

## Chicago Library Cosponsors Burnham Lecture at the Art Institute of Chicago

BY KAREN FEIL

The Swedenborg Library and the Art Institute of Chicago cosponsored a program on March 12 for Chicago's Centennial Celebration of the 1909 *Chicago Plan*, written by Edward H. Bennet and by Chicago Society member and Swedenborgian Daniel H. Burnham. Dr. Kristen Schaffer, associate professor of architecture at North Carolina State University and a recognized scholar on Burnham (she wrote the preface to the republished edition of the *Plan of Chicago*), returned to Chicago to present her talk: "Finding Burnham in the Archives: Swedenborgian Revelations and the *Plan of Chicago*." The program exceeded the expectations of both the Library and the Art Institute.

The program, attended by more than 150 people, was presented during the free Thursday evening "Voices" lecture series hosted by the Art Institute. The museum is free to the public on Thursday evenings, and traffic was brisk as Swedenborg Library program director Lily Gaines and trustee Karen Feil greeted and encouraged attendees to enter the Fullerton Auditorium, located just inside the front door of the Institute. Bud Phillips of the Des Plaines Society was among those attending.

Dr. Schaffer had presented the sem-

inal version of her lecture in 2005, first in an event cosponsored by the Swedenborg Library and National-Lewis University in Chicago, and again at the Swedenborg Foundation's annual meeting. Since that time, Dr. Schaf-



Lily Gaines, program director at the Swedenborg Library (left) with Dr. Kristen Schaffer as they arrive at the Art Institute of Chicago on March 12 for Dr. Schaffer's talk, "Finding Burnham in the Archives: Swedenborgian Revelations and the *Plan of Chicago*."

fer has continued studying Burnham's hand-written draft of *The Plan*, which is housed in the Art Institute's Ryerson Library.

On March 12, listeners heard a fully-developed work that drew extensively from that unpublished draft version, where Burnham's humanistic values and concerns for the common man are clearly evident. Many of his statements justifying elements of *The Plan* were

edited out of the published version. It is unknown why; Dr. Schaffer surmises that the businessmen members of the Commercial Club, who commissioned *The Plan*, may have foreshortened the scope to include projects they thought were achievable, leaving out the more visionary aspects. And as Dr. Schaffer wisely pointed out, the beautiful renderings of the imagined city published in *The Plan* tend to focus the mind on the pictures over the text. "It is difficult to reconcile the lush, rich, rhetorical Guerin-rendered perspectives with the earnest statements of concern for all citizens in the published Plan," said Dr. Schaffer.

Daniel Burnham's many contributions to architecture and urban planning have been overshadowed locally by the rivalry felt by contemporary Louis Sullivan and his followers and, in the later half of the last century, by Modernism. Associated with (and trivialized by) the "City Beautiful" movement, Burnham's legacy has been out of the spotlight for decades. Dr. Schaffer acknowledges that she is a maverick in her dedication to Burnham, but says that anecdotally, some previously skeptical architecture scholars, upon examining the draft of *The Plan*, have concurred with her findings. The many

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## The Editor's Desk



### Stories

Scientists debate the distinctions that separate humans from all other animals, encountering difficulties over the issues of speech and tool use. But for me, humans are the animals that tell and respond to stories. We tell stories—some of us are better at it than others—and we all love to hear, see, read, and remember stories. We are hard-wired to respond to stories. They help us understand and engage with the world by organizing information and stimuli into coherent packages for us to learn from.

That we are hard-wired to respond to stories is obvious from watching children engage with stories told or read to them. Even before they understand language they can be soothed by stories. And as they grow, stories become powerful entry points into their psyches and souls. As adults we continue to respond to stories: thus our engagement with novels and movies.

Most of us grew up with Bible stories, often as the focus of Sunday school

lessons. In his article "Share the Story," on the next page, John Maine presents a template, developed by the Sunday School Association (ANCSSA), for using Bible stories in Sunday school lessons in an organized and systematic way. If everyone participates in this project, the ANCSSA will have an impressive library of lessons to share with every Sunday school.

As the days hasten toward summer, remember to register for Convention 2009 and put your travel plans in place. Hope to see you in June!

—Herb Ziegler

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Thanks to David Fekete for explaining the external and internal worship of the Jewish nation in the Old Testament.

—Evelyn Bently  
Colton, California

## Church Calendar

**May 9:** Wayfarers Board of Managers conference call meeting

**May 17:** Annual Meeting of the New York Association • New York New Church

**May 22–25:** SCYL Memorial Day Weekend Retreat • Fryeburg, Maine

**June 24–28:** Annual Convention Seattle, Washington

**July 25–August 2:** Almont Family Summer Camp • Alma, Michigan

**August 1–16:** Fryeburg Camp Fryeburg, Maine

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## Messenger Article Discussions on Line

The Swedenborgian Community ([www.swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.org)) is hosting online live chats with authors of recent articles appearing in *The Messenger*. The Rev. Wilma Wake, pastor of the Swedenborgian Community, hosts the chats on selected Thursday evenings at 9 PM EST. Consult the web site for the schedule. If you are unfamiliar with online chats, Wilma can help you settle in. Recent chats included Bob Leas on his article about Andre Boisen, and David Fekete on his article, "Toward Externals: The Old Testament Testimony."

*The Messenger* is available for reading or downloading as a PDF file at [www.swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.org). ☒

## the Messenger

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The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or the Communications Support Unit, or represent the position of the Church.

## Correction

In the article, "Resources for Church Renewal" on page 62 of the April Messenger, Bruce McLaren should have read Brian McLaren.

# Share the Story: Serving Our Children

BY JOHN MAINE

Many of us shy away from Sunday school or, more generally, from talking to children about God. We're not sure where to start or exactly what to say, how to explain such things as spirit or—if that weren't enough—where Swedenborg fits into the mix. We fumble with the words and perhaps already the child before us is looking confused or bored.

Where do we start? Well, your Sunday School Association would like to suggest that we start by telling them a story. That's the idea behind the new and easy-to-use "lesson plan template" being distributed now to our churches and ministries.

It's all part of the Sunday School Association's new campaign, "Share the Story." The idea is for all of us to share how we tell the stories of God and how we make those stories come alive, both in the telling and in the activities that follow.

To participate—and, yes, we want everyone involved—all you have to do is use that simple, one-page template to describe how you would tell (not just "read") a particular Bible story. What methods would you use to make the story dramatic and compelling for young ears? What teaching aids would you use—pictures, special objects, puppets, physical movements, a simple song or rhyme?

Then describe the craft or activity that would help to illustrate the key point (i.e. the deeper meaning) of the story you've told. It could be a picture, a paper necklace, or a wall mural drawn on a big piece of newsprint. Or it could be a simple dance, a "clapping song," even a rap!

Have fun and let your imagination roam—the children we teach will certainly respond. And along the way, use your Dole Notes, your minister, or other

## The Sunday School Lesson Template

The Sunday school template does not include the necessary opening and closing rituals of a Sunday school class. These will vary with the customs and traditions of each church.

