

A New Swedenborgian Church in South Korea

BY HERB ZIEGLER

In August of 2013, Rev. Junchol Lee, pastor of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, journeyed to South Korea for two purposes: to visit his family and to participate in the ordination of a Swedenborgian minister and help organize his congregation as a Swedenborgian church.

There is a history of interest in Swedenborg's writings in Korea, and there were in the 1930s about forty Swedenborgian churches with about 8,000

members in North Korea; the North Korean government put an end to the churches. The General Church of the New Jerusalem has pursued missionary work in South Korea, and there

are at present at least three churches in Korea led by General Church-trained ministers. The General Church has established an online seminary for Ko-

two and a half years, Rev. Junchol Lee has been tutoring Keehyun Joh in Swedenborgian theology and doctrine via Skype.



Rev Junchol Lee, Rev. Keehyun Joh, his wife, and brother-in-law

reans, which is educating and training more New Church ministers. The General Convention of the New Jerusalem has engaged in some missionary work in South Korea in the past. For the past

the Pure Gospel Church, and Rev. Joh began leading a small group as a lay leader in Swedenborg-informed worship. Four years ago he heard about

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Planning for the Future

The New Year, 2014, is fast upon us. But the message of Christmas has reminded us of our ongoing need to bring our symbolic gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh for the work of the New Jerusalem. If our church is to be relevant in the coming years, we need to become proactive in financial matters. Planning

for fundraising begins right now. We must be deliberate in our personal giving plans.

Convention cannot fulfill all the requests for financial assistance from our local churches and ministers, let alone funding for new ways to reach the world with our message. Funds continue to dwindle. And thus our programs

continue to be cut instead of being expanded. A brief history will illustrate our problems.

In the early 1900s, Convention members saw the need to find a way to help local churches with their ministers' salaries. The Augmentation Fund was created to respond to this need, and it has served Convention well. Many a minister's salary was augmented when a local church could not pay a living

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The Editor's Desk



History

As a people, Americans are often characterized as lacking a sense of history—with some justification. Polls often reveal that large percentages of the public know little of history before their coming of age, and many know little of current events, history in the making.

There is a positive side to knowing little of one's political, cultural, and family history: there is less tendency to base one's motivations and goals on ancient wrongs, struggles, and prejudices. Americans find themselves much less involved than peoples of the Old World in struggles based on long-past history. Less burdened by history, we

are more resilient and innovative—we are free to move ahead without the burden of history. The downside is that we miss out on a richness that can inform our identity and our lives—wisdom comes less easily.

On [page 6](#) we can find delight in a small piece of our history as Sweden-

borgians in the last installment of Rob Lawson's fascinating series on Zina Hyde and the Bath Church.

—Herb Ziegler

Live Chat with President Ken Turley

The Swedenborgian Community, swedenborgiancommunity.org, will feature Rev. Ken Turley, president of our denomination, at its weekly live chat on Thursday, January 16, at 9 PM EST. On January 23, the chat topic is "Do you feel there is a relationship between your spirituality and your economic status? Why or why not?" ☪

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Old Testament Course Taught by Rev. Dr. David J. Fekete

March 3–April 20, 2013, Tuition: \$75

In upcoming months David Fekete will offer a course in the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the Letters of Paul, beginning with a survey of the Old Testament.

This course is a historical survey, which means that we will be studying the essential contours of the Old Testament. In future reading, students will know how to locate the passages being read within the history of the Israelite people. As we will see, the theology in the Old Testament usually relates to the historical events in each book. I hope to provide new perspectives for those well acquainted with the Old Testament and also give a manageable introduction for those just coming to it. To indicate your interest in taking the course, please email Rev. Fekete at: revdrfekete@gmail.com.

Outreach Video

The Puget Sound Swedenborgian Church has produced a two-minute promotional video featuring an interview with Convention president Ken Turley.

Tom Johnston (president of the Puget Sound Church and producer of the video) and Ken would like feedback and opinions about the usefulness of this video for your church and the denomination; they're exploring funding options to help produce more videos for churches and the denomination.

To download and view the video, go to <http://tinyurl.com/negs92o>. Email Ken at revken@swedenborg.org. ☪

Church Calendar

- Jan. 17–20: Preteen (SPLATz) retreat • Manna House • LaPorte, IN
- April 12: General Council Spring conference-call meeting
- April 25–26: SHS Board of Trustees meeting • Burlingame, CA

the Messenger

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Editor: Herbert Ziegler

Design and production: Herbert Ziegler

Copy editor: Robert Leith

Proofing: Beki Greenwood & Renée Hellenbrecht

Communications Support Unit: Kristina Madjerac, Ros Taylor, & Steve Sanchez

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Editorial Address:

Herb Ziegler, *The Messenger*

2 Hancock Place
Cambridge, MA 02139

Tel: 617.491.5181

Email: messenger@swedenborg.org

Business and Subscription Address:

The Messenger, Central Office

11 Highland Avenue
Newtonville, MA 02460

Tel: 617.969.4240

Email: manager@swedenborg.org

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Letter from the President



Dear Friends,

I have just woken up from the darkest night of the year. And as it slowly grows lighter under overcast skies, I'm thinking ahead to January 1, 2014. It is a new day. It is a new year. Granted it is a rather arbitrary marker as life goes on in its own rhythms regardless of the ticking of the clock or the turning of the pages on the calendar, and these are mere human attempts to measure the infinite and eternal unfolding of time. Still, the marking of hours and days and years does give us some sort of stable context from which to view our experiencing life.

It brings to mind the song, "Seasons of Love," from the musical *Rent*. The lyrics are well worth researching and reading. In part they read, "How do you measure a year in the life of a woman or a man? How about love?" As nebulous as that may be, to my mind love is a more accurate measurement than clocks, at least for measuring what matters. It leads me to wonder how we measure regeneration—that inner cyclical process of spiritual growth. For it is certain that we will be measured when we die and face our own individual Last Judgment: a sobering thought that we so often prefer not to think about.

How I feel about that depends entirely on what measurement God is going to hold me up against. I know I'm coming up short no matter what, but there are some aspects of my shortness that I have to be OK with. More that I have had to simply come to forgive and some that I have learned to work with and actually turn to good use. My hope and prayer is that at least there will be some sign of growth and positive change. As our collective spiritual mentor the Rev. Dr. George Dole once told me when I asked how you know on what side of the

border between heaven and hell you're standing, it matters much less where you are than it does what direction you are moving.

