powers of infinity to kinetic trajectories and process. (Even eleven-dimensional string theory cannot do that!) My new book *Proving God* is an attempt to show that Swedenborg's science most successfully points to both a deeper unifying theory and best corresponds to God's essential *loving* nature. It is my humble attempt to show that infinite *love* is the creative law-giving primary cause of creation, evolution and unending spiritual salvation operating on the most fundamental level of reality.

If I am wrong, it is because my approach is *too* Swedenborgian.

Proving God (a Sampling)

In **Chapter One** I introduce the problems that a materialistic ideology (scientism) has when contemplating the origins of the universe. Whether a scientist starts from relativity theory and the big bang or quantum “tendencies to exist,” he or she gets backed into the corner of the infinite. I end this chapter by introducing Swedenborg's unique claim that *love* is the *non-physi-*

cal first principle of the universe. Demonstrating how Love powers the universe is my strategy for unifying science and theology and proving God's existence.

Chapter Two is a short biography of Swedenborg's amazing eighty-four-year life and journey of discovery. My goal here is not only to introduce new people to Swedenborg but also to show his historic importance to human thought and why he is the right guy for the job of unifying science and theology.

In **Chapter Three** I return to the problem of infinity. I show that the Infinite is ontologically real and that time, space and finite matter have their origins in the Infinite. Swedenborg's science offers new insights as to how non-physical potentials (spiritual endeavors) create coherent structure (forms of uses) in the universe as derivative analogs of spiritual love.

Chapter Four not only makes the claim that Swedenborg anticipated many of the important elements of modern physics but that his scientific model is still superior in that it provides a potent way of combining space-time curvature and structure with quantum discontinuity (continuous and discrete degrees). Such a combination would provide a new approach to grasping *quantum gravity*—which still eludes scientific investigation. The mystery of why time flows in one direction (arrow of time) and not backwards is also discussed (from spiritual considerations).

Chapter Five covers what I believe to be Swedenborg's greatest contribution to physics—the Doctrine of Forms. This is Swedenborg's version of modern science's multidimensional string theory. Unlike string theory, which never gets beyond the physical realm, Swedenborg's Doctrine of Forms is a geometrical ladder from terrestrial forms and inert matter to God's Infinitely dynamic and eternal form.

Chapter Six explores the parallels

between the rational structure of the universe with the rational structure of the human brain and mind. Modern neuroscience is moving in Swedenborg's direction on two fronts. First, researchers are attempting to develop *multi-level* models of cognitive structure. (Only recently have scientists looked for deeper neural substrates within the neuron itself to address the higher cognitive functions of mental thought and abstraction.) Second, by theorizing that emotional experience (derivatives of love) shapes attention and organizes human memory into coherent belief systems, Swedenborg's hierarchical design of the human intellect and its affections (loves) is way out in front here, even demonstrating that the deepest scaffolding of our cognitive architecture has its origins in the spiritual realm and soul.

Chapter Seven is titled “Did Noah's Ark Travel Across Possibility Waves?” I felt it was time that the Swedenborgian movement provide rational evidence for John 1:1-3, which states that all things were created from God's Word. The Holy Word is a *multi-leveled* document, which contains the top-down patterning principles for all order, causal process, and law in our bio-friendly universe. (Since Swedenborg stated that the human body was the “temple of all sciences” and the Grand Human expresses the living dynamics of Scripture, God's Word also is profoundly scientific.) In this chapter I introduce a new theory of evolution into the debate between creationism, Darwinian theory and intelligent design. I think Swedenborg would be happy that I call this spiritual evolutionary theory *Conjunctive Design*.

Chapter Eight covers his observations about the individuals occupying heaven and hell and the unique psycho-topological phenomena of their spiritual landscapes, which are environments removed from their relations

continues on page 28

SCYL Winter Retreat

continued from page 19

The next two sessions were about the Old Testament God and law. Rev. Alison got us up and awake the next morning with a fascinating discussion on the meaning behind God's

wrath (Exodus 22:24 "My anger will be aroused, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives will become widows and your children fatherless.") and how it relates to a loving parent teaching their young child. Rev. Alison explained how God's wrath can

be understood as a child feeling anger against a powerful, but caring parental presence. We learned how God is pure love and wisdom and cannot ever become angry or vengeful. Next, Rev. Dr. Dave led an afternoon session on

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2010 SCYL Officers

The Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL) officer and chaplain elections for 2010 took place at the Almont Winter Retreat in December. The results are

President, Nina Sasser

East Coast and public relations officer, Rachel Madjerac

Midwest and activities officer, Janice Earls

Canada and service officer, Joseph Ferr

West Coast and fundraising & finance officer, Cody Steinhiser

Editor, *Clear Blue Sky* and communication officer, Holly Bauer

League chaplain, the Rev. Dr. David Fekete

Some of the SCYL Officers return to another year of service, while we welcome some new teens to the League as well. We must unfortunately say goodbye to 2009 officers Alex Dyer, Sam MacTavish and Jake MacTavish, who are moving on to college and exiting the League. We will miss them at our retreats and gatherings and thank them for their service in the SCYL.