The focus here is on the lesson itself. It should have these features:

**LENGTH:** A one-page (both sides) outline, for a 20 to 30 minute lesson.

**FOCUS:** The particular Old Testament or New Testament story to be taught.

**APPROACH:** The Bible presented as the guide to life, with Bible stories having a special (deeper) meaning relevant to our lives (implicit when teaching younger children and more explicitly taught—i.e. "correspondences"—to older children) and told with conviction in your own words.

**KEY POINT:** The clear identification and repetition of the key point of the story, ideally in six words or less, in terms that relate the story to their lives today.

**ACTIVITY:** A group or activity (craft or drama, for instance) that serves to illustrate the key point for the younger children.

**DISCUSSION:** A guided group discussion (and activity) for the older children.

## The Lesson Template

**STORY TITLE** Name of Bible story with scripture citation.

**HOW TO TELL THE STORY** Describe the visual, auditory, and sensory aids—storybooks, objects, sounds, pictures, puppets, etc.—that would help you tell the Bible story in your own words and bring it alive for children.

**DEEPER MEANINGS** Using the Dole Notes, your minister, or other resources, identify briefly, in bullet-point form, some deeper meanings and—especially for older children—some correspondences

**KEY POINT** Identify the key point of the story that the children should be learning. Suggest ways that point could be repeated for maximum effect during the lesson—as a little rhyme, or with clapping hands, or each child saying a word in turn to make up the whole phrase, etc.

**ACTIVITY** Describe an age-appropriate, step-by-step craft or other activity (song, dance, etc.) the children can do that illustrates the key point.

**DISCUSSION** Especially for the older children (e.g. 10–13 years old), provide a few simple questions or themes to help guide a discussion of the story and its key point.

resources to identify a correspondence or two, to help the older children see how we find the "secret message" (key point) hidden in the story.

Then send in your lessons to ANCSSA secretary Missy Sommer (abra99@yahoo.com). Our goal is to gather up all these products of fun and imagination and use them to build a big bank of online Sunday school lessons that every church can use.

We all love to tell our stories. It's perhaps the most ancient of human arts. It's how we celebrate and preserve the truth and teach the younger ones the way they

should go. Jesus himself was a great teller of stories (called parables). He was also the one who said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them."

That is his call to us on behalf of all the little ones in our midst: let them come to me. In other words, tell them my stories, the stories of God. It doesn't mean you have to be an expert in Swedenborg or even a Sunday school teacher. Just have fun; tell us how you would tell the stories and let us share them with others. Let the children come to him. ☩

The Rev. John Maine is president of ANCSSA.



# Nominees for Offices and Support Units: 2009

The candidate statements below were received by deadline for this issue. The following candidates' statements appeared in the April Messenger: Lori Steinhiser, Susannah Currie, Susan Wood-Ashton, David Vigas, Bob Leas, Herb Ziegler, Barb Boxwell, Junchol Lee, and Wilma Wake.

## President: Ken Turley



I was born in Chicago, 1941 . . . (sorry, a little Blues humor). I was actually born in 1949. The son of Marilyn and the Rev. Dr.

Calvin E. Turley, I was raised in Seattle, Washington with my sister Cynthia, my brother Matt, and my middle sister, the Rev. Susan Turley who is also ordained in the Swedenborgian Church and is currently serving as a CPE supervisor and Chaplain at the Department of Veterans Affairs, Palo Alto Health Care System. From my earliest years I faithfully, albeit somewhat reluctantly, attended church, Sunday school, youth group, and various church camps until I left for college when I was eighteen. After a year and a half, I left school, applied for and received conscientious objector status, and served two years of alternative service in San Francisco. During this time I worked with the handicapped and emotionally disturbed and performed and taught music in institutions for children, including everything from homes for unwed mothers to high security youth detention facilities.

After a few years I went back to college and earned a BA in music. Then I performed and taught music, worked as night shift custodian in a recycling collective, and did construction. Real-

The Nominating Committee has nominated the following candidates for offices, boards, support units, and committees:

Convention President	Andy Stinson: Woolwich, Maine Ken Turley: Fryeburg, Maine
Vice President	Lori Steinhiser*: Michigan City, Indiana
Treasurer	Susannah Currie*: Providence, Rhode Island
Recording Secretary	Susan Wood-Ashton*: West Palm Beach, Florida
General Council (layperson)	David Vigas*: Lansing, Michigan
General Council (minister)	Freeman Schrock: LaPorte, Indiana
Education Support Unit (EDSU)	Sue Ditmire: Egg Harbor Township, New Jersey
Ministry Support Unit (MINSU)	Barbara Boxwell*: Midland, Michigan
Communications Support Unit (COMSU)	Beth Harvie: Washington, DC
Information Management Support Unit (IMSU) (2 to be elected)	Andrew Sciarretta: Cambridge, Massachusetts Junchol Lee*: Cleveland, Ohio
SHS Board of Trustees (representative class, 2 to be elected)	Robert Leas*: Fort Wayne, Indiana Herb Ziegler*: Cambridge, Massachusetts
Nominating Committee (one to be elected)	Karen Conger: Bishop, California Wilma Wake*: Portland, Maine

The Nominating Committee is still accepting candidates for nomination to all positions. Any member wishing to contribute to life and work of the denomination is encouraged to submit contact Matthew Fleming (matthewmallard@hotmail.com). The committee is still seeking candidates for the positions of: General

Council (layperson), FPRSU, and MINSU. Elections will be held at the 2009 Annual Convention in Seattle. Nominations from the floor of the convention will be called for before an election is conducted.

\*Candidate statement appeared in the April Messenger.

izing I wanted to put music to a higher purpose, I came east to become a church musician. In the early 1980s, in spite of the blossoming popularity of the folk mass "Jesus Christ Superstar" and "Godspell," a guitar player was not welcome in any church-music college programs. However, I did want to study theology, so I enrolled at the Swedenborg School of Religion in Newton, Massachusetts. Our denomination did not have a place for a church musician, so I became a minister and was ordained in 1985 with the hope that music would play an important part in my ministry.

My first call was two-fold: I was instrumental in reviving the Blairhaven Retreat Center and church summer camp and served as pastor of the Elm-

wood New Church. Both situations showed immediate growth. After three years, I answered a call that was funded for one last effort to save the Swedenborgian Church in Portland, Maine. Over the next seven years we brought the church to life as a very active alternative-style spiritual community with an emphasis on folk music, lay leadership, and consensus-style polity. It is still going strong under the care of the Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake.

In 1996, I accepted a call to the Fryeburg New Church in Maine. It was a traditional style church with an illustrious history that had undergone a series of difficult experiences that had left it at a rather low point. In the thirteen years that I have served here

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## President: Andy Stinson



**I** am Reverend Andy Stinson, and I want to be president of Convention.

I was born and raised in Maine, with family that goes

back almost 300 years in my hometown. Not being raised in any church, I knew little about any kind of church growing up. I joined the Army Reserves coming out of high school and attended the University of Southern Maine in Portland and Gorham on an ROTC scholarship. Shortly after I graduated from USM, a friend suggested I check out the Swedenborgian Church in Portland.