With that thought in mind, I wanted to share this sign of growth in the Lord's New Church, that commonly held spirit of love and wisdom that is not defined or contained by denominational boundaries and earthly organizations. The Pope of the Roman Catholic Church has explained his most controversial remarks criticizing the church's "obsession" with transmitting a disjointed set of moral doctrines, saying that in the church's "hierarchy of truths," mercy is paramount, proportion is necessary, and that what counts is inviting the faithful in. He went even further, saying some of the church's historical customs can even be cast aside if they no longer serve to communicate the faith. Citing St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, Pope Francis stressed the need for moderation in norms "so as to not burden the lives of the faithful." Given statements of past popes and where the Catholic church is coming from, to my mind, that is movement in the right direction and proof positive that regeneration *does* happen!

As we cross this arbitrary boundary between 2013 and 2014 I ask us all to look for signs of regeneration within our own hearts and minds, within our individual churches, and within our denomination. I ask us all to focus not so much on where and what we are not, but more on what we are looking to and what direction we are moving. I invite us all to look deeply into our collective process and draw out and lift up the positives. It is the positives that we must build on and grow into. It is the positives that inspire us with joy and excitement. It is the positives that will lead us to God and the heavenly state of being, what we call the Lord's New Church. The boundaries, the limitations, and even the obstacles, are not nearly as important as the movement in the right direction. In this coming year, let's show and share and take joy in our signs of regeneration.

—Blessings, Rev. Ken

New Church in Korea

Continued from page 1

Junchol Lee from two Koreans who were studying with him via Skype and asked to study with them.

After two and a half years of study, Rev. Joh approached General Convention about establishing a formal connection with the denomination. On recommendation of the council of

Ministers and the Committee on Admission to the Ministry, the Annual Convention voted in 2013 to authorize recognition of Rev. Joh's church as a sister Swedenborgian Church. Rev. Junchol Lee was tapped to carry the letter of recognition to Korea.

Rev. Lee spent a week with Rev. Joh and his small congregation (about ten people), helping them set up the church and sharing Swedenborgian insights.

The high point was the ordination service. Rev. Joh was not ordained as a minister of General Convention, having taken a non-recognized route to his ministry, but as congregations have done in the past, his congregation ordained him as their minister. Rev. Lee was there to help them through the process and lend support as they became the first indigenous Swedenborgian Church in South Korea. ☩

Below: a letter from Rev. Keehyun Joh received by General Convention

Dear the President of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in North America,

First of all, I would like to express our deepest and most sincere thankfulness to you (the President of the Convention), the Committee of Admission into the Ministry, and the members of the Convention for sending Rev. Junchol Lee with joyful and thoughtful blessings upon our newly beginning Korean New Church community. On August 10, 2013, the ordination service was held at my home and officiated by Rev. Lee, with the laying hands of the members of the community. The General Convention of the New Church in Korea has come into existence! Both I and all members of our community acknowledge this as a historical event to be memorable in the history of the Korean New Church. We believe that it was possible only because of the Divine Providence and blessing of you, who firmly believe in the meaning and purpose of the New Church.

While learning the history of the New Church, I have learned that the General Convention invested a great deal of resources to support the birth of the New Church in Korea. I also learned that the previous generation did not yield the expected fruit, which might have caused a deep disappointment on your side. Yet, our Lord did not leave your effort and mindfulness in vain! In his time, the Lord led and guided a faithful Christian community that has been spiritually trained for over twenty years to the theology of the New Church, and at the end formed it to be the Korean New Church that is uniquely indigenous and independent.

Our community itself did not have any connection whatsoever to the previous generation of Korean Swedenborgian ministries. But we have met many persons who believe themselves to be the people of the New Church and were either directly or indirectly influenced by them. What I would like to inform you wholeheartedly is the truth that the seed that you had spread among Koreans long time ago was not indeed in vain at all! It was planted deeply and safely and nurtured by the Lord. In time, it grew to be a tree, small but solid tree that is now ready to yield many fruits.

Rev. Lee has informed us about a few concerns that you are mindful of regarding us along with a few helpful expectations. Our goal is to build a community that truly and practically reflects the spiritual principles of the New Church revealed by Emanuel Swedenborg. Our plan is not only to learn what is revealed by Swedenborg, but also implement what we learn and understand to be true. In pursuing this goal, we would love to align with the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in North America that pursues the coming of the New Church and the true Christian Church on earth. This is a dream that would take a long time to even come near to be real. But we are willing and committed to be patient to follow the lead of our Lord and to be delighted by each step. Our hope and plan is to build a church that would be a delight at the sight of our Lord.

I would like to express our deepest thankfulness to the General Convention again, and to ask your blessings, prayers, and loving attention to our newly beginning Korean New Church.

With thankfulness and blessings,

Rev. Keehyun Joh,

Senior pastor of the New Church Moimkuh,

President of the General Convention of the New Church in Korea

SHS Vindicated in IRS Decision

BY JIM LAWRENCE

At the end of December, 2013, the Swedenborgian House of Studies (SHS) received a letter from the Internal Revenue Service granting reinstatement of tax-exempt status, and thus ended a twenty-month saga that cost our school over \$20,000 in professional fees in addition to lost revenue resulting from abstaining from raising funds while we challenged the original IRS revocation ruling.

We first reported our IRS battle to the larger church in the June 2012 issue of *the Messenger*. A little earlier that spring we had learned from a foundation from whom we were seeking a grant that we were on a list of nonprofit organizations deemed by the IRS as noncompliant, and thus ineligible for nonprofit status. We were flabbergasted and began researching the matter. We learned that we were among thousands of schools caught in a very broad dragnet conducted by the IRS in 2008 to catch schools believed to be abusing their non-profit status by running profit-generating activities, and who were not filing annually Form 990, which provides information on the school's financial expenses and income.

The dragnet involved mailings sent by the IRS requesting either Form 990 or explanation of why Form 990 was not being filed, and after no response or inadequate response, thousands of schools were thrown into noncompliance. We were one of those. In our case, we asserted that we never received any of those mailings, though we did receive a postcard-like document, which we still have in a file, advising that we should determine whether we needed to be filing Form 990. We consulted our board treasurer at that time (Garfield Byrd) and our audit firm at that time, and we were advised that as a denominational seminary we were ex-



SWEDENBORGIAN
HOUSE OF STUDIES
at Pacific School of Religion

empt from filing Form 990. SHS has never in its history filed Form 990. Schools that serve recognized tax-exempt churches do not need to file the cumbersome Form 990. For example, in the cluster of the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley, where SHS, as a house of studies at the Pacific School of Religion headquarters its program, eight of the ten separately incorporated schools do not file Form 990 because each is tied to an exempt denomination. The two schools that serve multiple constituencies (Pacific School of Religion is one of them) do file Form 990 every year. One of the other GTU denominational schools was also caught in the dragnet, and their case is still unresolved.