We have an outstanding group of officers elected to serve in 2010. We welcome **Nina Sasser**, back for a second term as SCYL President. Nina was an inspirational and amazingly positive leader last year, and we are so excited to have her take on another year in this position. She lives in Portland, Maine, where she is busy applying to colleges and singing (Nina is excited to play the lead villain in her high school production of *Once Upon a Mattress*.) She is very involved in church retreats, camps, and annual conventions and plans to remain as involved as possible in church activi-

ties and retreats. If you haven't met Nina yet, make an effort to do so if you get the opportunity. Her happy, playful spirit is contagious! She is sure to be a presidential hit in her final year of eligibility as an officer.

We greet two first-time officers **Janice Earls** and **Joseph Ferr**. Janice lives in the Detroit area and has been an active participant at Almont Summer Camp, annual conventions, and retreats. Janice has been a part of the SCYL for a long time, and we are so pleased to have her finally as an officer! She is a talented musician and expressive conversationalist. You're sure to get an interesting story and lots of questions when talking with Janice. Joseph attends the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario, and just turned thirteen a few months ago. He is new to the SCYL, and we are so excited to see him playing such an important role in the future of the League at such a young age. We look forward to his insight and energy.

Cody Steinhiser begins his fifth year of service to the SCYL returning as the West and fundraising/finance officer. **Rachel Madjerac** returns for her third year as East Coast and public relations officer. **Holly Bauer** takes on the challenging job as editor of *Clear Blue Sky* (the SCYL newsletter and journal) for a second year. She did an amazing job putting out three great issues in 2009 and we are excited and blessed to have her continuing on in this critical and demanding role.

Rev. Dr. David Fekete was re-elected to his third year as the League chaplain. David spent much time and energy traveling to retreats from Edmonton, Alberta, last year. He also served as the spiritual leader at Paulhaven summer camp and was a lecturer and teen boy's dorm dad at Almont summer camp. He wrote monthly chaplain posts for the youth league blog (youthleague.blogspot.com) and was available at all times to teens in need. Best of all, he makes up great Mad Libs that the teens find highly entertaining!

Please join me in congratulating all of our 2010 SCYL officers and chaplain. This marks another year where we are thrilled to have a great mix of teens leading the League. Their nearly boundless enthusiasm and flair is sure to bring new and exciting things to the SCYL. I'm elated to be working with this group, and I hope that you get a chance to meet them.

—Kurt Fekete

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Old Testament law. We talked about the most important rules (Deuteronomy 6:5 “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”, Leviticus

He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”) and how the devil seeks to reside inside of us. We talked about how evil can try to take charge over our lives and ways we can allow heavenly angels into our hearts to com-

Rev. Sage led a morning session the following day looking at the very controversial subject of same sex relationships (Leviticus 18:22 “Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.”). We discussed marriage and how it was different in Biblical times then it is today (1 Kings 11:3 “He (King Solomon) had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray.”). We also looked at some laws from the Old Testament that we may not consider obeying, questioned the literal meaning of some (Leviticus 19:19 “Keep my decrees. Do not mate different kinds of animals. Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed. Do not wear clothing woven of

continues on page 31



Retreat spiritual leaders: (l to r) Rev. Dr. David Fekete, Rev. Alison Longstaff, Rev. Sage Currie, Rev. Jennifer Tafel

19:18 “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.”] and explored how the language of these laws in the Bible can be applied today.

That evening, Rev. Jenn displayed images of Satan [Revelation 12:9 “The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray.

bat demons and hateful thoughts. Some teens expressed how they felt when in a hellish state, and we looked at some ways to escape this trap.



Happy retreat girls (l to r): Liz, Celie, Emily, Audrey and Nina

Almont winter retreat was amazing as always. It was a great group of teens at this retreat, including a lot of new people! Everyone, whether it was their first or fifth Almont, became really close. Sometime during the fifteen or so hour van ride I decided that this retreat was the sixth best I had been to out of twenty-two! The four days I spent there were so filled with love and laughter and happiness and excitement and back-breaking, rib-cracking hugs. Leaving Almont is always one of the hardest things I have to do, and this year was no different. But I always tell myself it's good that I hate to leave because that just shows how special retreats are. And this one was really awesome!

My mind is flooding with memories of all the fun things we did—getting all dressed for everything (especially bowling), sharing stories while washing dishes, freezing during Ultimate Frisbee, devouring popsicles and garlic bread, bonding with the girls at 3 a.m., and having a raving dance party in Pfister lounge with glow sticks! The sessions were really intriguing. I especially enjoyed Sage's topic of same sex marriage and of course the closing worship service that ended with all the teens singing along to Journey's “Don't Stop Believing.” I found that moment to be truly touching. It was also at this retreat that I was elected president of the SCYL for the second year, which I am so, so excited about! All in all, Almont was incredible, and I thank all the teens and staff for making it such a beautiful place.

