

## "Matter Matters"—A Spiritual Retreat

BY JOHN TITUS

Imagine, if you will, being on a remote island off the coast of Scotland, population 120, surrounded by the undulating rhythms of the ocean, feeling the winds' relentless force constantly serving as a reminder of our vulnerability, and, yet, feeling completely safe, serene, and knowing God's presence fully. The view from your bedroom at the St. Columba Hotel overlooks the bay, and in the distance is the Island of Mull. A thirteenth century abbey graces the hillside in its splendor and opens its sanctuary for morning and evening services for the week's theme of peace and justice. The beaches are vibrant with bright colored stones and the contrast of volcanic rock with white sands. The hillside meadows are adorned with multitudes of grazing sheep along with shaggy Highland cattle. The food prepared for you is locally and organically grown; the fish is freshly caught and each meal is a culinary delight. All the conditions are present for a week of peace, serenity and worship.

Now, imagine a group of spiritual seekers joining you in your quest and the presence of a truly inspiring leader who gently leads you in a journey of discovery to the Divine Presence within us and within all of life. The stage is truly set for new beginnings, greater understanding, deeper love, and a peaceful journey into our true essence that is of God. My wife Bev and



Spiritual seekers on the Island of Iona

I, along with Bob and Wendy Reber, were truly blessed to make this journey in late October, 2009, for retreat with John Philip Newell.

Several years ago I joined a men's group with Bob and five other men. We invited Eric Allison to join us prior to his stroke. In our discussions, we heard of the wonderful work being done by John Philip Newell bringing the message of Jesus through the lens of the

Celtic Christian tradition. It is a message of love, hope, inspiration, peace, and justice. I was inspired to read some of John Philip's books including, *Listening for the Heartbeat of God*, *Christ of the Celts*, and others.

While reading these inspired words, I soon realized that his was a message of hope bringing to present-day life the message of Jesus' love and the wisdom of the ages. Scrutinizing his words

through the lens of a Swedenborgian, I was moved by the message of wisdom, love, and use that is so apparent in the Celtic tradition. Having studied some of the spirituality of Native Americans and their deep reverence for the whole of life, I was excited to discover this in the Celtic tradition as well. Perhaps, the most inspiring message I found, in light of the path I had traversed in the past eight years since our daughter Alicia was killed by terrorists, is the message of the interrelationship of all of life, the message that sees everything in terms of our relation to each other, the message that speaks so profoundly that when one of us is suffering, at some level, we all are suffering.

John Philip espouses the message of Jesus through the words of John the Beloved. In a quote from "The Acts of John," a second-century document uncovered in 1945 at Nag Hammadi, at the Last Supper, Jesus invites the disciples to form a circle. Jesus stands in

continues on page 124



Bev Titus on the island retreat

### In This Issue:

Letter from the President • Chaplaincy Response to "Don't Ask Don't Tell"  
FNCA Summer Camp • Re-imagined Denominational Web Site Goes Live

## The Editor's Desk



### Religion and Politics

These are times that try men's (and women's) souls. We are often cautioned to avoid discussing politics, religion, and sex—all three, of course, affect our lives profoundly, whether through our personal efforts or by intrusion into our lives. I will avoid the pitfalls of addressing sex here, but casting caution aside, I offer a few thoughts about the nexus of religion and politics.

I struggle with the notion of how my religious beliefs should inform my political behavior and vice versa. When I identify a political position that appears to be in line with my understanding of Christianity, and certainly Swedenborg-informed Christianity, I am caught short by vehement denunciations of that policy in the name of Christianity. Then I remind myself that different religions have different world views, and each religion comprises sects and individuals who have different world views that sometimes

coincide and sometimes conflict.

But I am an American who believes in our Constitution and the separation of church and state, so I attempt to analyze my political thoughts and positions without reference to Christianity. I soon realize that I bring my entire essence, which includes my understanding of ethical behavior, of truth and wisdom, and being of use, to every thought I have.

Emanuel Swedenborg suggests we give our allegiance to, obey the laws of, and perform our duties toward our country, as this is proper in the natural world. But even though he served in the legislature of his own country, he gives us no guidance, no understanding from the Bible, for forming political opinions or taking political action.

So in the end I come to this: I must use my rational mind, my natural intelligence, as a gift from God to evaluate things, and then I must look within myself to make sure my decisions are imbued with love, and then I must act as if of myself, and allow the Lord's love and wisdom to flow through me. If I perceive a conflict between my perception of love and wisdom informed by my religion and my perception of the laws and values of my country, then I must thoughtfully and prayerfully come to a resolution of that con-

flict, I hope in community with others. At the very least, I must constantly remind myself to love my neighbor, no matter his politics, religion, cultural views, or country. And to do this, I must constantly teach myself to be courageous, compassionate, forgiving, sympathetic, and respectful.

Conflict will always exist in the natural world, but I will strive to alleviate it rather than exacerbate it. Now that's a tall order for contentious times.