When an organization is deemed noncompliant by the IRS there are two fixes—one quick-and-easy and one slow and painful. Using our audit and review firm Baker Tilly, we challenged our noncompliant status over a period of several weeks as we argued that we deserved the easy fix (a simple informational form and small fee), but ultimately we were given the painful fix route, which in our case involved submitting Form 1023, which is a wholly new filing for nonprofit status, plus four years of Form 990 (2008 through 2011). This work involved many dozens of pages of detailed forms requiring information that was challenging to recover. We had to elicit help from our auditors and the business office at GTU. Given our tiny part-time staff and the full workload of running the school, it took many months to complete our reinstatement application.

The next complication was the backlog at the IRS for considering these applications. Although their official letter of response to receiving our application documents said they would render a decision within ninety days, we learned that, in fact, it might take as long as eighteen months. After the ninety days had passed, we filed a formal request for expedited consideration of our application, which was initially denied, but in a subsequent conversation the legal counsel within Baker Tilly argued (once again) that denying the expedition after such an arduous process was especially unfair to SHS, because we should never have been put on the noncompliant list in the first place and should not have been denied the quick fix in the second place—and the IRS agent agreed after looking at our case!

Within a week we were issued an Erroneous Revocation Letter that declares us as continuously exempt from our original application in July, 1918, to the present, that we can receive all proper donations, bequests, and gifts, and finally also affirms we are not required to file Form 990. The conclusion of our odyssey of trying to correct what we felt from the beginning was an error brings feelings of vindication and gratitude to many people who helped along the way—Baker Tilly, the GTU business office, SHS financial manager Alan Thomsen, administrative assistant Francesca McCrossan, and the SHS Board of Directors, especially treasurer Jennifer Lindsay and chair Jane Siebert. And we are also deeply grateful to our loyal SHS constituency for your patience while we tangled in what often felt like a contemporary David and Goliath tale.



Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence is dean of the Swedenborgian House of Studies.



An Indefatigable Spirit

Zina Hyde and the Bath Church: Part 3

BY ROB LAWSON

This is the final part of a three-part series about the early years of the Bath (Maine) New Church. Part 1 appeared in the June 2013 Messenger and Part 2 appeared in the December 2013 Messenger.

The uproar that erupted within the Bath congregation in April, 1843, over how to deal with the “indiscretions” of the widow Mrs. Waldron with Dr. Payne and their effect on his jilted fiancée Miss Hatch could not have come at a worse moment for the church. The youthful congregation was inexperienced in handling such matters, and the turmoil coincided with the onset of the New England building season, which included the much-anticipated construction of their house of worship. Highly engaged and focused, Zina Hyde attempted to lead by example.

On April 2, Hyde reported a three-foot snow pack, but he knew it would be soon gone. It was time to let contracts for building the church and his own house. The two would be monumental construction tasks he had been dreading. Both the Hyde and Bath Church projects would be carried out by a capable contractor and house builder, Alden Bradford Farnham. In his early thirties, Farnham “fell in” with the Bath Society the previous year (1842) when he married Frances Ann Davis Sloan, a Bath Church member. Farnham agreed to build the Hyde house for \$8,000 and the Bath Church for \$5,000. A house mover was hired to relocate the Hydies’ old home.

For seven months, Zina and Eleanor

Hyde stayed with the Dikes on Washington Street. Hyde dubbed the occasion “changing dormitories.” It must have been a lively time with three toddlers (two Hyde children and one Dike child) and with both Eleanor and Miriam contemplating and anticipating their next children. Both Samuel and Zina were actively engaged in their professional pursuits. Mealtimes must have been uproarious.

Though energetic and industrious, Zina found himself pushed to his limits. He was overseeing the construction of the new home, making purchasing expeditions to Boston, run-

Hyde wanted the new structure to be “one of the most elegant buildings that adorn the banks of the broad and beautiful Kennebec.”

ning his hardware ship-chandlery business, promoting the first translation of Swedenborg’s *Spiritual Diary* from scholarly Latin to English, and guiding the building of the Bath Society’s “temple.”

By mid-May, “20 to 25 hands” were employed blasting and quarrying, doing mason work for the foundation, and framing the walls of the Hydies’ house. On May 18 Hyde records: “The front of the body of my house went up without disaster.” Trips to Boston secured specialty contractors for what would be a state-of-the-art home. Influenced by his recent travels in Italy, the house would have a piazza—a long, covered walkway with columns. Hyde contracted for a stucco worker, “plumbers,” a bell hanger, and kitchen-mason specialists to set the new

range. On one memorable outing, he and Eleanor procured carpets, chairs, a sofa, and other furnishings for their new home to the tune of \$400 dollars, a large sum in 1843. Hyde envisioned their new home as a physical representation of their yet to be realized spiritual regeneration. His unabashed enthusiasm to incorporate Swedenborg’s insights into his life is typical, and he would have been familiar with the passage in *Heaven and Hell* where heavenly dwellings reflect the qualities of their occupants.

The same concept was applied in the design of the Bath Church. Hyde wanted the new structure to be “one of the most elegant buildings that adorn the banks of the broad and beautiful Kennebec,” but the result was to be more than ornamentation. The use of ancient laws of ideal proportions called the “golden ratio”—and in this case used for a church—would correspond to the orderly nature of the Divine as described by Swedenborg: “God is order itself.”

To keep up with Hyde, contractor Farnham may have had alternating crews working both sites. Farnham also may have had a crew at the Swanton house, next to the church, which was also built at this time. If this were the case, Swanton, Hyde’s business partner, could have served as a second pair of eyes, checking on progress at the church from his own house site.

Hyde provided measurements and design elements, drawing on ancient and neoclassical buildings from his stay in Italy. Which buildings he used as models is uncertain, though he was especially taken by the San Francesco di Paola church in Naples and its front

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façade. Fashioning with wood, Farnham made the Greek temple on paper a reality.

Without a traditional steeple, the building would have turned a few heads. Yet Bath residents were falling in love with a new architectural craze—the Greek Revival style. The city, with a population of over 5,000 and growing, was experiencing a period of prosperity. The unusual church design happened to be in fashion, matching a new sensibility as builders abandoned Federal style severity for ancient elegance.

Chaste and simple, yet grand and dignified in its proportions, the outside reflected what was within. Mirroring the Greek-style entrance with four Doric columns over a portico that extended the width of the building's front, one entered a large vestibule (more than twice the size it is today) and then an even larger sanctuary (nearly forty by fifty feet). Anticipating a continued surge in new members, the building was almost all sanctuary with a chancel "bump out" that stuck, box-like, past the west end of the building. There was no organ loft at this time. The only music was supplied by a small melodeon (reed organ), played from one of the pews. Much of the music was performed by chanting.