—Nina Sasser

Nearer to Each Other—Nearer To God

BY GREG HUANG-DALE

Sometimes Fryeburg, Maine, seems a long way from everywhere. My parents live in the Midwest, our close friends live in Georgia, and we have lived and worked several years abroad in China. On the way home from our trip to China this past summer, my three-year-old daughter lamented the distance as we drove the final leg from the Manchester airport to our home in Maine. “Dad,” she said, “Fryeburg is so far.” It had been a long trip, and we were all travel weary. Still, we had collected good memories of gatherings with kindred spirits half a world away.

Living in a variety of states and abroad has opened my mind to the reality that physical distance and spiritual distance are not equal. No matter where we go, God is nearby. When I started my career as teacher in the early nineties, I was living in a Christian community teaching English to recent refugees. No matter their origins—Central America, Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe—the refugees were extremely grateful for the kindness and generosity they met at Jubilee Partners, the community where I worked. I felt God’s spirit in our welcoming. And each time I have traveled abroad I too met a similar sense of the Holy Spirit working through people wherever I went, helping me and others in need. It wasn’t long before I started to seek God’s love in the places I lived and traveled.

Seeking this spirit, I traveled for the first time to rural mountainous Guatemala in 2000. I traveled with a delegation of church members from our congregation in Decorah, Iowa, to meet the people of our sister parish in Nebaj, Guatemala, deep in the mountainous countryside. The delegation was part of a growing relationship be-

tween our church community and the people of the Nazarene Church in Nebaj. While there, I stayed with Jose Torres and his family as he taught me his language, *Ixil*. I slept on the only bed in their home while they slept on the dirt floor; I ate the simple food of the Mayan people; I walked in the mountainside cornfields that Jose tills with his heavy hoe; and I worshipped with them in a simple wooden church where sunlight through the cracks in the walls provides most of the lighting. In one of the most impoverished places

Through personal relationships and our solidarity of faith and justice, God’s message is clearly revealed: to love one another as he has loved us.

I’ve ever been, I felt the need for God and the presence of God more strongly than ever.

Soon after that trip, a group of friends from Nebaj including Jose came on a delegation to Decorah. It was very difficult for them to get visas, and most had never traveled out of their valley, but they came wanting to learn about our lives. During the ten days they spent in our homes, we saw our lives in a whole new light. We saw our homes, our church, and our community through Guatemalan eyes. This too was a divine revelation. God revealed the truth of our blessings and our indulgences, and we were grateful again for what we had and what we shared with our sisters and brothers from Guatemala.

It was through Sister Parish that I fully realized the truth of Christ’s promise, “Where two or more are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). It

was in living the dependent life of rural Mayan people that I began to realize we are as dependent upon each other as we are on God. And it was a visit from poor Guatemalans that helped me understand the blessings God gives us to share. Through personal relationships and our solidarity of faith and justice, God’s message is clearly revealed: to love one another as he has loved us.

I grew from those experiences with a new vision and commitment to bring people closer in spirit despite geographic distances. I started teaching immigrant laborers in our Iowa community, documented and undocumented, who wanted to be better connected to their new home through the English language. I went abroad again to teach English as a second language and then returned to the US, landing in Maine, where I teach ESL in the local high school. Then, this past year I was invited to join the board of directors for Sister Parish (SP), the organization which connects then supports delegations and communications between North American churches and Central America Christian communities. As a board member I am excited to be traveling again this spring to El Salvador.

As a new board member I am writing to you with an invitation. Although the Fryeburg Church of the New Jerusalem has no SP of its own, I am hoping to spark interest among our new denominational family. I am traveling this March on the 2010 Solidarity Delegation to commemorate the life of Archbishop Oscar Romero. Unlike most SP delegations that are specific church delegations to their sister parishes, the people traveling with me will be from several different churches around the US. This unique “solidarity” delegation is designed to introduce Sister Parish delegations to

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new churches and new people in the US looking for new relationships with God and fellow Christians worldwide. This delegation trip is also an opportunity for members of Sister Parish congregations in the US to come together and share an experience. This trip will also be an educational opportunity to learn about the historic links that bind us as Americans, North and South—politically, economically, socially and spiritually.

And so I extend an invitation to you, to experience a personal connection to the people of Central America and to meet God among the Salvadorans. We will visit residents in Sister Parish communities as well as meet with Christian leaders and experts who will teach us about our connections as Christians, communities and countries. The delegation will travel from March 18–27, led by experienced and knowledgeable Sister Parish staff who live in Central America.

Sometimes we feel far away from the rest of our world. It's hard to leave the comfort of home and easy to turn off the depressing global news. But the world is also full of God's promise and God's people are full of love for each other. As the shepherds and angels and kings came to see the hope of a new world born in a stable, I hope you will consider an adventure to meet a new revelation come in human flesh to welcome us all into closer relationship with one another and with God.

If you are interested in the participating in the Oscar Romero Anniversary Delegation (March 18–27, 2010) or would like more information about Sister Parish, please contact me, Greg Huang-Dale, at huangdales@gmail.com or visit www.sisterparish.org to read more about the mission, history and future of this vital movement. ☩

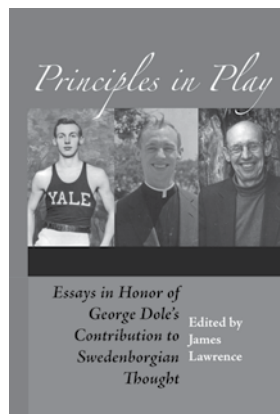
Greg Huang-Dale is a member of the Fryeburg (Maine) New Church.