It did not take long before I was entranced in every page of reading from the church's teachings. In Swedenborg, I discovered a description of how I knew the world worked but simply had never heard anyone articulate. After college I began to be a regular part of the church community in Portland as I worked for several years in the fishing industry in Maine.

Being a fisherman named Andrew I might have discerned my call to ministry sooner, but by 1995 I could resist the call no longer and began attending the Swedenborg School of Religion (SSR) in Newton, Massachusetts. I was one of the last graduates of SSR before it underwent its reincarnation as the Swedenborgian House of Studies. Concurrently with my time at SSR I earned a Master's of Divinity degree from Andover Newton Theological School.

In 1999, I received a call from the Elmwood New Church in East Bridgewater, Massachusetts. Serving there from 1999 to 2002 was a joy; I forged connections in that community that I still treasure today. In 2002, I was mo-

bilized as an Army chaplain as my unit was called to provide anti-terrorism security in the US. From 2002 to 2006, I served in Fort Eustis, Virginia, supporting the soldiers and their families of an army at war.

I left active duty in 2006 and accepted a call to our church in Washington, DC for a year. In 2007, I was elected chair of the Council of Ministers and, leaving DC, I returned to Maine. It is an honor to serve as chair of the Council of Ministers and to be for my brothers and sisters in ordained ministry their representative to General Convention and the larger world.

I have served on numerous boards and committees in Convention including: chair of the Council of Ministers, Retirement Committee chair, Board of Trustees of the Swedenborgian House of Studies, Committee on the Admission to the Ministry, and chaplain on youth and the military.

I believe in the message of the New Church that God's powerful engagement with the world and our lives is changing the world, and I want our communion to be a part of that change. This church—this system of belief, the radical and transformational truth claims it makes—have the power to transform people's lives the way it transformed my life.

I think there is no better way to live in the world than as a Swedenborgian, and I believe we need to be in the business of inviting others on this journey and declaring the radical message of the New Church to the world. Living as a Swedenborgian is seeing our lives through the lens of the heavenly and the hellish. It is experiencing the biblical narrative that Christ lays down through the journey of our own lives. It invites us to see our lives and our world profoundly and utterly bound up with a spiritual world that is as real to our existence as the physical world. It lov-

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## EDSU: Sue Ditmire

**T**he Education Support Unit has become rather inactive in the past few years. I hope that we can revive it and develop a new sense of direction and purpose. I am one of the founding members and currently chairwoman of the steering committee for the online Swedenborgian Community. I know that with concentrated effort and good ideas, you can accomplish your goals.

I became a member of the Swedenborgian Convention at Kemper Road Center in the early 1970s. We were a small group, but mighty creative. When there, we developed a monthly day-long program for our children called Saturday Children's Workshop. It fit our needs of providing religious education without taking away our own opportunity to attend to our spiritual lives on Sunday morning.

After I moved to New Jersey (1983), I stayed active in Convention as the secretary for the Board of Education. At that time, the BOE sponsored pre- and post-convention workshops as well as a large assortment of mini-courses. I am currently a member of the Wilmington, Church of the Holy City, although my lack of driving keeps me from attending more than once a year or so.

Some of the questions and opportunities I see for the Education Support Unit: Is it time to try to revive some of the old programs? Can we work closely to the benefit of the Sunday School Association and Convention? What about education opportunities on the Internet, in conjunction with the SHS and [swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://swedenborgiancommunity.org)? What new opportunities can we develop? Are we listening to the needs of convention members, young and old? Can we react quickly to needs without requiring money and lengthy studies to justify our actions, yet stay true to the

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# The Early Christians, Swedenborg, and the Modern Mind

BY STEVE SANCHEZ



There is a rich correlation between the early church, the Logos, and Swedenborg's philosophy. The way the early church philosophers used the platonic idea of the Logos to confront the pagan intellect is fascinating in itself, but it also suggests how Swedenborgian ideas can be used in a similar way today. Let me explore these correlations and suggest how Swedenborg's ideas have the potential to bring renewal to religion.

## The Early Christians

Among the early Christians up to the third century, religion was in a state of relative unity and spiritual goodness. It began with the powerful spirit of the Pentecost and continued with the direct influence of the Apostles. Of course, there was a variety of groups among the early Christians: in Israel there was a group called the Israelite Christians, and another called the Christian Israelites. The former left the synagogue and identified themselves as a separate Christian community, although they did not accept Jesus as divine. The later accepted Jesus as the Messiah publicly, but retained primary identification with the Temple and Israelite heritage. They saw Christianity as an Israelite renewal, and resisted the entrance of Gentiles. But Christianity quickly spread to the Gentiles and became identified as a Gentile religion. Some other historical groups were the Marcionites, the Gnostics, and the Proto-Orthodox.

In his book, *The New Testament*, Bart Ehrman tells us the Proto-Orthodox became the dominant group. They held the core beliefs of Christianity

... that Jesus Christ was both divine and human, that he was one being instead of two, and that he had taught his disciples the truth. They claimed that the apostles had written the teachings of Jesus down and that, when interpreted in a straightforward and literal fashion, the books that were passed on from the apostles to their followers revealed the truth necessary for salvation.<sup>1</sup>

The early Christians believed that Christ was the Messiah and the incarnation of God, and this nurtured in them a spirit of love and unity. They lived together and shared their resources from a love for each other. They called each other brother and sister from the same motivation. The clergy held in the highest regard were the

**In a way, everything Swedenborg wrote about the internal sense could be seen as a description of the Logos.**

traveling evangelists like Paul; there were many women in this role as well as men. The early church was not free from conflict, but it had not yet been infiltrated by corruption. There were theological disagreements and debates, but these were worked out from within, from a respect for the One God by whom they were led. The early Christians suffered persecution, which for them was the highest honor, because it was a way to demonstrate their loyalty, a cue they took from their Lord himself.

They lived in a pagan world, to which they sought to demonstrate the

superiority of the Christian revelation, even while they admired the greatness of the Roman Empire. They refused to worship the emperor, for which they were persecuted; yet they continued to pray for the emperor and to live by his civil laws. In *The Story of Christianity*, Justo L. Gonzales writes:

These tensions were admirably expressed in the address To Diogenetus: Christians are no different from the rest in their nationality, language or customs. . . . They live in their own countries, but as sojourners. They fulfill all the duties as citizens, but they suffer as foreigners. They find their homeland wherever they are, but their homeland is not in any one place. . . . They are in the flesh, but do not live according to the flesh. They live on the earth, but are citizens of heaven. They obey all laws, but they live at a level higher than that required by law. They love all, but all persecute them.<sup>2</sup>

The Apostles' Creed comes from the time of the early church and reflects the theology of the times. According to Swedenborg and others, the Apostles' Creed was written at a time when the church had yet to be corrupted. This makes the early church a valuable model for modern Christians because it offers a powerful sense of renewal for those who believe and can be very convincing for those who have yet to believe. There are many people who are angry and have rejected religion because of the many abuses and falsities that have occurred within it, so to know there was a time of wholeness, a time when Christians were acting from a revelatory love and understanding of what Christ had done for them, could have a powerful effect on their hearts.