The walls were painted a burnt-rose color. The aisles were covered with Kidderminster, an English commercial-grade carpet. The chancel was framed with columns in relief, supporting a wooden lintel. The floor of the pulpit area was covered with a deep crimson plush Brussels carpet. This inner space contained a mahogany altar with

an inscription above it from the Book of John: "Search the Scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal Life and they are they which testify of Me."

With space for fifty-six numbered pews and a seating capacity of 325, the Building Committee was thinking big. To raise money, twenty-eight of the pews were made available for purchase by auction. Like real estate, these pews

windows, thirteen feet-high, filled with panes of clear glass, and a twenty-four-foot-high flat ceiling, provided a dignified atmosphere. Among other items, Sewall paid a local carpenter to make forty-seven stools, one French stool, and twenty book racks for the temple's library and meeting room.

A November 1 deadline for completion came and went. What the construction delays entailed we do not know. The dedication date was rescheduled for early January. After a day's delay by a morning snowstorm, the church building was consecrated January 11, 1844. Hyde noted in his journal, "The day delightful, the air clear and cold, and the sleighing good." The ceremony opened with the congregation chanting a selection from the *Book of*



1905 Postcard of the Bath Church. Collection of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission

could be owned by families for their reserved use. Hyde noted that this group "sold for from \$15 to \$264, including the choices above the appraisal." One of the registered receipts still exists. Sewall purchased pews number 21 and 4 for \$275.

A stone baptismal font, supported by a fluted stone column and three

Worship and ended with chanting the phrase, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth." As it proved nearly seventy-five years later, a flaw in the building design would lead to a terrible disaster, but that is another story.

Preferred winter travel in the nineteenth century was by horse and sleigh. Hyde, a sleighing enthusiast, had been thrown from his sleigh in January 1842, fracturing his pelvis or his hip. Partially healed, the overexertion from his many commitments in 1843 took its toll. After the church dedication ceremony, he was bed-ridden much of the winter of 1844. At first, he believed the affliction was rheumatism. Dr. Payne's homeopathic treatments were ineffectual. By spring, Hyde could only get around on crutches. When a new fence was being built for his house later that summer, Hyde



Interior of the Bath Church decorated for Christmas ca. 1919

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An Indefatigable Spirit

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supervised from a couch on wheels.

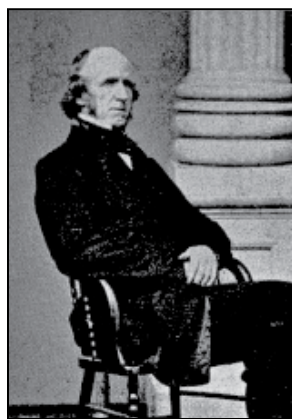
On April 1, Hyde traveled to Boston for medical treatment. There, physicians diagnosed he had a spinal disease. Hyde underwent two months of painful hydropathic and homeopathic treatments, with little improvement. During Hyde's absence from Bath, Brother Sewall held a special church meeting to deal with the troublesome Mrs. Waldron.

The widow Waldron had been upsetting members of the congregation now for two years. In April, 1842, she and Dr. Payne came with the widow's sister and brother-in-law to an "Enquiring" meeting held by the Rev. Dike. These meetings were designed to answer questions and to invite interested individuals to join the church. However, for Mrs. Waldron to appear in public, as innocent as it may have been, in the company of one of the city's most eligible bachelors and just weeks after the death of her second husband, Dr. Charles Waldron, would have been viewed as indiscreet if not scandalous. A month later, Dr. Payne joined the church, followed by Widow Waldron two months later. Her mother, Mrs. Prescott, had joined the church the year before.

Even before she joined the church, Hyde addressed Mrs. Waldron as Sister Waldron. After attending the annual convention of the Swedenborgian Church in Boston that year, Hyde and his family took the daily packet for Bath. His entry for July 2, 1842, reads, "Left our Boston home at Mr. Worcester's in Louisburg Square [Beacon Hill] and taking with us Sister Mary A. and little Frank Waldron, return to our happy home in Bath." The widow's continued presence in church, even after she and Dr. Payne broke off their af-

fair in 1843, gnawed at the forbearance of several church members, especially, the Allen family.

The stated purpose of the April 30 meeting, held in the new vestry, was "to confer upon the difficulties which have agitated (and do now agitate) the Society for this past year." A bomb of dissension was about to be detonated, setting into motion the very event Hyde had skillfully avoided the previous summer in dealing with Dr. Payne. Sewall's tabled motion regarding the widow Mrs. Waldron from the previous July, when Dr. Payne's right to communion was suspended, was put forward. A majority voted to also suspend Mrs. Waldron's right to communion. But it was not a unanimous decision. The women were asked to weigh in on the vote. Several abstained, including Sewall's oldest daughter Harriet, and Mrs. Farnham voted no. Other women, however, voted in favor of punishing Mrs.



William Dunning Sewall

The widow's continued presence in church, even after she and Dr. Payne broke off their affair in 1843, gnawed at the forbearance of several church members . . .

Waldron. Swanton again questioned the authority of the Society to suspend Mrs. Waldron's or anyone's right to the sacraments.

At the heart of the issue was Mrs. Waldron's ongoing refusal to accept responsibility for any wrongdoing. In Dr. Payne's case, on the other hand, the young doctor had been penitent, broke off his relationship with Mrs. Waldron, and married his former fiancée Miss Hatch.

As a result of the Society's action, Henry Masters (Waldron's brother-in-law), his wife (Waldron's younger sister), and Mrs. Prescott (Waldron's mother) sent letters of resignation. Masters, the former treasurer of the Building Committee, was an unfortunate loss. (He would eventually move to the Dakota Territory where he would be elected its first governor.) But his hands were tied. He, his wife Caroline Prescott, and their children lived with Dr. and Mrs. Prescott. John B. Swanton Jr., one of the church "pillars," refused

to continue serving as secretary and as treasurer, and Dike was pressed into service as secretary pro tem. Regrettably, the discord spread to outsiders, possibly through the offended Prescott family or their supporters. The end result was disastrous for the Society. Who would want to join a congregation or attend a church service under this cloud?

From his sick bed in Boston, and with Eleanor acting as his secretary, Hyde fought for preserving the Bath Society. Throughout the month of May, he met with Swanton and corresponded with Sewall and Swanton, trying to find a way to neutralize Sewall's apparent headstrong action. In a letter to Sewall, he despaired, "And then, the withdrawal of some of our brethren and sisters, seems like acting prematurely, or like giving up the hope of the Church, which it is my happiness to entertain."