George Dole *Festschrift*

Throughout a career spanning more than four decades and another one still continuing as scholar, preacher, and translator, George Dole's output to interpret the meaning and significance of Emanuel Swedenborg's writings for a contemporary context not only represents a life work of unparalleled breadth in Swedenborgian studies, but also one of unparalleled influence in the Swedenborgian Church since the nineteenth century.

By extending and deepening conversation in the diverse but integrated fields of biblical studies, theology, religious psychology, history, and translation theory, George Dole not only has facilitated an immensely rich conversation in a Swedenborgian interpretation of religion and culture but also has shaped new paradigms for understanding Swedenborg.

A collection of writings in honor of a writer is called in German a *festschrift* (celebration + life). Studia Swedenbor-



giana, the imprint of the Swedenborgian House of Studies (SHS) in Berkeley, published in January a *festschrift* titled *Principles in Play, Essays in Honor of George Dole's Contribution to Swedenborgian Thought*, written by a dozen colleagues, many of whom were also former students, and edited by Jim Lawrence,

dean of SHS. *Principles in Play* explores a stunning array of trajectories in Swedenborgian thought initiated by Professor Dole and displays the enormous impact he has had on the lives and careers of many others.

Principles in Play can be acquired for \$25 including shipping and handling by sending a check to:

Studia Swedenborgiana Press at SHS
1798 Scenic Ave
Berkeley, CA 94709. ☩

Gathering Leaves 2010

A Feast of Friendship

Gathering Leaves 2010, "A Feast of Friendship," is set for July 8–11 at The Lord's New Church, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. All New Church/Swedenborgian women are invited to attend for the purpose of learning and connecting with others in our own and our sister denominations. The signification of "holding a feast" is worship from a glad mind (*Secrets of Heaven* §7093).

For more information and pictures, check out Gathering Leaves 2010, on Facebook. If you have questions or wish to help, contact Roslyn Taylor (hrtaylor@temple.edu). ☩

Annual Convention

continued from page 31

easy nightclub during St. Paul's gangster era, which rivaled Chicago's. Have dinner and learn to swing dance, then cut a rug on the floor where John Dillinger, Al Capone, and the other crime bosses of the twenties and thirties danced. See the bullet holes where some rival gang members rubbed out. Guys can dress like a gangster and dolls like a gun moll, and have their photos taken.

Get your gats, put on your hats, and escape to St. Paul. Don't forget the date and don't be late. ☩

Angel Windows

continued from page 17

The canvases dress up the place and its walls in a way befitting our theology. We hung them in different ways, in different places, separately and together. They've even traveled to another location and will be emissaries to Mexico for our course there on angels as helpers and messengers of the Lord, for our spiritual growth and transformation of the world.

—Rev. Carla Friedrich, Pastor,
San Diego Swedenborgian Church

I am struck by how beautiful and transcending the Angel Windows are in the sanctuary at our San Diego Swedenborgian Church. During the Angel Series of sermons given by the Pastor, because of the different messages and levels of spirituality each angel represented, I felt a sense of how magnificently each angel's message can reach the heart of any individual no matter what spiritual level that person is experiencing, just like it is from the Lord and His Word. It presents the hope that people can always transcend from where they are if they choose to.

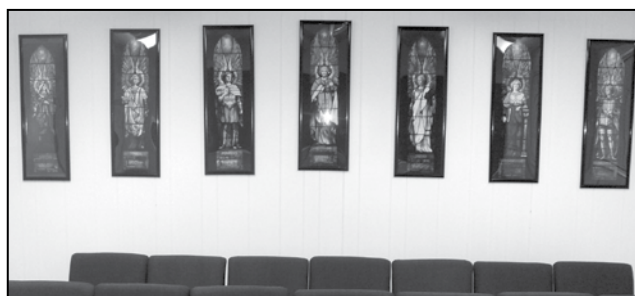
—Barbara,
San Diego Swedenborgian Church

The biggest lesson I got from our seven weeks of introduction to the Angels was that angels had agendas. I had never thought of them as executives but rather as "go-fers." I'm excited and amazed by the levels of caring and helpfulness this brings, along with the simple beauty of the windows. I look forward to seeing the real thing.

—Diane,
San Diego Swedenborgian Church

We wanted the angels for our church after Susannah announced their availability at the annu-

al convention in Seattle. She said they would be great for an angels group. I knew that's what the church needed—or that's what the angels were telling me! We got the angels just in time for our building dedication service, and they have been inspirational for our angel group. I use meditation music and guided meditations in the group, one meditation specifically inviting angels into our lives. The group was asking how to let angels into our daily lives. I use passages from *Heaven and Hell* to inform the group about how angels inter-



Angel in the nave of the Lansing Swedenborgian Church

act with us. The group format is open, and people explain how they can feel heaven and hell in their daily routines.