1 D. Bart Ehrman, *The New Testament, A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.7.

2 Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity* (San Francisco: Harper, 1984).



## The Logos and Christianity

A look at the reasoning the early Christian philosophers (such as Justin Martyr, Origen, and Irenaeus) used to address the objections the pagans raised against them is illuminating and, at the same time, very much in harmony with Swedenborg's writings. They are also surprisingly relevant today. There were many debates between the Greek and the budding Christian cultures, but the greatest of these centered on the concept of the Logos. Within this concept of the Hellenistic culture the two found deep agreement. Logos is a Greek word that means both word and reason. In *The Story of Christianity*, Gonzales defines the Logos, and then shows how Christians extended the idea:

According to a tradition of long standing in Greek philosophy, the human mind can understand reality because it shares in the Logos or universal reason that undergirds all reality. For instance, if we are able to understand that two and two make four, the reason is that both in our mind and in the universe there is a Logos, a reason or order according to which two and two always make four. The forth gospel affirms that in Jesus the Logos or 'Word' was made flesh. Thus, according to Justin, what has happened in the incarnation is that the underlying reason of the universe, the Logos or word of God, has come in the flesh. . . . the logos is 'the true light that enlightens' everyone.<sup>3</sup>

Justin argues that there were those among the pagans who knew the Logos and that their philosophy of the Logos is from the same source as the Christian Word. Paraphrasing Justin, Gonzales writes,

Whatever truth there was in the writing of Plato was granted to him by the Logos of God, the same Logos who was incarnate in Jesus.

Therefore, in a way, Socrates, Plato, and the other sages of antiquity "were Christians."<sup>4</sup>

## Swedenborg and the Logos

Centuries later Swedenborg says almost exactly the same thing, except that he specifies the source. Students of Swedenborg will recall that he asserts an ancient Word existed previous to the Old Testament. He writes,

Religion was transplanted throughout the whole globe from the ancient Word, and afterwards from the Isrealitish Word. Unless there had been a Word, no one could have known of God, of heaven and hell, of life after death and still less of the Lord.<sup>5</sup>

He further writes,

Do you suppose that the ancient wise men, such as Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, and others, who wrote about God and the immortality of the soul, obtained this knowledge primarily from their own understanding? No; they obtained it from others by it having been handed down from those who first knew of it from the ancient Word. . . .<sup>6</sup>

This explication is a remarkable confirmation of Justin's, and others, intuitive perception. Swedenborg specifically identifies the source of the ancient philosopher's understanding of the Logos as the ancient Word, the same source as the Christian Word. This universal ancient source is what made the idea of the Logos so powerfully persuasive to both the Christian and the pagan mind.

Let's look at the meaning of the Logos and Swedenborg's contribution to it more closely. The Logos is an idea in flux, one that is always pursued because it is so comprehensive and inter-

nal that it can never be fully defined. In a way, everything Swedenborg wrote about the internal sense could be seen as a description of the Logos. The early Christian writers saw the Logos as the means of relation between God and man, and that Christ was the fulfillment of it. Clement, Origen, and others argued that within the Supreme Being there is a ". . . Logos, Word, or Reason of God, and this is personal, capable of direct relations with the world and with humans."<sup>7</sup>

The idea that the Logos is the means of relation (or accessibility) between God and man is key, because Christ served the very same purpose. Implied in the Logos is the idea that there is an intrinsic form in man, which comes from the form of God, and that this is the means by which man can know Him. In *The Passion of the Western Mind*, Richard Tarnas gives a powerful and detailed explanation of why there was such an exhilarating affinity between Christianity and ancient Platonic philosophy:

Fundamental Platonic principals now found corroboration and new meaning in the Christian context: the existence of a transcendent reality of eternal perfection, the sovereignty of divine wisdom in the cosmos, the primacy of the spiritual over the material, the Socratic focus on the "tending of the soul," the soul's immortality and the high moral imperatives, its experience of divine justice after death, the importance of scrupulous self examination after death, the admonition to control the passions and appetites in the service of the good and true, the ethical principal that it is better to suffer an injustice than to commit one, the belief in death as a transition to more abundant life, the existence of a prior condition of divine knowledge now obscured by man's

4 Gonzalez, p. 56.

5 Emanuel Swedenborg, *Divine Providence*, n. 254.

6 Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christianity*, n. 273.

7 Gonzalez, p. 161.

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3 Gonzalez, pp. 55-56.

## SHS Spring Board Meeting

The Swedenborgian House of Studies met by conference call for their spring meeting on March 28, 2009.

Dean Jim Lawrence reported that ten ordination path students are registered (though the three students who began this year have not yet been fully approved by CAM for the ordination path): Sherrie Connelly, Steve Sanchez, Alison Longstaff, Gabriella Cahaley, Emily Jane Lemole, Cameron Linen, Dagmar Bollinger, Julie Conaran, Roz Taylor, and Jenny Caughman. Of these, Alison Longstaff and Cameron Linen expect to be ordained at the Annual Convention and are now finishing their coursework with SHS. There are two Swedenborgian ministers working on D.Min. degree programs at the Graduate Theological Union (GTU): Rev. Hunter Roberts at Pacific School of Religion, and Rev. Susan Turley at San Francisco Theological School (Presbyterian).

Inese Radzins is teaching this semester a theology course, "Swedenborg's

True Christian Religion" as a Moodle (video conferencing) course at the GTU. Inese is also co-teaching an upper-division seminar on modern theology. Inese was very successful in her faculty review process, which concluded early this semester. With our board's previous conversation and vote and with the (enthusiastic) consent of the PSR faculty, Inese is now tenure-track.

George Dole continues with two students this spring, teaching the second semester of the year-long Bible course using the video conferencing technology.

Jim Lawrence is teaching "Western Esoteric Traditions" (in which Swedenborg plays a significant role), with thirteen students (all non-Swedenborgians) enrolled.

SHS is experiencing the challenge of a seemingly permanent shift to a primarily off-campus student body. Other theology schools also are facing this problem and are developing guidelines for online and short residency classes.

PSR and SHS are being looked at as leaders in this trend.

Dean Lawrence is working on a redesign of the SHS certification program. The seven SHS Certificate courses in Swedenborgian Studies will be accredited through PSR; six of seven will be real-time face-to-face courses.

Francesca McCrossan is working on ways to help create and monitor connections among the students using online resources.

Spending remains within the budget, which was decreased at the fall meeting in anticipation of the decline in value of the endowment due to the economic environment.

The board voted to align its fiscal year with PSR's, which is aligned with GTU's. A restructuring of financial services at PSR will facilitate more efficient and timely financial reporting and accounting.