Sewall was a powerful player in the Church. If anyone could persuade him to make amends, Hyde could do it. They had known each other as businessman—Sewall built ships and Hyde supplied them—and as relatives and

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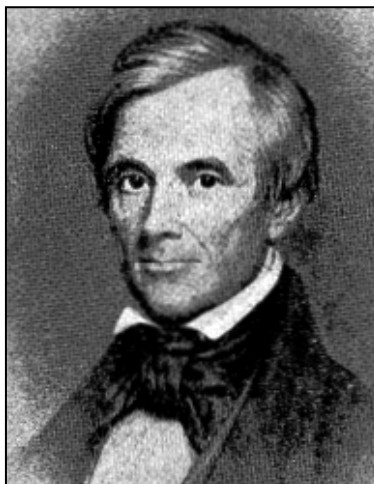
friends. Hyde's first wife was Sewall's cousin. Both had experienced excommunication in 1829 by the Reverend Ellingham from their Congregational Church for having started up the Bath Society of the New Jerusalem. Now, Hyde reminded Sewall of what was at stake, writing, "But I feel poorly qualified to give counsel, situated as I now am, though deeply anxious for a restoration of harmony with our beloved Jerusalem."

The three men went back and forth with suggestions. Swanton was championing Dr. Payne and Mrs. Waldron. Sewall was representing the Allens' and possibly his own and his wife's hostility toward Mrs. Waldron. Hyde was brokering for compromise. As he pointed out to Sewall, "Your motion I could have agreed to, had it been somewhat modified and made to imply only temporary suspension, whereas now it seems to amount to excommunication."

Swanton proposed a resolution to quench the gossip: "Resolved: That we regard it the duty of all in the society together with our Brother [Dr. Payne] and Sister [Mrs. Waldron] to seek by a life of charity and mutual good will to blot out all memory of our past difficulties. That it is our duty to avoid all allusion to the subject ourselves and to close our ears against any allusions to the subject by others. And all such in the Society or out of the Society as are disposed to allude to the subject to the prejudice of the parties cannot be regarded otherwise than as enemies of the church."

At one point, despairing to reach a satisfactory resolution, Hyde complained to Sewall, "Why Mr. Dike or one of the brethren did not at the time conceive some modification of your resolution, I could not conceive, excepting that for the time they were under a spell that paralyzed their active

thoughts." He was particularly disappointed in young Reverend Dike's lack of leadership and courage when it was most needed. Hyde well knew Dike's tendency toward equanimity and also knew that if push came to shove, Dike was capable of making a stand. In Dike's defense, the young minister told Hyde that "all that he has said and done on the subject of our difficulties



Zina Hyde

has had but little if any effect."

Sewall explained to Hyde his real views and the circumstances leading up to the passing of his resolution. Harriet Sewall, visiting the Hydies in Boston, confirmed what had happened at the April meeting and corroborated her father's position. What this tantalizing detail has yet to surface. Hyde again wondered why the matter had not been taken to General Convention's Pastoral Committee or why "any number of brethren that we may agree to select out of the Society" had not been asked to mediate.

Both Swanton and Hyde encouraged Sewall and others, especially the Allens, to make personal amends by speaking with the injured parties. On this point, Hyde wrote to Sewall, "I suppose ere this you may have conversed with our Sister Prescott, Brother Masters and wife, and Sister Waldron. I hope others will also see them, Sister Hannah [Allen], especially, and

not let a perversion that 'it will do no good' prevent her, such doubts would, of course, tend to prevent all good, as a result."

The unrepentant Mrs. Waldron's continued presence at church and her refusal to admit to any improprieties only exacerbated the situation. Accompanying her at church were her two children: nine-year-old Frank Welch from her first marriage and four-year-old Charliana Waldron from her second marriage. Even Swanton, who had come to the defense of the widow and the young Dr. Payne and who believed both had already suffered much admitted, "that the conduct of Mrs. Waldron and Dr. Payne has been such that the Society cannot regard them as innocent."

Hyde's indefatigable spirit would not give up on reaching a compromise. His resiliency and determination to preserve the struggling congregation, his "Jerusalem on earth," prevailed. In May, 1845, at an afternoon meeting at Zina Hyde's home, the congregation voted to modify Sewall's resolution from the previous spring. Citing "the injunctions of our Lord as given in the 19th chapter of Matt [sic] and adopted as our rule of conduct, . . ." the congregation charitably offered the widow Waldron its love and affection. "Resolved, that said vote be and hereby is not regarded as designing excommunication or unlimited but limited suspension and only until such time as the person shall manifest a desire to return to the confidence and affection of the society by expressing such a desire to the Pastor." In effect, Mrs. Waldron's right to take Communion was left to her "freedom and sense of propriety." All that was needed was her initiating a discussion with the Rev. Dike.

During this difficult time of 1843–44, it is not surprising that there were no new members added to the congregation—but what unfortunate timing.

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An Indefatigable Spirit

Continued from page 9

The construction of their first house of worship and its dedication ceremony were once-in-a-life opportunities to generate interest and attract new members. Instead, things stood at an impasse as the congregation sorted things out.

One positive event was the planting of trees in the half city-block belonging to the church. At a meeting on July 23, 1844, Hyde put forward two resolutions: "That the Society gratefully acknowledge the receipt of 4 horse chestnut trees presented by Mr. Isaac Elder for the purpose ornamenting the grounds of the Temple." The second resolution acknowledged the gift from Boston Swedenborgian professor of law, Theophilus Parsons, of seventy-five "English forest trees" for the church grounds. By fall of 1845, the tide turned and new "receivers" again began to join the ranks of the Bath Society.

And what became of the widow Mrs. Waldron? Did she accept the congregation's offer of forgiveness and make an acknowledgment that she had erred as well? We may never know the answer to this. She never sent a letter of resignation, but appears to have stopped attending the church sometime in late 1845 or early 1846. On April 5, 1846, (with a notation "delayed from November 1845"), the once jilted and now married Betsy Ann Hatch Payne became a member, perhaps a sign of Mrs. Waldron's permanent absence. By July, peace had settled on the congregation. The minutes for July 5, 1846, read, "The regular quarterly meeting of the society for the administration of the ordinance of the Holy Supper was held in the afternoon at the home of Brother Z. Hyde—Brother Hyde's health is such as not to permit him to leave his bed—the usual

number were there in attendance and the meeting was pleasant."