—Rev. Jenn Tafel, Pastor,
Lansing Swedenborgian Church

This is something we definitely wouldn't learn from attending a Sunday worship service, but it's definitely something our souls needed.

—Angel Group member,
Lansing Swedenborgian Church

What Sharing the Angels Means to Me

My own satisfaction in this project comes from how it helps me answer my own call to ministry. I feel I am called to communicate hope of eternal life, the reality of eternity here and now, and the love of God for every person. Through assisting In Company with Angels in its mission, I feel that

it has 1) raised public awareness of the concept of angels and eternal life, 2) opened persons who are searching for a greater sensitivity to the presence of angels in their daily living, and 3) given experiences of deep appreciation of beauty that communicates God's love uniquely to each human soul open to receive it.

The mystery of how beauty provides a bridge for God's love into the human soul is one that intrigues and excites me. Many of us feel "touched" by the Divine through the natural world when we enjoy a beautiful sunset, an

ocean horizon, or a gentle snowfall. Others feel the Divine inspiring them to create through music, dance, or a visual art form. Still others are drawn to view, listen and appreciate the artistic expression of others. Through beauty we often find peace, and in that peace, I believe God's love can more readily flow in. When you take time to allow beauty

in all its forms, to be a part of your life, you are creating an opening to experience a Divine connection, where God and the angels can join you in the peace and joy of the moment! Through reaching out to experience the beauty of these stained glass angels, I feel that I have taken a step closer to reaching out to the God who is always reaching out to me. I feel blessed to have the beauty of these angels in my life and I hope you'll invite them, or whatever beauty touches you, into yours.

Please visit the website at www.incompanywithangels.org for updates on future exhibits: the Museum of Biblical Art in New York City (Fall 2010) and the Taft Museum in Cincinnati (Spring 2011), and to purchase merchandise to enjoy the angels in your home. ☦

The Rev. Susannah Currie is a chaplain in Providence, Rhode Island.

Bath Man Set Early Pace for First 4-Minute Mile

BY SETH KOENIG

Reprinted by permission from The Times Record (Mid-Coast Maine) in the October 5, 2009 edition.

Roger Bannister's name will forever be etched in history as the first human to run a mile in less than four minutes, a record since surpassed but still recognized as a legendary breakthrough in athletics.

But on that May day in 1954 when Bannister would become a British hero and dominate headlines worldwide, his first goal was to catch up to George Dole.

Dole, a 1948 Morse High School graduate, was running that day for Oxford University. He was the only American of the six runners on the Iffley Road Track, and started in the pole position due to his victory at a qualifying race earlier in the season.

"My visual memory was that I was ahead going into the first turn," recalled Dole, now 78 and a local minister. "I got a better start."

In a recent interview with *The Times Record* at his High Street home (Bath, Maine), Dole sifted through a stack of old newspaper clippings and stories commemorating the event. In many, including a 1994 *Sports Illustrated* article, Dole is quoted.

In 1994, while living in Massachusetts, he was invited to an event in London celebrating the fortieth anniversary of Bannister's mile-run milestone. It was there that Dole finally got

to congratulate the running legend for his feat.

Four decades earlier, the reserved Bannister was swept away by a media circus following the record-breaking race, while Dole quietly left the track to study for end-of-term exams.



George Dole today, ready to run

"At the London luncheon, he invited me to sit at his table," Dole said. "He was really a gracious man."

Looking back, the Bath native said that leading into what would become history's most famous foot race, sev-



The start of the historic race—George Dole at far right

eral runners were closing in on the elusive four-minute mile record. In addition to Bannister, American Wes Santee and Australian John Landy were steadily whittling down their respective race times that year.

"In running circles, everybody was watching everybody," Dole said of the time. "I think Roger and his coach wanted to keep (his training regimen) qui-

et. But there were little things in the Oxford paper that said, 'This might be the day that it happens.'"

For the first several strides of that race, Dole was the man to beat. Soon, though, Bannister and pacers Chris Brasher and Chris Chataway eclipsed the American rounding the first turn and ran off into history.

"My thoughts were basically, 'How long can I hang in there?' and 'Can this push me to run my best time?'" Dole recalled. "You have your fantasies, but you don't take those very seriously for long. I was really watching them, as much as anything, through that last lap."

When the event announcer began listing Bannister's time of 3:59.4, the crowd went wild. Dole still fields occasional interview requests to describe the race as he saw it. The Morse alumnus said he estimates his time in the race was about 4:25, although the official timekeeper had stopped keeping time by then.

"It was four minutes out of 78 years," continues on page 31

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Proving God

continued from page 21

with spaces and times. This chapter also stresses that a correct unified theory of the universe cannot be invented without the knowledge of the Spiritual Sun in heaven.

Chapter Nine is an overview of the *spiritual* history of the human race including the spiritual quality of prehistoric humans. If Swedenborg's spiritual accounts of human history are correct, then he may well have provided a solution to the mystery of the Neanderthals' sudden disappearance.

Chapter Ten concerns Swedenborg's unique teachings about the Second Coming, mainly that it is a spiritual event rather than a physical event and that it is taking place within the hearts and minds of spiritually responsible individuals *now* living.