—Herb Ziegler

*"Whatever you love above all else is the purpose which you look to in everything you do. This is in your motivation like the imperceptible current of a river which carries you along even when you are thinking of other things, for it is this which gives you life."* —Emanuel Swedenborg

## Contents

"Matter Matters"—	
A Spiritual Retreat .....	117
The Editor's Desk .....	118
Letter from the President .....	119
Fryeburg New Church	
Assembly Summer Camp ....	120
New Releases from the	
Swedenborg Foundation ....	121
Chaplaincy Response to	
"Don't Ask Don't Tell" .....	122
Boston Magazine on the Sad	
Tale of the Boston Church ..	123
Poem: "A Pan Full of Light" .....	123
Angel in LaPorte .....	126
Burnham Film Released .....	126
Annual Convention Addenda	126
Passages .....	127
20 Minutes a Day .....	127
Re-imagined Denominational	
Web Site Goes Live .....	128

## Church Calendar

**October 8-10:** Pacific Coast Association annual meeting • Duval, Washington

**October 8-11:** SCYL Columbus Day retreat • Duxbury, Massachusetts

**October 22-23:** Swedenborgian House of Studies fall board meeting • Berkeley, California

**November 5-6:** General Council fall meeting • Duxbury, Massachusetts

## the Messenger

© The Swedenborgian Church of North America

Published monthly except July and August by the Communications Support Unit of the Swedenborgian Church of North America (founded 1817, incorporated 1861 as the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America).

October 2010

Volume 232, No. 8, Whole Number 5353

Editor: Herbert Ziegler

Design and production: Herbert Ziegler

Editorial assistance: Robert Leith

Communications Support Unit: Sage Currie, Leah Goodwin, and Beth Harvie

Reproduction: Gnomon Copy, Cambridge, MA

### Editorial Address:

Herb Ziegler, *The Messenger*  
2 Hancock Place  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Tel: 617.491.5181

Email: messenger@swedenborg.com

### Business and Subscription Address:

The Messenger, Central Office  
11 Highland Avenue  
Newtonville, MA 02460

Tel: 617.969.4240

Email: manager@swedenborg.org

Subscription free to members of the Swedenborgian Church; nonmembers: \$12/year; foreign: \$15/year; gift subscription from a member: \$5/year; single copies: \$1.00.

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

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

## Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

I am now two months into my term as your president. My computer desktop is filling up with file folders for committees and councils and support units and church communities. As I get farther and farther into the job, I feel as if I am wading deeper and deeper into the lake I look out over each morning. It is not yet over my head, but I know it soon will be! And yet I continue to wade on in, for even as the apprehension grows, so too does the excitement. For I know how to swim! I know how to keep my head above water and make progress in any given direction. I know a number of different ways to move so I don't wear out specific muscles, and I know how to pace myself so I don't exhaust myself and go under. What is more, if necessary and sometimes for the fun of observing and discovering the kinds of things you can see only in this way, I go under on purpose, for over the years I have also learned how to hold my breath and swim under water! The truth is, even though I was away from it for a while, I love to swim. And as president I love swimming in the lake we know as the General Convention of the New Jerusalem.

For the past two months I've just been wading around the edges testing the water, checking out the shore line, and identifying the contours and hidden boulders of the bottom. But as you read this, I will have already climbed up onto a rock on the shore to get the overview and dived in head first to come up treading water neck deep in the Ministers Support Unit (MINSU) meetings up in Kitchener. This will be a major learning experience for me. I have served on MINSU in the past, but it has been a while since I have concerned myself with the distribution of funding support for our various ministries. What is different this time is that my perspective is not that of a minister looking at Convention from the position of responsibility for one of its churches, but as president with a sense of responsibility for *all* of our churches! Believe me, it is a very different perspective, and I am seeing things I never saw before and the whole of Convention in a way I never have before. I'll tell you more about this in the months to come.



By later this month I will have attended the National Council of Christian Churches meeting in New Jersey, the Wayfarers Chapel board meeting in Rancho Palos Verde, California, the PUSH meeting in LaPorte, Indiana, and returned home to play a couple of sets of music with Laurie at the Fryeburg Fair back in Maine. Along the way I expect to visit with Rev. John Maine at the Kitchener, Ontario church, Rev. Renee Machiniak at the Detroit church, Revs. Jenn Tafel and Sky Paradise at their newly established churches in western Michigan and New Mexico, Rev. Carla Friedrich in San Diego, and Rev. Wilma Wake in Portland, Maine.

One final note: if you were at this past annual convention, you may remember Lisa Allison's report on Rev. Eric Allison's amazing recovery progress from his stroke and her request for some help from Convention. Through the combined and carefully coordinated cooperation of a great number of people across the country, Eric will be undertaking a guided tour to visit friends and family and churches he has served in his career as one of Convention's hardest working and most successful ministers. He will spend time visiting with parishioners in LaPorte and Kitchener, two of the churches he served with dedication and distinction. He will also travel with John Titus and myself, who have been close friends for many, many years, for a few days of R'n'R at John's camp on a lake in the wilds of Michigan. And then Eric will attend a family reunion with his brother and sister in Indiana. All in all it will be a journey of over three weeks and every day of the entire time he will be accompanied by friends and family, each taking their turn assisting in the rigors of travel and spending time with our friend. Through the combined efforts and hospitality of three churches and over twenty people, Eric will experience a wonderful trip meeting old friends, making new friends and returning to his beloved Lisa wonderfully refreshed and exhausted! Lisa too, will have had the opportunity to both rest and pursue her blossoming career as a children's musician. (See [www.LetYourMusicShine.com](http://www.LetYourMusicShine.com).) This is a true testament to the caring uses that we can accomplish with God's love and wisdom expressed and manifested in communication, cooperation, and combined efforts focused on a shared goal.