Kim Hinrichs, director of outreach, reported that the fund-raising campaign has raised \$22,000 of the planned \$50,000. She reported much positive feedback with online lay education courses. ☩

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## General Council Spring Board Meeting

The General Council of the Swedenborgian Church met by conference call on April 4, 2009.

President Chris Laitner reported on placement committee activity, identifying three searches for part-time minister and two for full-time minister.

Vice-president Jim Ericson reported on the National Church in Washington, D.C. (Church of the Holy City). There appear to be five active and twelve inactive members. They are working hard but the management and upkeep of the church is daunting. A question was raised regarding the legality of any local board action since the

membership has dropped below the necessary membership for the board. Rentals have decreased since the departure of the building administrator, and there are security concerns about having the church and parish house vacant. A meeting of the trustees of the National Church will be held at the Annual Convention to address these issues.

Susannah Currie, treasurer, reported that Martha Bauer, office manager, is working with the firm AccountAbility to organize financial reporting.

Renée Helenbrecht, operations manager (in training) is busy preparing for Annual Convention in Seattle.

IMSU has contracted web developer DeepBlue, to collaborate on redeveloping the denomination's website.

The council voted to donate \$1000 to the New Church of Southern Africa.

The personnel committee, Lori Steinhiser, Deane Currie, and Renée Machiniak reported the purpose, goals, responsibilities, and meeting schedule of the committee.

The council approved the schedule of business for the Annual Convention presented by Chris Laitner.

The members of the council reconvened as trustees of the Lehnén Fund,

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## Nominations: Turley

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we have maintained an active Sunday school and a traditional style of worship while expanding the range of music, and have grown considerably in numbers and activity. It is now a thriving, healthy church, active in the community with a new generation of members and leadership poised to move into the future.

During my 24 years as a parish minister, I served on the Committee On Worship, MINSU, and General Council. I am currently serving on CAM and have been active in organizing and helping contribute to the music and worship of our annual conventions for many years. I am also serving as president of the Maine Association and as the Association's representative to the Maine Council of Churches Executive Board. I have been past religious education director and am current president of the Fryeburg New Church Assembly. During these years, I have been instrumental in producing seven CDs of religious music for the church including "Songs For The Journey," and original compositions of an oratorio on the Book of Revelation, three musical plays for Sunday schools, and the recent "Meditations on the Seven Angels of Revelation" for the In Company With Angels project.

Over the course of my career, I have seen myself and have been seen by some as a bit of a rebel trying to "push the envelope." I hope that is still true. Yet I also hope that the years have made me more understanding and diplomatic in

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and voted to fund the Rev. Catherine Lauber's request for a grant to cover 50 per cent of the cost of her flight from England, where she is currently serving the General Conference as a minister, to attend the Annual Convention and Council of Ministers meeting. ☛

## Nominations: Stinson

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ingly offers us a template for God's regenerative work with each of us and our world and empowers us to be a part of the unfolding of the Kingdom of God that is the New Church though our participation in all that is good in the world.

To me, this is the most compelling vision alive, and I want it not to simply survive in the world but to thrive. I want to give churches real tools to be able to do their work. I want to help our congregations leverage technology so that they can reach the world of which they are a part. I want to provide national exposure to our communion so that we can begin to attract like-minded souls.

Mostly, I want us to stop lamenting and start rejoicing. I want us to be proud of our heritage and our church. I want us live the truth we know that this tradition, lived out as a means of coming closer to God and bringing heaven closer to the world, is one of the best journeys on the planet and makes our lives richer and our world better when we do live it. I want us to remember the wonderful inheritance that we have received from the saints who have gone before us. I want us to feel the reward of sweat on our brow from working together to be a part of a movement that has, can, and will change the course of human history.

These may seem like big things, but they happen in a thousand small acts. They happen in the smile of a greeter on a Sunday morning, they happen in the joy of community, in one person taking an active and authentic interest in another person; they happen in comforting the grieving, visiting the shut-in, and embracing the New Church in all its forms as heaven becomes more manifest in this world.

In all this there is work to be done.

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## Nominations: Ditmire

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missions of Convention?

I will be happy to discuss these questions with everyone, anytime. Talk and communication is what leads to meaningful action.

## IMSU: Andrew Sciarretta



My name is Andrew Sciarretta; I've been attending the Cambridge Society of the New Jerusalem for the past seven years, became a member four

years ago, and am

currently serving as president. My involvement in the church represents an ongoing interest in psychology, consciousness studies, spirituality, and religion that began when I initially learned of Swedenborg while working on my psychology degree at UMass Amherst in 1996.

In 2002, at WinterGreen Research, Inc., my programming experience began with work on a voting machine project based on Perl, and SQL in a Linux environment. After that I helped to develop all aspects of a "configurable return on investment web application" used to illustrate complex scenarios such as "mainframe vs. distributed servers: total cost of ownership."

Although getting things to appear as they should on screen and in a manner that is clear to the end-user is much of the work, the other part involves developing the ideas behind these models by working with companies as an industry analyst.

For this project I've been learning and using Perl, SQL, PHP, HTML, CSS, and Javascript. My programming skills are largely self-taught, and I routinely research methods for performing tasks by consulting coworkers,

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## The Early Christians

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limited natural state, the notion of participation in the divine archetype. . . . Despite its having entirely distinct origins from the Judeo-Christian religion, for many Christian intellectuals the Platonic tradition was itself an authentic expression of divine wisdom, capable of bringing articulate metaphysical insight to some of the deepest Christian mysteries.<sup>8</sup>

If what Tarnas says is true of Platonic principle, there are many ways Swedenborg's metaphysics shed light on the Logos, and we certainly can't cover all of them here, but I would like to discuss an essential point of correlation: God's oneness, and the human need to acknowledge God's oneness. I will paraphrase Swedenborg's reasoning on the issue: For God to be the One God, the infinite Divine Truth, there can only be one. If there were two, than neither would be infinite or omnipresent; therefore, it is impossible that there are two. God is the indivisible substance of life that creates life; he himself is uncreated, but is, and always has been, eternally present. Only God has intrinsic life; he is the very source of life itself. His essence is composed of divine love and divine wisdom, which are the substance of life. Man's relationship to God is that man is a receptacle of life from him. And man is made in God's image. This means that God is the origin of the human form, in the sense that God is the macrocosm and man is the microcosm. God is infinite man, and humans are finite man.

The mind of man is made in God's image just as the body is; therefore, it is inherent in man's psyche that the image we have of God is one. This is the all-important point for the seeker to grasp. We can grasp it because of our rational

ability to follow the truthful logic, and because it is implanted in our mind to acknowledge the One God. That which is implanted from God is the Logos.