In **Chapter Eleven** I discuss the "science of salvation," translating Swedenborg's detailed descriptions of spiritual regeneration into scientific language. It is my hope to offer the reader a more visceral comprehension of the orderly dynamics behind the Lord's

plan for our spiritual development.

Chapter Twelve straddles theology—the issue of evil in the world. Many serious thinking individuals have left religion and turned to atheism because they cannot reconcile a loving God with a world full of suffering and calamity. This is an important topic to people who see cosmic injustice in everything from human relationships to species predation and extinction throughout evolution. Swedenborg provides the best answers to these irksome questions.

Chapter Thirteen addresses the mysterious phenomenon of hypnotism and the hidden mechanism behind it. This chapter is not a rehash of early Swedenborgian examinations and comparisons with Anton Mesmer's work. I offer unexpected (and unflattering) insights into the chronic problems of the corporeal and habitual mind that rules "customary" consciousness. The Genesis story of Adam and Eve's "fall" actually addresses humankind's susceptibility to suggestion and hypnosis through disconnection with God.

The **Final Chapter** offers an an-

cient mathematical model of how love can represent the ultimate science—a grand unified theory of everything—with explanatory and predictive powers. It is a new look at Swedenborg's *Circle of Life*, seen from the angelic perception that views all process as comprehensive wholes with mathematically anticipated uses sharing a common equilibrium. This heavenly knowledge (relational holism) is beyond the practical reach of academia. It represents heavenly cognition (the simultaneous perception of connected things in series) and is only received through Divine revelation from the Lord. Future researchers will have to address the Lord's cherubim and their own spirituality to gain access to a working knowledge of this universal and sacred science of love. ☪

Edward F. Sylvia received his Master of Theological Studies at the Pacific School of Religion and Swedenborgian House of Studies. *Proving God* is Ed's second book and will be available mid-March. For more information and an excerpt, visit <http://www.ProvingGod.com>. Visit his blog for regular insights and articles <http://thegodguy.wordpress.com>.

Farewell to Fryeburg

continued from page 32

ters there since he and Rev. Rachel had left, and that we were actually finishing our time there ourselves, and a new minister was due to begin her ministry soon. The phone number remains the same, even though different ministers come and go.

Carolyn's family has property in Fryeburg, and she was seeking information on lawyers and realtors, etc, because she's looking to sell it, and I was able to help her out with the phone book—easily enough done, and the phone call could have easily ended there. But as we got to talking, although I hadn't recognized her name at first, I realized that she was the daughter of Wilfred and Ethel Rice!

Wilfred was minister in Fryeburg in, I think, the 1930s, maybe? (I'll have to consult the book!) I told her that I remembered her parents. Indeed, I still have a baby quilt that her mother made for Emily when she was born! We got to talking about her life and memories of growing up in Fryeburg. We talked about how much we had both loved

the parsonage—she grew up there, just like my children. We talked about how hard it was to pack up and leave, what furniture was still there, what wood stove and chimney weren't there any longer—that kind of stuff. Turns out, she had lived there exactly thirteen and a half years, just like us.

How very like God to send that phone call to me just when I was thinking about former ministers and their families, just when I was feeling a sense of longing and melancholy that this most poignant and memorable stage of my life was coming to a close. How very like God to send an angel, just when I needed her the most, to remind me that all is well, that change, while it comes with painful separation and regret in some measure, also brings about growth and new life in another.

How very like God to send that gentle reassurance to us all.

This church community has been a blessing beyond measure to Ken and me and our children during our time in Fryeburg, a blessing that I can't even begin to express in words. Through times of joy and times of trial, our lives

here have been enriched by the loving members of this community. I know I am both sad to leave and looking forward to what is ahead of us, with a heart full of fondness for a time and people I have loved and felt loved by in return. But now, especially, I feel more and more reassured, since God sent an angel to whisper in my ear through the voice of a former minister's daughter, that change is a natural part of everyone's lives, and we can look ahead to the future with hopeful and trusting eyes.

—Laurie Turley

Laurie Turley is a music teacher, former musical director of the Fryeburg New Church, and wife of the Rev. Ken Turley, the recent minister of the Fryeburg New Church and president-elect of the General Convention.

Reprinted from the December 2009

God With Us

A Swedenborgian Understanding of the Divine

Online Class, February 7 - March 27, 2010

Taught by the Rev. Lee Woofenden

Registration fee: \$120

Who is God? Why do people have so many different beliefs about God? And how can we develop our own personal relationship with God? These are just a few of the many deep questions we will explore as we approach the sacredness of our Creator. We will begin with a survey of many widespread beliefs about God, including non-belief. Then we will focus on the Swedenborgian Christian view of God as transcendent Creator, as God With Us in the person of Jesus Christ, and as the active, healing presence of the Holy Spirit in our world, in our communities, and in our own hearts, minds, and lives.

In this course, the teacher will offer a written presentation on the topics for each week. Reading assignments will provide the students with further insight. Reflection questions focusing on the students' own engagement in the weekly topics will lead into further discussion.