So that's a report on the first couple of months. I hope to give you a monthly update here in *The Messenger* of how things are going. So until next month I'll just keep swimming!

*Blessings, Rev. Ken (Turley)*



# Fryeburg New Church Assembly Summer Camp

BY DEBBIE COOK

**A**s I write this on August 7, 2010, our summer camp session is in full swing. For many of us, we wait all year for this special time with this special community of people that worship, study, learn, live, laugh, and eat together for two weeks. It is a special time to build community year after year, and it is so appropriate that the theme for lectures the first week was community. Second week our theme will be the minor prophets.

We initiated two new programs this year which have both been successful. We created a new group called the Senior Flames, or as they call themselves, Super Flames. These are college-age students who attend at the reduced teen rate but have adult privileges and housing outside of the dorms. They help and work with the Flames on kitchen duties of serving and dish washing. We hope this more affordable price will make it easier for them to at-

tend camp. This week they were very important.

The other new program was the Opening Weekend Retreat. We had a great presenter to lead this program, Anna Woofenden, who led us through a Bible study process studying intensively a portion of the Elijah story. Eleven adults attended. This was a great chance to get camp started with a bonding intensive experience. We had three sessions over Saturday and Sunday. It was a special experience that encouraged people to come to camp on Saturday and to have something focused to do on that opening weekend.

Lois Dole has served as camp nurse for many years, and I want to thank her for all the care she has given to sick and injured campers. This year Jason Greenwood took EMT (emergency medical training). As Flames advisor, his training will be invaluable for teens and our whole community.

Sage Currie has promoted the As-

sembly programs at the Fryeburg Church, and it has been delightful to have quite a few local people attending lectures and even staying on for some of the other programs, like the adult discussion group.

Our attendance the first week this year was better than last year, with a fairly healthy adult population but low numbers of Sparks and Flames. Second week has more attendees, with increased attendance by Sparks and Flames as well.

Speaking of food, we have been eating delicious food cooked by our new cook, Sonja. She has been challenged as she learns the ways of camp, and she is learning some of our traditions as well. My dream is to find a great cook who will stay for ten years!

The weather and the river have cooperated this year. After having two years with a near-flooding river, we have been back to the delight of swim-

*continues next page*



## New Releases from the Swedenborg Foundation

### *Un recorrido por los cielos y sus maravillas*

The Swedenborg Foundation is launching a new Spanish-language program with the publication of *Un recorrido por los cielos y sus maravillas*, a translation of their best seller *Afterlife*, edited by Donald L. Rose and translated by Sylvia Montgomery Shaw.



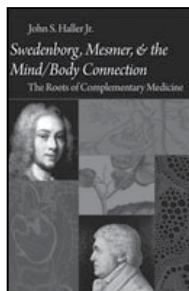
*Afterlife* takes the essence of Swedenborg's classic *Heaven and Hell* and presents it chronologically, starting with the process of awakening after death and then taking the reader on a journey through both heaven and hell. This shorter format provides an eye-opening introduction to Swedenborg's philosophy.

### *Swedenborg, Mesmer, and the Mind/Body Connection*

Healing practices as diverse as homeopathy, chiropractic, and therapeutic

touch draw their inspiration and effectiveness from an unseen world beyond the physical senses. Our view of that world is the legacy of two key thinkers: Emanuel Swedenborg and Franz Anton Mesmer.

The starting point of *Swedenborg, Mesmer, and the Mind/Body Connection* is the competing worldviews of Swedenborg, a mystic whose deep faith in God and visions of the afterlife have moved generations, and Mesmer, whose magnetic healing system required nothing but the forces of nature. This book traces the influence of these two men through the nineteenth century as their ideas were embraced by utopians, psychic healers, spiritualists, mind-cure advocates, homeopaths, and ultimately by the inheritors of those traditions—modern practitioners of alternative and complementary healing. It illuminates a pivotal time

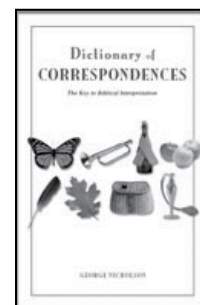


in American history, when pioneers explored not only the boundaries of their growing nation, but the limits—and the intersection—of mind and spirit.

The author, John S. Haller Jr., emeritus professor of history and medical humanities at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, has written a dozen books on subjects including race, sexuality, and the history of medicine.

### *Dictionary of Correspondences*

Interwoven with Emanuel Swedenborg's commentary on the Bible is his system of correspondences, which describes the relationship between the spiritual and the physical worlds in symbolic terms. For Swedenborg, specific people, places, animals, and objects represent spiritual principles or ideas—for example, light corresponds to truth, and darkness to ignorance. Using this system, he interpreted the Bible in a radically new way, using it to illuminate the path to spiritual growth. First compiled in the decades following Swedenborg's death, the *Dictionary of Correspondences* has been continually revised and reprinted for over two hundred years.



The author, George Nicholson (d. 1819) was among the earliest clergy members of the Church of the New Jerusalem, ordained into the New Church in 1800 in England.