What we do know of Waldron's subsequent life is that she became engaged to James Lemont Brown. The young man may have been apprenticed to his older brother-in-law, John Hayden, who for decades ran a successful jewelry and watch business in Bath. True to form, he was seven years her junior. They left Bath and were married at Trinity Church, New York, on October 24, 1846. They then relocated to Boston where he became a partner with a wholesale jewelry company. Mrs. Mary E.A.C. Brown joined the Boston New Church, becoming a devoted member and very involved in its Sunday school program.

Her two children from previous marriages, Frank and Charliana, are interred with their mother in Forest Hills Cemetery, one of Boston's fashionable park-like cemeteries. Charliana died in Roxbury at age seventeen of consumption (tuberculosis), and Frank died in Nebraska at the age forty-three while serving his first term as Nebraska's sole U.S. Representative. Outliving



Congressman
Frank Welch

her two children and three husbands, the widow Mrs. Brown died in 1881 at the age of seventy of heart congestion at the Homeopathic Hospital in Boston.

Consistent to the end regarding her age, she subtracted five years at her admittance, giving the hospital authorities her age as sixty-five. Her Swedenborgian pastor, Rev. James Reed, referring in his memorial to the Sunday school program, lamented that funds—"a considerable sum of money for the use of the school" that she had made arrangements to leave to the church—were gone. He alluded to the

fact that she fell on difficult times toward the end of her life. It is possible that she gave her son Frank money to invest in Nebraska real estate. Upon his sudden death in 1878 while on a political speaking tour, Congressman Welch owned considerable farm, urban businesses, and residential properties in five Nebraska counties. If this were the case, her money would have been tied up for years and would have had to go through her daughter-in-law who was the executrix of her husband's estate.

Zina Hyde lived out the remainder of his life as an invalid, dying on September 19, 1856, at the age of sixty-nine. For a man of his nature, who was best when fully engaged in a life of usefulness, this period must have been a trial. He nevertheless kept busy. In particular, he continued to promote the translation and dissemination of Swedenborg's writings. Occasionally, he managed to attend church, but more often church members came to worship or visit with him. It is said that there was a special couch for Hyde in the church from which he could see and hear the service.

By 1856, it was time for the church to be repainted for the first time. No doubt Hyde was involved in making the decision on how to raise the funds (\$300) and who the painting contractor would be. Frank Sewall, youngest son of William D. Sewall, remembers accompanying his father on many occasions to the Hyde home. There in the spacious house he would study the many titles of books in the library, view the oil paintings from Europe, and romp in the upstairs great attic, which had been turned into a playroom, with the Hyde children. And meanwhile, below them, Frank's father would sit by the bed of his old friend, discussing what was closest to their hearts—the Bath Church of the New Jerusalem.

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Acknowledgments

Understandably, several readers have inquired where this information for the formative years of the Bath Church has come from. Most of the Church's untold back story is largely the product of primary sources—letters, diaries, original bills and receipts, local newspapers, church records, genealogical material, family lore, and land deeds—heretofore never published.

A treasure trove of raw material is available in Bath at three important local resources: Robin A. S. Haynes, manager of the Sagadahoc History and Genealogical Room at the Patten Free Library, introduced me to its collection of local history, and she kindly has permitted *the Messenger* to publish an early 1872 stereoscopic view of the Bath Church, which appeared in Part 2 of this series. Nathan R. Lipfert, senior curator, and Kelly Page, registrar of the Maine Maritime Museum, were most helpful in piloting me through more than 640 boxes of Sewall papers and six boxes of Hyde family papers. Judith E. Stevens, registrar of the Registry of Deeds at the Sagadahoc County Courthouse, took time to instruct me in accessing their well-organized stacks of bound deeds going back to 1826.

On a personal note, I am especially grateful to the Reverend Dr. George F. Dole, who generously lent me a transcription of Hyde's journal, and Lois Dole, then-secretary of the Bath Society, who gave me access to relevant church photographs she has carefully and skillfully assembled over the years as well as the Church baptism and business meeting records.

From a distance, the following people provided essential information swiftly and with good humor: Jim Lawrence, dean of the Swedenborg House of Studies in Berkeley, California, kindly located in their archives the obituary of the irrepressible Mrs.

Why I am a New Church Person

BY HANK FROESE

I must start from the beginning and tell you that I was brought up in the Old Mennonite faith. My parents came from Russia in 1924 and came to Herbert, Saskatchewan. They attended the Mennonite Church, and in 1942, we moved to Abbotsford, British Columbia, and here is where I wanted to get confirmed and join the church.

In 1947, everything was set, and I would be confirmed on that Sunday. That day, before we went into church, two ministers asked me to talk to them in the car outside. They informed me that they could not confirm me because one minister's son had seen me at a dance the night before, and so they said that they couldn't confirm a sinner

like that. I would have to pray for forgiveness and promise not to attend any more dances.

So I decided not to join their church. Instead, after twenty years or so of going to church, I quit right then and said there was no use, I was a goner anyway.

I got married in 1948 to a New Church girl (Irlean Sawatzky) and met her aunts and uncles in the Vancouver and Chilliwack areas, and they were all New Church people. They seemed to me to be different. They never, ever said I should come to the church. They never tried to tell me what I should be doing to have eternal life. They seemed happy and just minded their own business, it seemed like to me.

Then we moved to Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, and there my wife Irlean would go once a month to Four Corners and attend services held there by Rev. Henry Reddekopp. One day it was very muddy and the roads were bad, so I told my wife I would drive her and the kids to church. I heard my first New Church service that day by Rev. Reddekopp, and it was so different from what church I had had. He used the inner sense so very well that any child could understand, and it was so inspiring to me and so very interesting. I could learn so much from these services, and as long as Henry served there in Meadow Lake, I don't think I ever missed a service.

I am very happy to be a New Church person and I just wish that other people could have the opportunity to see the difference in the New Church as I have had. ☩

The late Hank Froese lived in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan. This article was first published in the January/February 1988 issue of *Conference Magazine*, published by the Western Canada Conference of the New Jerusalem.

Waldron. Renée Hellenbrecht, operations manager of the Swedenborgian Church in Newtonville, Massachusetts, and Michael Yockey, librarian for the Swedenborgian House of Studies Library and Archives, both rose to the occasion, supplying information in response to last-minute requests. Margo Jones Pomeroy and Stephen Pinkerton, both superb genealogists, lent me assistance on tracking down the elusive Mrs. Welch Waldron Brown.

To all of these people, thank you for enabling me to tell with accuracy this 170-year-old story, a portion of which the Bath Church congregation of 1843 was directed in a proposed resolution to "blot out all memory of." ☩



Rob Lawson is president of the Bath Society. He is retired from the Maine Public Broadcasting Network and is a writer and an editor.