For more information and to register contact the Rev. Lee Woofenden by email at: leewoof@leewoof.net

2009 Journal Available

The 2009 *Journal of the Swedenborgian Church* is here. If you want to order a copy, the prices are

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Letters to the Editor

continued from page 18

that the text itself should be the primary focus. When we are looking at Swedenborg as an author, the situation may be different to some degree, but I feel that we nevertheless need to ensure that we are true to what Swedenborg actually wrote.

One of the questions that this raises for me is whether some of the figures mentioned by James Lawrence in his November article have spent sufficient time working with Swedenborg's text to make some of their claims about Swedenborg. It is difficult to provide conclusive evidence to refute some of their claims, both as their own arguments are, in my view, often sketchy and insubstantial and as it's difficult to provide evidence of, for example, Swedenborg not being a "spy." However, that's not my main point. What these writers have in common is that they tend to place Swedenborg within the flow of the Western esoteric tradition. Indeed, the latter tends to be their expertise rather than Swedenborg himself. On the whole, I feel positively about Swedenborg becoming part of these discussions. I certainly don't feel it's healthy for us to try and keep Swedenborg "off limits"; in its way, that might make him as "esoteric" as anything else. At the same time, I think that it's important that those of us with a background of reading Swedenborg point out where what is being written about him doesn't ring true. Although I can't disagree with what James Lawrence says about concepts in Swedenborg being found elsewhere, for other reasons I would question to what extent Swedenborg can be said to be part of the Western esoteric tradition, and I'd like to explain a little why I say this.

The word "esoteric" literally means "inner," but is usually used to mean what is "hidden" or the province of

a few. What that immediately brings into sharp relief is that Swedenborg was working as a revelator. The fact that he saw this rôle as being a call from the Lord makes it difficult for many commentators to take his claim at face value; however, it's not just that he makes this claim. This spirit also runs throughout what he writes. On page after page it sings out that Swedenborg is striving above all to make himself clear. Through analogy and simile, repetition and illustration, he hammers home his point. Part of this goes back to his scientific methodology, but it also stems from how he saw his rôle as being the Lord's servant and instrument of the Second Coming. As this was going to happen, at least partially, by the written word, Swedenborg took seriously what he wrote and held to a desire for this to be widely understood. (There may be an implicit contrast with Blake here, as per the December article by Francesca McCrossan and James Lawrence—it doesn't feel as if Blake felt the same need.) I think this also links with how he saw the growth of the "New Church" as a universal movement. I would argue that the esoteric tradition has tended far more to have a sense of knowledge being limited to a select few (and even more that knowledge directly bringing about some form of spiritual development). In some senses one could say the same of Swedenborg, especially as he published in Latin. However, a chapter in *Heaven and Hell* being entitled "It Is not so Hard to Lead a Heaven-Bound Life as People Think It Is" and the contents of this chapter suggest that Swedenborg takes a very different view of this.

I think it is important to acknowledge, as James Lawrence does in his article, that those of us looking at Swedenborg from a religious perspective will tend to have a particular optic (emic rather than etic) and this is obviously how I write. However, I don't

believe that other commentators will ever be writing solely as outsiders. They too will write from within a particular culture, as the study of postmodernism has pointed out. In the case of some of these individuals, part of that culture will be a desire to be or become a figure of authority. Part of this within or on the edge of academia can easily lead to a need to make controversial claims. What one might also say is that if there is a value in being an "etically-informed emic," then there would need to be a counterpart of this as an "emically-informed etic."

I wonder if part of the difficulties of maintaining some of these tensions is that there is much that is paradoxical in how Swedenborg writes: the mystic and the rationalist, the questioning scientist and the Divinely-commissioned revelator. One of the biggest challenges in a society in which a secular and materially-focussed viewpoint is increasingly vocal is that Swedenborg's claims about the spiritual world become more and more difficult to accept for more and more people; at the same time, an approach which sees Swedenborg's spiritual world experience as a continuation of his scientific investigations offers a way to resolve, or at least hold together, the tensions inherent in what Swedenborg writes. I have often felt that those tensions are equally inherent in our institutions (although perhaps this is more marked in the UK than the USA). We often seem too religious for the "alternative" and too "spiritual" for mainstream religion. Perhaps Eugene Taylor's review of *Occult America* in the December edition also suggests something of this. Being involved in these types of discussions is, I'm sure, necessary for us to gain more understanding of where we stand in relation to the whole of the religious, spiritual and esoteric scene. As Eugene Taylor's review reminds us, those of us reading Swedenborg have a responsibility

continues next page

Passages

Deaths

Long-time member of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, **Vivian Wood**, passed away October 16, 2009. ☩

4-Minute Mile

continued from page 27

and it's four minutes in which I really didn't do anything remarkable," he said.

These days, Dole still runs. When the weather is good, he runs a four-mile loop that takes him up Whiskeag Road and by Bath's prominent cemeteries. Just like he did on May 6, 1954, he still puts everything he has into each run.