### *Secrets of Heaven*

### *Divine Providence*

These portable editions contain the complete text of the New Century Edition translations, but not the translator's preface, introduction, annota-

continues on page 122

continued from preceding page

ming in the Saco River. I wait all year for this experience. There is *nothing* to compare with a day like today in Fryeburg.

The camp session committee consists of Trevor Woofenden, activities director; Nancy Little, camp registrar; Susannah Currie, religious programming; Jason Greenwood, Flames advisor; as well as myself (Debbie Cook) as camp director. This group works hard in many ways to make sure that the camp experience is rich and full, as well as one that works smoothly. They are also the group that hashes out problems by working on them together. I appreciate the efforts of all those

whose end goal is to make camp a great experience. Thank you.

The FNCA is a building and land, true enough. But anyone who has been here when no one is around knows that the true essence of the Assembly is the gathering of like-minded people who come together to nurture their spiritual life. This is a unique and special place. ☸

Debbie Cook began attending FNCA as a teen in the early 1970s. She has taught children's religious classes, served on the Board of Directors and the Summer Session Committee and been camp director for many years. When Debbie is not in Fryeburg for two weeks every August, she lives in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, with her husband, Richard Cook.

## Chaplaincy Response to “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell”

The Secretary of Defense is engaged in a study on the proposal to lift the ban on gays serving in the military. Part of his process was to ask the individual member denominations of the nation’s chaplain organization to share their opinions on changing current policy. The Swedenborgian Church of North America is a member of that organization, and our representative, called an endorser, for the past four years has been the Reverend Richard L. Tafel.

The director of the International Conference of Evangelical Chaplain Endorsers urged other chaplain endorsers to support his letter for the Secretary of Defense and President, wherein he conflates homosexuality with Pearl Harbor, 9/11, and God’s wrath on America.

Below is Rev. Tafel’s letter to President Obama and Secretary Gates.

June 1, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States

The Honorable Robert M. Gates  
Secretary of Defense

Dear Mr. President and Secretary Gates.

Mr. President, we have been invited by the Chief of Chaplains to share the perspective of our denomination’s Ecclesiastical Endorsers of the impact on chaplains should the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” legislation be repealed.

From the position of our chaplain who recently served at Fort Eustus, VA, repealing the legislation would be a good thing. Our denomination’s beliefs are founded on the basic principles of God’s Love and Truth. We believe that being honest with yourself, others and with the Lord are the most crucial elements to faith development.

A policy that acknowledges that perfectly capable soldiers are gay and they must lie about it runs contrary to our beliefs. It made the chaplaincy work of Chaplain Stinson more difficult as closeted gay and lesbian soldiers felt they needed to speak in code to gain counseling from him for fear that if they were honest they would be discharged from the military. Chaplains and other counselors in the military often have to warn soldiers not to be too honest about their struggle because being honest risks their careers.

This policy stands in direct opposition to our belief that all people should inspire both their Love and their Truth as they grow spirituality on whatever faith path they walk.

We appreciate your leadership in calling for an end to this policy. A policy that encourages dishonesty has no place in our military. We believe that the truth does set people free.

We are grateful that you’ve asked for the perspective of Ecclesiastical Endorsers and hope that you’ll find our perspective helpful in this process.

God Bless,

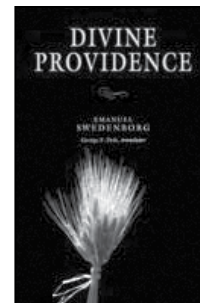
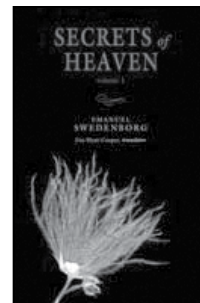
The Reverend Richard Leonard Tafel, Endorser  
The Swedenborgian Church of North America

## Foundation Releases

continued from page 121

tions, or indices.

*Secrets of Heaven*, the first major theological work of Swedish scientist-



turned-seer Emanuel Swedenborg, provides the model for a new way to understand the Bible. In this first volume, Swedenborg examines the inner meaning of the creation story and then takes the reader verse by verse through Genesis to the account of Noah and the Flood, all the while illuminating a biblical path to spiritual growth.

Gary Lachman, author of *A Secret History of Consciousness*, said, “*Divine Providence* is a challenging essay on the nature of human freedom, a forceful attempt to justify God’s ways to humankind. . . . Dole’s eloquent new translation . . . brings an important and much-needed eighteenth-century treasure to a twenty-first-century world.”

Also available in portable editions in the New Century translations are Swedenborg’s *Heaven and Hell*, *True Christianity* vol. 1, and *Divine Love and Wisdom*.

For more information or to purchase go to [www.swedenborg.com/](http://www.swedenborg.com/).

## Foundation Announces Helen Keller Fund

Thanks to a very generous donation from Mrs. Vlora Nickel, the Swedenborg Foundation has established a new fund to help develop materials like audio books for the visually impaired.

continues next page



## Boston Magazine on the Sad Tale of the Boston Church

A brief history of the Boston Church of the New Jerusalem since it opened its doors to self-described criminal Eddie MacKenzie in 2002 appears in the September *Boston Magazine*. The article, “Gods & Mobsters” by Beverly Ford, is comprehensive and well-written, although it would take a book based on extensive interviews and investigation (here’s an opportunity for an aspiring author) to explicate the characters and machinations that led to the present situation.