General Council Fall Meeting

The General Council of the Swedenborgian Church convened for its fall meeting in Framingham, Massachusetts, November 1–3, 2013. Members present were Rev. Ken Turley (president), Rev. Betsy Coffman (vice-president), Rev. Susannah Currie (recording secretary), Polly Baxter (treasurer), Lon Elmer, Barb Cullen, Rev. Kit Billings, David Vigas, Rev. David Fekete, and Debbie Dolley. Absent were Tom Neuenfeldt, Rev. Randy Laakko, and Carl Helm. Guests present were Renée Hellenbrecht, operations manager and Rev. Kevin Baxter, chair of the Council of Ministers.

Licensed Pastor Designation

Work is ongoing to refine the process for the licensed pastor designation approved at the 2013 Annual Convention. It is viewed as being a solution for congregations without the means or ability to contract with an ordained minister.

Designated Funds

General Council reviewed convention-held designated funds and took action as follows:

- Wilkins Fund (for educational and missionary use): Currently half goes to the Swedenborgian House of Studies and half to the Ministries Support Unit (MINSU). Voted to apply the fund to the Educational Support Unit (EDSU).
- Ehrman Fund: There is no indication that it is a permanent fund; it will be reclassified from permanently to temporarily restricted—currently applied to *the Messenger*. Voted to continue its use for support of *the Messenger*.
- Bancroft Fund (for Augmentation Fund or MINSU use): Initially to the Connecticut Association—currently to the Adrienne Frank Fund.

Voted to apply it to the Missions Fund.

- Neighborhood House Association Fund (to be used to maintain centers of Christian influence): currently used for general purposes. Voted to apply it to EDSU use.
- Pausch Fund (for general purposes of General Convention, with a preference to establish a scholarship fund for Urbana University): Currently for general purposes (used in the past for Temenos funding). Voted to use it for general purposes and scholarship aid to Swedenborgian students at Urbana University.
- Brown Fund (for scriptural scholarship under direction of the Council of Ministers): currently used for general purposes. Voted to apply it to the Council of Ministers for continuing education of ministers.
- Chase Legacy (for use by the Council of Ministers to publish collateral writings): currently used for general purposes. Voted to apply it to *Our Daily Bread*.
- Starling Childs Fund (for the Church Extension Board to set forth in modern form the writings of Swedenborg): voted to apply it to the Missions Fund.
- Kent Andrew Trust (for use of General Council): Voted to apply it to general purposes.)
- Lehnen Fund (for educational and religious purposes): used for scholarships for Urbana University students from 1955 to 2006. Currently the treasurer accepts applications for general uses. Voted that in the absence of other requests the income be directed to other educational purposes such as the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL), Transitions, etc.
- M. E. DuPont Trust (to the Missions Board): since 1991 applied in

Vision Statement

General Council engaged in a brainstorming process to develop a vision for the future of the denomination and agreed on the following visioning statement:

As people and a community we are becoming

- Open to the Divine presence and leading in all things
- Authentic and enthusiastic about living our Swedenborgian faith and vibrantly communicating this at all levels
- A living body finding unity within our diversity, inclusive and meeting others where they are
- Inspired by God's love, wisdom and energy, sharing creativity and resources to facilitate health, interconnectedness, and transformation of people for joyful and excellent service to the world and each other

error; divided into five parts: Augmentation Fund/MINSU/*the Messenger*/SHS/pensions. Voted to reclassify to permanently restricted mission funds.

- Esther Perry Fund (created by the Council upon receipt of sales proceeds from donated land): Income has always been applied to SCYL. Voted to move funds to the permanently restricted Millennium Fund.
- Blakebell Fund (for general purposes, with preference to needy persons): used for general purposes, with up to \$3000 for needy single women and widows—requested annually by the Temenos Church. The treasurer will obtain documentation of appropriate use of the fund.
- Frank Fund (for individuals studying for the ministry or education of those teaching within General Convention): voted to use the in-

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come from the Frank Fund that has not been used for individual grants to cover expenses for, first, mission purposes and second, for Augmentation Fund purposes to the extent that those expenses fulfill the terms of the gift.

- Philadelphia Library Fund (for free distribution of Swedenborgian materials or establishing or maintaining libraries in Swedenborgian churches): voted to establish a policy that instructs the treasurer to use the income from the Philadelphia Library Fund that has not been given in individual grants to cover expenses for free distribution of Swedenborgian literature.

The Council voted to remove discriminatory language in fund descriptions.

Central Office Issues

The chair of the Central Office Review Committee updated the Council on their work.

- Requests for proposals (RFP) were published in *the Messenger* and mailed to Swedenborgian churches and centers. The committee has prepared a comparison of locations. As digitizing of records proceeds, the space needs of Central Office may change from those originally envisioned.
- Personnel issues resulted in revised job descriptions and an evaluation process has been activated. A contingency plan has been developed to deal with employee transition or emergency situations.

Discussion ensued regarding management and oversight of Central Office.

- What is the impact on Central Office when there is a change of elected leadership? How does leadership oversee employees? Managerial

oversight of Central Office from a distance is difficult.

- There is a need for documentation of Central Office responsibilities and processes. A Central Office handbook and calendar are in preparation. The accounting section has been revised and the beginning of the other parts is one of the operation manager's goals for 2014.
- The president initiated a discussion about oversight of the president. He welcomes job performance feedback. Anonymous feedback via an online survey could be used for evaluation.

The Council discussed the purpose functions of Central Office and came to the following consensus:

- Central Office is professional space for employees to work in, not a physical doorway to the church.
- Central Office does not require a large meeting area.
- A Swedenborgian church or center should be within a reasonable distance of Central Office.
- There is a need for a written procedure that defines to whom questions about theology can be referred. The website and our publications list the Central Office phone number and email address.

Factors and considerations surrounding the timing of a move were discussed at length. No decisions were reached.

The Central Office Committee was asked to send a report of further progress in the spring.

2017 Planning Committee

The president appointed Rev. Kevin Baxter, Polly Baxter and Rev. Kit Billings to serve on the 2017 Convention Planning Committee, the 200th anniversary of the first annual convention. More volunteers and ideas for celebration will be sought.

Appointments

General Council voted to approve the recommendation of the Massachusetts Association to appoint Herb Ziegler as a trustee of the Gray Fund, replacing Ray Guiu.

Urbana University Issues

Convention is prior owner of Urbana University (UU) land, and there are situations in the 1921 deed to Urbana University under which Urbana land would revert back to General Convention. Urbana requested that this clause be revoked to facilitate their negotiations to restructure their \$50 million loan and add another \$2 million. The banks are uncomfortable with the clause because they would have no clear claim in the event of default. It was General Council's opinion that maintaining the Swedenborgian heritage of Urbana and its relationship is Convention's priority over possession of the land.