## The Modern Mind

When a person grasps this reasoning, the implication in regard to salvation may take a grip on his or her heart. Indeed, Swedenborg writes that to enter heaven a person must be prepared in a heavenly form, and the primary factor in building that form is our idea of God. So, stated simply, the form of a person's mind is made in such a way that it can only open to internal and spiritual levels when the person recognizes God as the One God in a human form.<sup>9</sup>

This is an approach that may appeal to the reasoning of moderns and their spiritual thirst. It expresses a duality contained within the oneness of all things, and furthermore demonstrates the truth of God within us by a psychological process. It is understood that no one is expected to believe this or agree with it instantly; if they do come to agree, it is a gradual process. The above reasoning from Swedenborg is similar to the way the early Christians used the idea of the Logos to convince Gentiles and pagans of Christ's power of salvation. For moderns who have pagan beliefs, understanding this reasoning can help them begin to appreciate the special redemption that Christ brought. If they understand the inherent need for humans to recognize one God, and that the human form comes from God, then the door is open to see that Christ is the One God in divine-human form.

For those with resistance to and anger toward the church, it is important to be able to learn not to throw away the baby with the bath water. Swedenborg can help such people get past the historical power plays of religion by

bringing to light the inner sense of the Word. Swedenborg may help them realize that there was a time when the church was free of corruption, a time when Christians lived together in a true community of charity and brotherhood, a time when they stood by their faith at the risk of their lives.

It is also important to understand that the church always exists in its wholeness and purity internally, or in heaven. So on a deeper level there is never a reason to reject religion in one's heart, especially now that we are in the New Jerusalem; because in the Church of the New Jerusalem, light is fully available to us and will always be so. This is an important message that the Swedenborgian Church is in a unique position to bring to humanity. It helps a great deal to be aware of the conditions of the New Jerusalem because then we know where we stand in relation to God and the cosmos. It is not easy, but we are in freedom and always have the light of Christ available to us.

Mainstream religion has this message from the time of Christ, but teaches that Christ is yet to come. That is a different, more apocalyptic mind set. It creates a different attitude toward sin and the Christian Church. As far as most people are concerned the sins and corruptions of religion are still in effect because they believe the Second Coming has not yet occurred. Swedenborg asserts it has, and that the Second Coming was about the judgment and redemption of the Christian Church. So mainstream religion, at least in part, still lives under the guilt and burden of the church's sin. In addition, if the modern, "spiritual but not religious" people embrace the New Jerusalem, then they can let go of their anger and resistance toward religion. The sins and corruptions are still here, and light is in its fullness; equilibrium has been restored; redemption is accomplished.

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8 Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991).

9 Swedenborg, *True Christianity*, n. 28.

# 185th Session of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem, June 24-28

**Council of Ministers: June 21-23**

## 2009 Registration Form

Convention 2009 will be held in Seattle, Washington on the campus of The University of Washington. To learn more about UW, visit [www.washington.edu](http://www.washington.edu). To learn more about the 2009 Convention and view a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), please visit [www.swedenborg.org](http://www.swedenborg.org) or call the Central Office at 617.969.4240.

**Lodging:** Haggett Hall's rooms are arranged corridor-style with one bathroom per floor. Every two floors share a lounge.

**Childcare:** The childcare program will run during meetings and receptions for children ages 3-12. **If you will be bringing children to Convention, please read the Convention FAQ or contact the Central Office for details, rates, deadlines and to obtain the necessary forms.** Note that dorm rooms will not have extra cots or cribs, so please plan accordingly.

**Teen Program:** The youth program runs from Wednesday, June 24 through Sunday, June 28, and is supervised by Kurt Fekete. If you want your teen age 13-17 to attend without a parent, please see the FAQ or contact the Central Office for details.

**All guests staying off campus will have to pay for meals when entering the dining hall. Please read the FAQ for details.**

Parking permits are available for those staying on campus. Please contact the

Central Office **before the end of the registration period** for rates and to secure a permit. Commuters must pay for parking each day when entering the campus.

**Cancellations:** If you do not cancel on or before Wednesday, May 27, you will forfeit your registration fee. If you cancel less than 24 hours before your check-in, you will forfeit your registration fee, as well as the cost of one day of room and board (plus tax) or ten percent of the or ten percent of the package rate, whichever is greater. If you fail to show up, you will forfeit your full prepayment.

**You must choose from the following room packages:**

- Package A (June 21 -28, seven nights), Council of Ministers:**  
\$458.50 per person, double occupancy  
\$602 single occupancy  
Includes seven nights of lodging, seven breakfasts, six lunches, and seven dinners.
- Package B (June 23-28, five nights), General Council:**  
\$327.50 per person, double occupancy  
\$430 single occupancy  
Includes five nights of lodging, five breakfasts, four lunches, and five dinners.
- Package C (June 24-28, four nights):**  
\$262 per person, double occupancy  
\$344 single occupancy  
Includes four nights of lodging, four breakfasts, three lunches, and four dinners.

Name	Attending Women's Alliance luncheon?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Name		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Will you need a parking permit? (on campus guests only; average cost \$12/day; contact Central Office for total cost and more details)		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Street	Apt. #	
City	State (Province)	Zip
Home Church	Email	Day Phone
Names, ages, and genders of children accompanying you		
Requests (dietary, mobility, roommate)		

Please print any additional names or information on the back or on a separate sheet

Registration	Amt	# People	Total
Adult	\$105		
Teen (13-17)	\$90		
Child (3-12)	\$55		
Under 3 years old	Free		
*Family maximum	\$300		
One Day Registration	\$40		
Local Volunteer	\$55		
Women's Alliance Lunch (on campus)	\$15		
Women's Alliance Lunch (off campus)	\$25		

Room & Board	# Nights	#People	Total
Single (see package descriptions for rates)			
Double (see package descriptions for rates)			
Grand Total (from both Registration and Room)			

## Payment Information

All prices are in US currency. **If you pay with Canadian funds, please add \$5 for handling of each Canadian check. All bills must be paid in full before May 27.** No registration refunds after May 27. Bills may be paid by Visa or by MasterCard. You may call the Central Office to make a secure credit card payment at 617.969.4240.

Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Send checks payable to The Swedenborgian Church to:

Central Office, The Swedenborgian Church  
11 Highland Ave., Newtonville, MA 02460

\*Family maximum price applies to immediate family members only.



## The Early Christians

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Understanding the cosmic situation in the New Jerusalem helps us to re-conceive the way we see life and religion, and can have a powerful healing effect in the wearied psyche.

Mainstream religion's assumptions tend to be associated with the past; on the other side, scientific thought and humanistic, progressive religions assume that we are constantly evolving toward a future where Christ was simply another event on a time line. While this is true in a sense, I suggest there is an enormous misconception in this way of thinking for this reason: all lines of truth lead to the moment of the Resurrection. In that moment the substance and order of the universe was forever imprinted and changed by Christ's ultimate act of love. This is not just a poetic expression, but can be seen structurally in Christ's mighty act of subjugating all of heaven and hell and his building an enormous chasm between the two. The idea of the permanent imprinting of the universe can

also be seen in Swedenborg's assertion that Christ is the only one who took his physical body into the spiritual world and the only one who ever will. (But this subject is the greatest of all mysteries, a subject to pursue another day.) The moment of the Resurrection bursts forth like a sun in history. He fulfilled the potential of the Logos and the Word, and because the Word is divine truth accommodated to man and because he fulfilled all prophecy of the Word, he became divine truth embodied and, at the same time, made the Logos within us burn bright.