The article outlines MacKenzie’s self-described and reported criminal activity preceding and coinciding with his relationship with the church. Ford quotes Mackenzie from his book *Street Soldier: My Life as an Enforcer for Whitney Bulger and the Boston Irish Mob*.

Too often, I retreat to scams and doing “collections” for people,” MacKenzie writes in his autobiography. The money is good and easy, and the accompanying rush of adrenaline is probably close to what one gets in closing a legitimate business deal. But the money is tainted and easily thrown away. In any new situation, I look at my old side and my new side, and decide which to use. My old side will never be gone. Try as I might, I can never change who I was.

Ford describes how the Rev. Steve Ellis embraced MacKenzie and facilitated his rise to control the church, which resulted eventually, ironically, in Mackenzie and his associates expelling Ellis from the church.

Unfortunately, the article covers little new ground in terms of MacKenzie

and his early activities at the church—these were reported by Kevin Cullen in a 2004 *Boston Globe* and in other places. Ford skims the surface, interviewing few people and not digging deeply. It would be nice to see a long piece by a seasoned investigative reporter in a publication like *The New Yorker*.

Ford concludes her piece with the following paragraphs:

If nothing else, the Church on the Hill has become a much different place than the one Eddie MacKenzie entered eight years ago seeking redemption. One day this past spring, a reporter visited the church hoping to talk to the man who has been at the center of so much controversy there.

The visit was a short one. Once a sanctuary open to all—a place that embraced an ex-con with open arms—the church has now become the kind of place where people asking uncomfortable questions are escorted from the building.

You can read the article at [www.bostonmagazine.com/articles/gods\\_mobsters/](http://www.bostonmagazine.com/articles/gods_mobsters/). ☩

### A Pan Full of Light

Sifting through the sands of time  
Panhandling for golden moments  
Really? This is it?

A few shining nuggets among  
the sediments?

But maybe if I let go  
of my preconceived notions  
Of what is gold  
and what is just commotion  
Or lumps of coal  
from life’s misfortunes.

Might there be  
with a touch of the Stone  
The richest riches  
man has ever known?

The depths within me  
and without  
Would unite together  
banishing doubt.

With new eyes opened  
I could wash away the silt  
And see a Heaven on earth  
that surely can be built.

Words of wisdom  
fused with love  
Might delight my soul  
and move my body as a dove.  
And in the final battle  
If all went right  
I’d see God everywhere  
And my pan full of Light.

—Lori Steinhiser

Lori Steinhiser is a member of the  
LaPorte (Indiana) New Church.

continued from preceding page

One of the first goals of the Helen Keller Fund is to produce recordings that will introduce people to the insights of Emanuel Swedenborg.

All future donations to this fund will be earmarked specifically to help offset the high cost of producing audio

books, as well as other projects aimed at making Swedenborg’s writings available to the visually impaired.

If you would like to donate, please call 800-355-3222, ext. 10.

The audio CD of *My Religion* by Helen Keller is now available from the Foundation. ☩

## SF Church Ministerial Search

The San Francisco Swedenborgian Church has bid farewell to its interim minister, the Rev. Jeffrey Cheifetz, and is preparing to re-open its ministerial search in January. The congregation is managing services and inviting guest preachers to fill the pulpit. ☩

## Matter Matters

continued from page 117

the middle of the circle and the disciples begin an ancient Hebrew circle dance together as Jesus says, "I will pipe a dance for you! . . . I will mourn, lament all of you!" His words according to John Philip point to the dance of life. They point also to the brokenness of the dance and to the sufferings that disharmony brings. "The whole universe takes part in the dance," Jesus says. According to John Philip, he is speaking of the harmony at the heart of life and pointing to a way of moving in relation to all things, even though he knows also the price of living in relation to such a unity.

During the Christmas season of 2003, I was feeling the depth of my loss. A deep sadness surrounded me and filled my whole being. It was a sadness resulting from the murder of my daughter, but it was greater than that. I felt the pain and suffering of the devastated lives of innocent people everywhere, especially in Afghanistan as a result of the United States invasion, brought on by the political leaders of our country out of fear and a burning need for revenge—a misuse of American military might and lives. I truly felt the suffering of the fathers and mothers who had lost not only their children, but also their homes and communities to our weapons. Many of these people were merely in the wrong place at the wrong time or victims of a miscalculation by our sketchy military intelligence. Politics aside, I felt a deep compassion for these people who were suffering the same as those of us who lost someone on 9/11.

As I often did during those times, I wrote a letter to no one in particular and sent it to family and friends. A friend of mine, a priest, sent the letter to Bishop Tom Gumbleton, a long time peace activist, and he used it in

his weekly homily for the *National Catholic Observer*. At the heart of the message was this sense of the "brokenness of the dance and to the sufferings that disharmony brings." I saw very clearly that in our interrelatedness, we as human beings are like the cells of the body, interconnected, relational, and part of a greater whole. I talked



Thirteenth century Benedictine abbey

about the interrelationship and harmony when all the cells are healthy and working together and the effect on the whole if some of the cells are cancerous or diseased. Similar to our approach to cancer, in which we bombard the diseased cells and the healthy cells with radiation and chemicals hoping that the "bad" cells will die and the "good" cells will survive, we approach war the same way. Health and wellbeing are not always the result of this method of treatment just as peace and justice are more often than not casualties of war. Someday, we will find a better way to treat cancer and our neighbors. And, hopefully, we will realize that hate and violence only beget more hate and violence and that love guided by understanding is the only way to achieve harmony and peace. As John Philip so astutely proclaims, "What we need today are insights and spiritual practices that remind us of the Unity of our origins and that further nourish the longing for peace that is stirring among us."