"The old competitive instincts don't go away," he said. "People who aren't runners probably don't understand it. The goal of running—to run as fast as you possibly can—means you always end up absolutely exhausted. If you're not, you're doing something wrong."

Seth Koenig is a staff reporter for *The Times-Record*.

continued from preceding page

to correct misconceptions and combat misinformation, but that is not likely to mean that there will ever be only one way to understand Swedenborg. Perhaps it might even be the best indication of the significance of Swedenborg's rôle that he will always be approached in a number of different ways by a range of people. Maybe this is even part of the Lord's will for his "New Church."

—David Lomax

David Lomax is principal of The Swedenborg Open Learning Centre in Manchester, England.

Seek and Ye Shall Find Annual Convention 2010

The Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church and Illinois Association are happy to invite you to the 2010 Convention of the Swedenborgian Church to be held in St. Paul June 20–27—mark your calendars.

The theme is "Seek and Ye Shall Find," and indeed you will find many exciting and special events during your visit, including some special mini-courses on Swedenborgian history and events at the Virginia Street Church.

In addition to the options of visiting

beautiful gardens, parks, a conservatory, zoos, art museums, a great variety of ethnic restaurants, and many other fun and interesting sites, you can visit one of only four museums in the country designated to display the Dead Sea Scrolls. For shopping for or experiencing the unusual in entertainment there is the Mall of America, the largest store complex in the nation.

Join in for dinner on Friday night in a series of caves that were a speak-

continues on page 25

SCYL Winter Retreat

continued from page 23

two kinds of material."), and tried to work out how to determine what laws are relevant today. We talked about our church resolution on same sex marriage and how individual churches have the freedom to decide where they stand and how we allow and encourage people to deliberate and choose on their own what path to take.

That afternoon, Rev. Dave concluded our sessions with a presentation on the second coming and the apocalypse (Matthew 24:30 "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory."). We learned that the end times is a metaphor for our life and not literally true. Rev. Dave explained how the unrest and turmoil of the second coming is within us and how Jesus truly does come again, not in the outer world, but in your own heart (Luke 17:21 "nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you.").

We reflected on all that we learned and discussed at a beautiful closing communion service which included

the burning of a ceremonial Yule log, along with teen contributions of musical performances, readings of original and other meaningful poems and singing. It was wonderful to explore different perspectives on these difficult parts of the Bible that are not often openly shared in church or at home with family. The teens brought up many insightful points and offered soul-enriching stories of personal struggle and growth. It was clear at the end of this retreat that although our Swedenborgian church does not have all the answers, we certainly do possess some practical theology to deal with tough biblical questions. Most importantly, we are not afraid to face controversy head on and talk about hot issues in an environment that is safe, open and free. Today's youth demand a religion that does not overlook or dismiss the logical and rational, but instead works in harmony with science and technology. The Swedenborgian faith offers this, and the teens at this retreat both challenged and embraced those ideals. I was moved deeply, and I departed with a stronger faith and more meaningful connection to the Bible. ☩

Kurt Fekete is the youth director of the Swedenborgian Church.

About the Swedenborgian Church

Emanuel Swedenborg was born January 29, 1688 in Stockholm, Sweden. Although he never intended a church denomination to be founded or named after him, a society was formed in London fifteen years after his death.

American groups eventually founded the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. As a result of Swedenborg's spiritual questionings and insights, we as a church exist to encourage that same spirit of inquiry and personal growth, to respect differences in views, and to accept others who may have different traditions.

Swedenborg shared in his theological writings a view of God as infinitely loving and at the very center of our beings, a view of life as a spiritual birthing as we participate in our own creation, and a view of Scripture as a story of inner life stages as we learn and grow. Swedenborg said, "All religion relates to life, and the life of religion is to do good." He also felt that the sincerest form of worship is a useful life.

Reflection

A Farewell and a Phone Call

I had a very interesting phone call the other night while emptying yet one more dresser drawer at the parsonage, packing one more box of memories of our time in Fryeburg. I had recently been reading the parsonage history in the book *O, Jerusalem*, which was written in the 1970s when Dave and Carole Rienstra were still living there. Ola Mae Wheaton and Margaret Briggs wrote it together. I had read various sections of it through the years, but more recently, I've been reading about all the ministers who have lived in that house since 1900 up to the Rienstras.

As I emptied a tall wooden cabinet, I started wondering who had originally left it in the parsonage, how many families had loved it and stored their precious items in it. I began thinking about how many items of furniture, books in the attic, letters to loved ones and childhood mementos were left there, how many

ministers' families had called it home and then had to pack up their things and move on when the minister's position changed. (You may guess that I was having a hard time leaving behind nearly fourteen years of memories of that house, where both my children had been raised.) In thinking these things, I felt a calm reassurance come over me, knowing that our family was yet another link in the long legacy of people who have loved that house. But at the same time, I felt a deep sadness and a sense of grieving for a truly blessed period in my life that was soon to be over.

Not more than half an hour later, the phone rang—Carolyn Rice (Barnes?) was looking for Rev. Jim Lawrence! I had to tell her he hadn't lived in the parsonage for close to twenty years now, that there had been two minis-

continues on page 29



Ken and Laurie Turley