Swedenborg matter-of-factly states that after the Resurrection, the Divine took on the natural level in the human and material world, whereas before he existed in the spiritual and the celestial levels, and governed the natural through the mediate action of angels. This statement has enormous implications. The incorporation of the natural made "the whole" burn exponentially brighter; now the Logos, the Word, is available to man by immediate influx, not by representation as it had been. This statement also has a structural ba-

sis, that is, the writings state that after the Resurrection the life of the Lord not only extended below (to the natural), but correspondingly, extended "above" his former perception.<sup>10</sup> This is why the incarnation and the resurrection burst forth like a sun in history, and why all lines of meaning lead to him, because the increase in his state of love and wisdom had never existed before. Another way of stating the spiritual thought that all lines lead to the Lord is this: the eternal is not linear; the eternal is the presence of God. His presence eternally sustains and teaches the Logos in our mind, and that is what we are evolving toward. This is why Christ is true man: He fulfilled all truth to perfection, and all truth proceeds from him. All lines lead to him in infinite ways, and along a path of ever increasing joy, because the Logos is implanted in the mind of humans and manifests as a thirst only Christ can satisfy. ☩

Steve Sanchez is a student in the M.Div. program at the Swedenborgian House of Studies. He lives in Portland, Oregon.

<sup>10</sup> Emanuel Swedenborg, *Secrets of Heaven*, n. 1919.

## Nominations: Turley

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my approach. I am absolutely sure that the years and the variety of my experiences have taught me an appreciation for, and love of, the history and traditions of this denomination, without which there would be nothing to rebel against and no envelope to push!

In seeking to become president, it is not my intention to reorganize the structure of Convention or bring to end or eliminate anything already in place. Rather, my deepest desire is to help the various communities and individuals within our Convention clearly identify what it is they truly love and help to nurture and inspire the fulfillment of these visions. At the same

time, it is essential that we recognize how fast the world around us is moving forward, particularly in the realm of digital media. If we are to avoid fading into the annals of history as nothing more than an interesting anomaly of the "old church," then we must continue to search out and encourage ways to engage the new generations of spiritually hungry in culturally relevant ways. I seriously doubt that is something my generation can or will accomplish. But it is the absolute responsibility of my generation, without abandoning our own loves and values, to assist and facilitate the up and coming generations in effectively ministering to the spiritual needs we are all familiar with, in ways that so many of us "oldsters" simply are not.

The advent of the Lord's New Church is happening all around us and rapidly gaining momentum with every passing day. Our history, our name, even our Swedenborgian faith, do not guarantee that we are or will remain part of that "church." That will only be proven by the quality and vitality of spirit which we cultivate within us, as individuals and as communities, and in turn seek to share with those outside our known limits and comfort zones. It is only by coming alive to the Lord's presence and letting that spirit move us deeper in directions we know and courageously in directions still to be discovered that we will truly be the New Church. If you elect me as your president, this is the vision I will devote myself to serving. ☩

## Burnham Plan

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young Chicagoans in the audience on March 12 heard an emphasis on humanism and intentionality in the Plan that they hadn't heard before.

Several of the Burnham Plan 100 Centennial planning partners, representing other associations and institutions involved in hosting Centennial programs this year, also attended the talk. "I wouldn't have missed it—this is one of the top programs offered on Burnham this year," commented Liz Wilp, of the Burnham Plan Centennial Project at Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development, DePaul University. On April 9 DePaul hosted "Daniel Burnham Meets Vincent DePaul: a conversation about community engagement and urban poverty reduction in Chicago and Manila"—another city for which Burnham developed a plan. The Swedenborg Library supported and participated in this event. (For more information, visit [burnhamplan100.uchicago.edu/events](http://burnhamplan100.uchicago.edu/events).)

Chicago Society members and Swedenborgians from the General Church's Glenview community were proud, and perhaps just a little amazed, to hear Dr. Schaffer draw the connections between Swedenborgian concepts of uses and correspondences to elements in Burnham's Plan. "I felt this event validated our work at the Swedenborg Library," said Lily Gaines, who is not Sweden-

## Burnham at DePaul Conference

DePaul University, on the occasion of centennial celebrations for Daniel H. Burnham's Plan of Chicago, hosted a conference called "Daniel H. Burnham Meets St. Vincent de Paul" on April 9 to rediscover Burnham's values, honor Vincent's charity work, and consider the universities' responsibilities for community service and urban poverty reduction. A selected panel of experts on Burnham, Vincent and community service took a closer look at the ways in which values leadership affects urban planning and urban engagement. Karen Feil was the second speaker at the panel discussion, following the introduction by J. Patrick Murphy, the director of public service, who spoke briefly about Vincent DePaul. She discussed the Burnham family connections with the Chicago Society and basic Swedenborgian values that he would have learned in that connection, and through testimony of friends and colleagues and evidence of his work, observed in his life.

borgian herself. "This event underlined the importance of the work we've been doing at the Swedenborg Library."

Following the talk, Gaines and Feil led a group of 40 who had prepaid \$40 for dinner at the legendary Cliff Dwellers Club. Daniel Burnham was an early member of this club for artists and those interested in the humanities, and the club still honors his memory with its "Burnham pie" dessert. Eighteen members of the Cliff Dwellers also joined in for dinner and Q&A with Dr. Schaffer. Among those joining in the dinner gathering was Mary Sue Glosser of the Art Institute, who with Lily Gaines, organized the event. Glosser was "very pleased" with the attendance and the caliber of Dr. Schaffer's talk.

The Swedenborg Library is exploring more cosponsoring opportunities for Dr. Schaffer in Chicago, to repeat

this program later during the centennial year.

At the talking stage is a proposal to have Burnham's draft of *The Chicago Plan* available online through the Art Institute's Ryerson Library. A movement is also underway to have a statue of Burnham installed in Burnham Park, near the Field Museum; in light of the impact he had on Chicago, it is an honor long overdue. ☛

Karen Feil is a trustee of the Swedenborg Library in Chicago.

## Nominations: Stinson

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I believe we have to start new communities of faith. Our churches, not our buildings, are our communities, and the more we can foster new relational communities of faith, gathering anywhere and everywhere, the more we can be a part of the New Church in the world. It's not about stuff, places,

or money. It is about bringing people to God and God to people.

Lastly, I am proud to be a part of this tradition. We have given a great thing to the world, and I believe our greatest days of being God's agent in healing the world and combating the hells are ahead of us. If you think that too, I hope you will give me your vote for president of Convention in June. ☛

## George Dole Festschrift

The Swedenborgian House of Studies, will publish a new book in late spring, *Principles in Play: Essays in Honor of George Dole's Contribution to Swedenborgian Thought*. Edited by James Lawrence, the book is a *festschrift* (collection of writings published in honor of an author) that celebrates the writings and influence of this remarkable Swedenborgian minister, teacher, author, and scholar. Critical and personal essays will explore the depth and breadth of Dole's impact and influence. Ordering information will be available soon on the SHS web site, [www.shs.edu](http://www.shs.edu). A review will appear in a future issue of *The Messenger*. ☛

# Manna House Tween Retreat

BY LORI STEINHISER

Eight “twens” (ages 9–13) from Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio came together at Manna House in Laporte, Indiana, for a weekend retreat led by SCYL youth leader Kurt Fekete. Friday night was spent hanging out and getting to know each other; for instance, we all now know Danny is “yarnful” (ask him sometime; he’ll fill you in on “the story”) and Bryan, Mariah, and Skylor’s noses are exactly the same size. The evening ended with a much anticipated meditation by Kurt.