Each morning during the retreat we would awaken to a wonderful break-

fast prepared by loving hands and designed to nourish our whole being. At nine o'clock we would make the short trek to the thirteenth century Benedictine Abbey, a beautiful ancient structure made of stone and wood which amplifies every word throughout its vast structure.

The Iona Community was holding their annual gathering during the week we were there; people came from all over to join together in worship and fellowship. The Iona Community, founded by George MacLeod, is a concept that brings people together in both spirit and community. Its members are bound together by a five-fold discipline of prayer, meeting together, economic sharing, planning of time, and work for justice and peace.

After the morning worship our group of twenty-four came together for a time of learning, meditation, reflection, and renewal. John Philip has an incredible gift for teaching, an understanding that is truly inspiring, and a heartfelt compassion in which he deeply feels the world's pain and suffering. I was continually astounded by the clarity of his teachings and the resonance of his words.

After the message John Philip shared with us, we would hear words of scripture and identify a phrase that spoke to us. Chanting this phrase to ourselves, we would go off to a quiet place for meditation. I chose the Augustinian Nunnery, now a roofless red granite stone ruin that "sits open to creation," filled with the "Sacred Feminine" energy. Here I found solace; here I found peace. John Philip talked often about the nunnery as

a place that reflects the brokenness of our lives and our world, as well as the failure of our religious institutions. . . . It is also a place

continues next page



continued from preceding page

that personifies the neglect of the feminine that has crippled our Western cultures and spirituality. It is this that many of us are longing for in the spiritual journey of the world today, a recognition that our imperial religious inheritance is collapsing and that we desperately need to reintegrate the mystical, intuitive, and earth-related fragrances of the feminine if we are to be alive to the deepest yearnings of the human soul.

The afternoons were free, so Bev and I explored the island. One afternoon we took a picnic lunch to a beach and collected stones. The stones were different colors—red, green, white, black, orange, yellow; some of the stones were of serpentine, a very special mineral for us. We collected several and had a necklace made from them. The other stones we brought home with us will forever connect us to this spiritual place.

On Tuesday afternoon, we had a “life run.” Even though it was raining and quite windy, we all had a truly spiritual journey. There were six checkpoints throughout the island. We each went in silence to the reflection points and opened the envelopes designated for that place—the abbey, the nunnery, different beaches, and back to the starting point. At each station along the journey, we had to read, write in our journal, and reflect. On the Back Bay, looking out over the Atlantic Ocean, listening to the waves crashing onto the rocks, the cliffs gracing the landscape, we were asked to make an “environmental structure” using gifts from the beach or ocean. This would represent a relationship that is important to us and what our hopes and dreams were for that relationship. After the sculpture, we were to write a letter to this person. At another checkpoint, we had to re-commit ourselves to those important things in our lives; at another, we had to reflect on those

things about ourselves both good and not so good that we want to change or strengthen. At the last checkpoint, we had the option of fully submersing ourselves in the ocean. Most everyone chose to do this and it proved to be a powerful experience, many described it as a baptism. This outdoor adventure took us out of our comfort zones and



Augustinian nunnery ruins

challenged us to go beyond our limits, experience the joy of God’s creation, and do some soul searching. To me, it was very familiar territory and another transcendent experience. I try to incorporate these types of experiences in my daily runs, kayak adventures, hikes, and other outdoor meditations.

At five o’clock each day we would gather together for more time of learning, reflection and meditation. The discussions were always intellectually stimulating and enlightening. John Philip’s book entitled, *Listening for the Heartbeat of God* comes from the Last Supper, during which John the Beloved leans over to Jesus and places his ear next to Jesus’ heart. The lesson for each of us in this loving act is that God’s presence is in all of life, and by listening for that presence we develop a deep reverence for all that is of God. And, we begin to awaken to the mystery that binds all of life together so wonderfully. We then become aware of the interrelationship of all life and the intricacies involved in finding harmony and peace. We begin to realize that when one of us is suffering, we all are suffering. Healing does not happen in

isolation. This is the journey we are on, the journey of the human soul!

The interwoven nature of life is coming into a new awareness . . . by disclosing to us the heart of all being, Christ discloses to us the heart of our own being. The cross reveals that we approach our true selves as we give ourselves away to one another in love. “The same power that looked over the chaos and brought light and order, looks over us now.” We will find our way in the great dance only to the extent that we love.

On our last day together on this beautiful Island of Iona, our group that started as strangers but now felt like a spiritual family went on a pilgrimage around the island. Along the way, at designated points of spiritual significance, we gathered together for worship, prayer, and thanksgiving. In the heart of the Hebrides, we felt the magnificence of God’s creation and the glory that abounds. Our hearts were filled with abundant love, and new beginnings were on the horizon. We understood John Philip’s message that “the matter of creation is holy and living energy born from the hidden depths of God.” And,

The universe is a single organism that carries within itself one ancient rhythm, . . . a body with one Heartbeat. Christ comes to lead us back into the dance. In him we hear the beat that comes from the heart of all things.

We realized this wisdom, that in the whole of creation, matter does truly matter. ☦

John and Bev Titus are longtime Swedenborgians living in Gregory, Michigan. John and Bev lost their daughter, Alicia Titus, in the 9/11/2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York City. Alicia was a flight attendant on the second airplane to hit the towers. The Tituses established the Alicia Titus Peace Fund at Urbana University in Urbana, Ohio, in her honor.

## Angel in LaPorte

BY BARBARA HALLE

**T**he forty-inch angel in the sanctuary of the LaPorte New Church has an interesting story behind it. In

July, LaPorte-an Jean Simpson called and shared that her filmmaker daughter, Paige, had purchased an angel statue in 1995 in Spain for a movie she was working on, for which she paid about \$6,000. Paige asked her mother to think of a few churches in LaPorte that might consider taking her. After thinking about it, Jean suggested Paige call our church. Neither Jean nor Paige had ever been in the church, but, from the outside, they felt that it might be the place for the angel. And it does feel as though she belongs—her coloring, style, and texture are a complement to our lovely setting. ☩



Barbara Halle is editor of the LaPorte Report, the newsletter of the LaPorte (Indiana) New Church, where this article first appeared.

## Annual Convention Addenda

The article on the annual convention in the September *Messenger* failed to mention several things. The musical duo Blue Stratum, Gordon Meyer and Sandy Cadman, performed a beautiful set for voice and guitar at the opening session. The altar shown on page 108 of the September *Messenger* was created by artist Jackson Buxton. He fashioned the altar from birch tree limbs and other natural materials to resemble the Arc of the Covenant. Minnesota

## Burnham Film Released

**A** new documentary previewed at the annual convention by the Chicago Swedenborgian Library, *Make No Little Plans: Daniel Burnham and The American City*, produced by The Archimedia Workshop, aired on September 6, 2010, on PBS. The film, written, directed and produced by Judith Paine McBrien, is the story of a Swedenborgian imbued with the doctrine of uses, who shaped some of America's best-known places and spaces. The film explores Burnham's fascinating career and complex legacy as public debate continues today about how and for whom cities are planned.

*No Little Plans* highlights dramatic developments that transformed both Burnham and the American city—the early development of the skyscraper, the awesome impact of the 1893 World's Fair, and the physical reconfiguration of existing cities, including Chicago and Washington DC.

"He had a personality that was as big as the subject of cities," explains architect David Childs, a fellow at the American Institute of Architects and one of many noted commentators in the film. "We should care about Burnham because he was part of a group that changed ideas about planning and architecture and because our cities are full of the history that he caused to happen." To read more or purchase the DVD go to <http://thearchimediaworkshop.org/burnhamfilm/home.html>. ☩

Public Radio covered the opening session of the convention and American Public Media covered the convention with a blog on "Speaking of Faith," a national weekly program with a large following. A link to the blog has been added to the Virginia Street Church's Facebook page and Web site ([www.virginiastreetchurch.org](http://www.virginiastreetchurch.org)).

## Free *Chrysalis Journals*

The *Chrysalis Journal* was a literary magazine published by the Swedenborg Foundation in the 1980s and 90s. Each issue focused on a Swedenborg-related spiritual topic, with contributions from a variety of authors, poets, and illustrators. If you or any organization you know of would like to receive free copies of these issues, either in sets or as single issues, you may have as many as you can find a use for. However, we do ask that you pay for shipping and handling. Following is a list of titles available:

- CH1 In Search of the Soul (Introductory Issue)
- CH11 The Holy City
- CH12 Wise Woman: A Human Process
- CH13 Partners
- CH21 Angels
- CH22 Gardens & Architecture
- CH31 Aspects of African Spirit
- CH32 Freedom's Routes
- CH33 Spiritual Countercultures
- CH41 Science & Spirituality
- CH42 The Fabulous
- CH43 The Tree of Knowledge
- CH51 Journeys
- CH61 Cosmopolitan Connections
- CH62 Ethics
- CH63 Mankind
- CH71 Scientists Explore Spirit
- CH72 The Future of Human Nature
- CH73 Crossroads
- CH81 Time
- CH82 Work
- CH83 Family
- CH91 The Future of Religion
- CH92 Music: Harmonious Elixir

Call 800-355-3222, ext. 10, for ordering information.

virginiastreetchurch.org). The blog includes a fifteen-minute interview with Rev. Eric Hoffman about the Swedenborgian faith. Readers may post comments on the blog. ☩

## Passages

### Baptisms

On Sunday August 1, the Church of the New Jerusalem, Pawnee Rock, Kansas, was full of friends and family for the special occasion of three baptisms, led by the Reverend Jane Siebert. Justin and Lacey Vieux brought their sons **Brody Lynn and Dylan Michael Vieux** for baptism. The boys are grandchildren of Toni and Rick Stimatze and great grandsons of Vivian Bright. **Blake Daniel Alexander** was brought for baptism by his parents, Greg and Megan Alexander. Blake is the grandson of Carl and Connie Helm and great grandson of Alberta Troll.