After breakfast on Saturday, we headed over to the fellowship hall for an enlightening discussion about spring, the theme of the weekend. I was really wowed by the way the kids were connecting the dots so easily between our physical and spiritual experiences of the seasons. They made tie-dyed flowers that stood for their talents and skills. After lunch we headed to Soldier’s Memorial Park to hang out on the beach and collect five smooth stones for more of the flower project.

Emily made a daring attempt to sit at a picnic table high up in a tree but it was a bit too far out of reach—good try, Em. We made it back to MH without getting too much sand in our pants



(l. to r.) Top: Mariah, Skylor, Tony, Bekka. Bottom: Dan, Bryan.

(thankfully, huh, Tony?!) and added words of truth to the stones.

The evening was full of rousing games, pizza, fellowship, and more flower making. We finally had to call it quits amid pleas of “one more game” when we realized it was after 1 AM. How did that happen?!

Sunday brought on a mad dash to pull ourselves and Manna House back together before worship service. The kids shared the extra flowers they had made with the congregation, then “planted” their own during Sunday school time.

The retreat was a great deal of fun, and we’re so glad Bekka and Anna were willing to come long distances to join us! Plans to make a tradition out of this weekend are in the works. Many thanks to Tam and Dawn for being a part of our first tween retreat; we could not have done it without you! Thank you also to the WA-WAs for donating the paper goods and to everyone who dropped off food and drinks! ☪

Lori Steinhiser is a member of the Laporte New Church.

Limited financial assistance for teens traveling to Annual Convention is available. Deadline for requesting assistance is June 1, 2009. Please contact Kurt Fekete at kfekete@hotmail.com if you would like to apply for scholarship money for your teen.



(l. to r.) top: Anna, Emily.  
bottom: Skylor, Mariah.

## SCYL Memorial Day Retreat

The 2009 Memorial Day Weekend Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL) Teen Retreat is May 22–25 in Fryeburg, Maine. Our retreats are open to teens ages 13–18 of all faiths and beliefs. At our retreats we offer life skills and spiritual sessions based on the principles of the Swedenborgian Church. We strive for a safe, secure and inclusive environment to discuss and share relevant and meaningful ideas and challenges that teens face today. We work, play, and learn together as a community. We have fun!

For teens and parents new to SCYL retreats, please don’t hesitate to contact youth director Kurt Fekete with any and all questions and concerns (email: kfekete@hotmail.com or call 802.345.0169). Kurt will answer your questions or, if appropriate, put you in contact with a league officer in your region to help give you as much information and encouragement as you need!

Visit us online at: [www.youthleague.blogspot.com](http://www.youthleague.blogspot.com)



## Nominations: Sciarretta

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various online resources, and books. I enjoy working with a team, and tend to make sure people are on the same page by trying to understand the greater context of an issue and by boiling down technical concepts into clear and concise descriptions. I like to understand why a given technology or method may be best suited for a given task, and how it may play out in the final result in terms of feasibility, maintainability, efficiency, and simplicity.

The aspect of the IMSU project dealing with how to present Swedenborg's message to the greater public is very interesting to me. Trying to understand the best way to present Swedenborg's thought to another person is something I enjoy pondering rather often, so I hope to pursue this endeavor in the context of the IMSU team and its goals.

## Nominating Committee: Karen Conger

I am a lifelong Swedenborgian, having been born into the Washington, D.C. church, later becoming a member of the Urbana church and the Los Angeles church. Currently I am a member-at-large of the Pacific Coast Association; my husband Stan and I are "satellite" Swedenborgians living in a small town in the Eastern Sierra Nevada of California, more than six hours from the nearest church. I am enrolled in one of the wonderful online courses that the Swedenborgian House of Studies is currently offering, my fourth in a row. I have served on the Nominating Committee once before, and was for nine years a member of MINSU. If elected, I look forward to once again serving the Church in North America. ☩



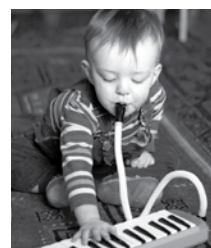
## Passages

### Birth

Rafi and Rebecca Kline Esterson are pleased to announce



their joy at the birth of a son (and brother to Aaron), **Moses Esterson**, on April 13, 2009. Mother and baby are doing well, notwithstanding the ordinary complications of being born at 35 weeks. Little Moshe weighs 5lb 9oz.



Aaron composing a tune for his brother.

### Confirmations

Hillside Community Church in El Cerrito, California confirmed five new members on Palm Sunday: **Lesley Ferguson, Katherine Schiffgens, Carole Springsteen, Amy Kang, and Ishak Kang.** ☩

## News in Brief

**T**he American Academy of Religions (AAR) accepted a seminar proposal for its 2009 meeting from the **Rev. Dr. David Fekete**. His seminar is titled "Gender Imagery as a Metaphor for God-Human Conjunction: A Comparison between Tantric Hindu Shakta Yoga and Emanuel Swedenborg's Theology of Mystical Marriage." Rev. Fekete will explore the striking similarities between the Yoga "subtle body" and Swedenborg's "spiritual body." These mystical bodies are examined by reference to Swedenborg's symbolism of the marriage between God and the church and the Hindu symbolism of the ecstatic union between the God Shiva and his consort Shakti.

The AAR is an international convention for academic scholarship in religious studies.

The **Women's Journey to Spiritual Freedom** class at Laporte New Church ended in April, but the women in the class decided to continue to support each other by meeting once a month. The purpose of the group is 1) fellowship—a place to talk about spiritual growth, 2) a place to support each

other, and 3) A place to figure out how to apply the Lord's teachings to their lives.

The **Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound** held a special Easter service at the home of Lisa and Eric Allison. the Rev. Kathy Speas set the tone for a sacred, magical, musical Easter for 55 souls The service, preceded by a pancake breakfast, was conducted in the Allison backyard tipi.

**Leah Grace Goodwin** delivered a lecture titled "The Trinity and the Universal Human: Two Models for a Pluralist Christianity" on April 1 at Swedenborg Chapel in Cambridge, Massachusetts. ☩

**Announcing  
The Annual Meeting of the  
New Church Theological School  
(dba Swedenborgian House of Studies)  
June 25th, 2009 at 7:30 PM  
at the 2009 Annual Convention of  
The Swedenborgian Church  
University of Washington, Seattle Campus,  
Seattle, Washington.  
All are welcome**

### 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.

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