### Marriages

**Annette S. Bailey** and the **Rev. Lee S. Woofenden** were united in Christian marriage on August 12, 2010, at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly in Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Dr. George F. Dole officiating.

### Deaths

**Dr. Thomas Chalmers Peebles**, longtime member of the Boston Church of the New Jerusalem, passed fully into the spiritual world June 8, 2010, at age 89 in Port Charlotte, Florida. He was survived by his wife, the former Annie Diffley, as well as by a daughter, two sons, and five grandchildren.



Dr. Peebles graduated from Harvard University and then served as a United States Navy bomber pilot in the Pacific during World War II, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross. After initial rejection by Harvard Medical School, he took pre-med classes and was admitted the next year. He became a pediatrician, and a fellow at Children's Hospital Boston. While studying an out-

break of the measles, he isolated the virus and was able to cultivate it and show that the disease could be passed on to monkeys inoculated with the material he had collected. Dr. John Enders, with whom he worked, was able to use the cultivated virus to develop a measles vaccine in 1963. (In the late 1950s and early 1960s, nearly twice as many children died from measles as from polio. The vaccine for measles has led to the near-complete elimination of the disease in the United States and other developed countries.)

He made other medical breakthroughs. In a tetanus study, he discovered that tetanus booster doses could be given once every ten years rather than yearly, substantially reducing the risk of allergic reactions caused by the higher dosages in use then. In his private practice, he noticed that patients from towns where the water was fluoridated had fewer cavities. He conducted research and determined a dosage that was included as part of a regular vitamin.

His friend John Perry writes,

Tom was a lifetime member of the Boston Church, and in my youth the Peebles pew was next to ours, and I remember the whole family being there on Sundays. He had a brother Bob and a younger sister Carol. In the late 1980s and in early 1990s Tom and I again worked together as directors of the Swedenborg Foundation. We worked closely together on the Bostonview Corporation, the nonprofit corporation that managed the building that housed the church and apartments (owned by the church). Tom served as president after Larry Young passed on. Tom also served as chairman of the Boston Church Board of Trustees.

For a more complete obituary, go to [www.nytimes.com/2010/08/05/health/05peebles.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/05/health/05peebles.html). ☩

## 20 Minutes a Day

**D**uring an appointment with my doctor last week we discussed the importance of Vitamin D, a deficiency of which, he tells me, is linked to all kinds of medical problems. In fact, he reported that if a person's vitamin D drops below a certain level, they are twice as likely to suffer heart disease. My mother tells me that my aunt, Carol Lawson, is a fierce advocate of people spending at least twenty minutes a day outside in the sun, as the sun is our natural source for vitamin D. I couldn't help but think of the significance of all this, given that our sun, with its warmth and light, corresponds to God, the source of all love and wisdom. How might our world be different if people consciously spent twenty minutes a day basking in God's love and wisdom?

—Jenny Caughman

Jenny Caughman starts her M.Div. studies at SHS in January, studying at the Earham School of Religion in Indiana.

## Write for Us!

We are looking for  
fiction for next year's  
Chrysalis Reader

*"Marketplace: an Exchange of Desires and Intentions"*

Copy Deadline:  
November 15, 2010

See [www.swedenborg.com/chrysalis](http://www.swedenborg.com/chrysalis) for details

or Email  
[chrysalis@hovac.com](mailto:chrysalis@hovac.com)



### About the Swedenborgian Church

Emanuel Swedenborg was born January 29, 1688, in Sweden. Although he never intended to establish a new denomination, a society was formed in London based on his writings fifteen years after his death.

American groups formed societies and 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.

## Re-imagined Denominational Web Site Goes Live

**T**he Information Management Support Unit (IMSU) and its chair, Rev. Dave Brown, have announced the launch of the re-imagined and redesigned denominational Web site, [www.swedenborg.org](http://www.swedenborg.org).

Over a year in the making, the site takes advantage of the newest features in web programming and is better designed for aesthetic resonance, readability, and

seekers—and the site gives them a button that leads to a bulleted list of basic Christian beliefs as set out by Swedenborg. Some are active seekers, and their button gives them a fuller explanation of the beliefs. Deep seekers get yet a fuller explanation of the beliefs. In this way no one gets either too much or not enough information given their level of seeking.

---

# [www.swedenborg.org](http://www.swedenborg.org)

---

navigability. With \$25,000 budgeted by General Council two years ago, IMSU contracted with the Web development firm Deep Blue to assist in the design and implementation of the new site.

The home page draws the visitor in with a clear menu, short introductory statements, and easy-to-find link buttons; the head banner is animated with vibrant artwork. Web sites must grab a viewer in a split second, and visitors are individuals with vastly different motivations for viewing the site. Some have a casual interest in religions, spirituality, or Swedenborg—they are curious

Menu selections at the top take visitors to *Our Daily Bread* and archive of sermons, links to online versions of Swedenborg's work and collateral materials, a list of congregations and societies and links to them, links to ministries and related entities such as SCYL and SHS, and a virtual bookstore, where purchases are directed through Amazon or the Swedenborg Foundation. There is so much more it cannot all be described here; you must visit the site yourself.

In the next phase of development, IMSU plans to develop more content for the site. ☒