General Council voted to approve the revocation of the reversionary clause in the 1921 land deed following the establishment of a new legal contract to maintain, in perpetuity, a relationship between Urbana University and General Convention consistent with Convention's historic and ongoing relationship with Urbana. Polly Baxter, Kit Billings, Susannah Currie, and Dave Vigas were appointed to a UU/GC Relations Committee to follow this process and to report to the Council.

The desirability of having a Swedenborgian chaplain on the faculty at Urbana was discussed. It was voted to add provision for this position to the 2014 budget in the event the details and staffing for this position can be worked out. It would be necessary for Urbana to accept the proposal. The amount added to the budget factored in the ability to offer donated housing as part of the compensation.

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Learning and Labor—Mission in Peru

BY JANE SIEBERT

I seized an opportunity to join a mission trip to Peru in 2012 that was sponsored by the First United Methodist Church in Wichita. The trip was made more rewarding and enjoyable by the presence of my daughter Casana and Pat and Steve Tukos, from the LaPorte New Church in LaPorte, Indiana. We combined a work week at a church in a small village in the Andes with some touring of Lima and, of course, Machu Pichu.

While working on the floors in the kitchen and bathroom of the parsonage and painting the Sunday school rooms, there were times that it didn't seem like we were half a world away from home. The extended family members of the pastor would stop by with their little grandchildren for the pastor's wife to baby sit. Each precious child was full of expectant hope and love, and their black eyes sparkled, staring with curiosity at the strange foreigners.

We had an evening with the teens of the church where we sang songs, played games, and ate snacks together. The elders of the church stopped by one afternoon, and they spoke of the trials of getting older, not hearing so well or walking as steadily, and their love of God and the

church. We stayed in a nice hotel, with hot water and good meals. Yes, sometimes Peru felt like home.

And then some days I truly felt as if I was in a different world. We had to do much of the work by hand, like taking out the old floor tiles with a chisel and hammer. We mixed the cement by hand on the back porch. Jobs that would have taken an afternoon with the right tools, took us three days and resulted in a lot of sweat and achy joints. We hauled out the old tile and floor in woven bags that we had to haul up two flights of

stairs to dump out the window to a dump truck below. We even hauled the wet, mixed cement through the house to the bathroom in a leaky wheelbarrow, and the pastor's wife didn't mind. She said, "Oh, it will clean up." The Sunday school rooms that we painted took three coats of a chalky diluted paint. And the colors they chose looked like orange and lime sherbet: delightful colors, but not what we would normally paint Sunday school rooms.

When the teens shared snacks, it was grilled skewers of blue potatoes and

beef hearts. The elderly of the church were in their sixties and seventies, and after hauling rock up the stairs, I felt like I fit right in with the elderly. We



Casana Siebert, the mission's interpreter, with village boys



Mother and child



Pat Tukos and friend



The village teens entertain the mission



Jane Siebert at Machu Pichu

were told not to sing in the shower in our hotel. The water was not safe to drink or even rinse your mouth—the things we take for granted.

When we visited a farm, the rows of corn looked familiar until we pulled off an ear—the kernels were white and



Praying for good crops with the farmers

large like hominy. The ears were very fat and not very long. When the Peruvians eat the corn, they boil it like we do but then eat it by picking off one kernel at a time. In a small, low-ceiling building, we found their pride and joy—guinea pigs, lots of them of all sizes. These are a delicacy in Peru.

Experiencing different cultures is like experiencing different religions. Some things seem familiar and some seem totally different. My challenge is not to judge the things that are different as wrong but rather to accept the

[Continues next page](#)

Passages

Confirmations

Welcome, Penny!

What a joyous and heartwarming Sunday morning it was on November 17, 2013, in the sanctuary of the LaPorte (Indiana) New Church. There, we were honored to witness the confirmation of **Penny Sue Billings** into membership as officiated by her beloved husband and our much-loved pastor, Rev. Kit Billings. ☩

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variety and enjoy learning and expanding my understanding.

As Swedenborg reminds us,

. . . heaven is where the Lord is recognized, trusted, and loved. Variety in worship of the Lord from the variety of good in different societies is not harmful, but beneficial, for they are the source of heaven's perfection.
Heaven and Hell §56

Read about Rev. Siebert's mission trip to Guatemala and her thoughts about mission trips in the December, 2013 Messenger. ☩

The Rev. Jane Siebert lives in Pretty Prairie, Kansas, and attends the Pretty Prairie Swedenborgian Church.



A Grandma caring for babies while mothers are in the fields working

Planning for the Future

Continued from page 1

wage. In recent times gifts to this fund have fairly well stopped.

The Mission Fund is another fund started by the denomination for spreading the good news of the New Church. Over the years many members of the church have contributed to this fund. But as with the Augmentation Fund, contributions dwindled to practically zero.

We did it before and we can do it again. What is needed are new funds to do the work of the New Jerusalem. Any amount will be greatly appreciated. Our permanent funds are generating little interest and few contributions. You and I need to change this. You and I can change this. We cannot respond to increased financial demands put upon Convention's existing funds without raising new funds.

One challenge for new funds was answered by the creation of the Tafel Fund, gifted to the denomination with no restrictions on the use of the income, other than promoting and serving new Swedenborgian ministries, outside the box of traditional ministries. This new fund honors the twelve Tafel ministers who have served or are serving our de-

nomination, beginning in 1868 and continuing to the present.

If our faith in the Lord's New Church is to be realized, we need to double our work. So the need for new denominational funding is as acute as ever. Also, more flexibility on the use of the restricted income is needed. This is happening! Over \$50,000 has been raised for this new fund. Twenty times that amount needs to be raised to create the income needed to become relevant again. We can do this. Our commitment to the Lord and His Church is great. Become a partner.

Now is the time to give to your church. Contributions to any or all of these capital funds are sincerely solicited. Call me at (239)560-6785 or email RHTafel@yahoo.com to talk about your gift now and planned giving for the future. Together, we can do this!

—Dick Tafel
Capital funds chair



New Novel by Edmonton Author

Edmonton Church member Susan Hulcher has published a young adult fantasy novel, *Calista's Court*, available as an e-book on Amazon.

General Council

Continued from page 13

New Business

General Council voted the following new business:

- Award a Certificate of Appreciation to Gina Peracchi, Convention accounting manager, for ten years of service
- Approve the travel policy
- Adopt the General Convention Employment Manual as revised
- Approve revised employee benefits
- Approve the changes to the Wayfarers Chapel bylaws proposed by its

board of directors

- Move the responsibility for oversight of the Advanced Degree Education Fund from the Committee on Admission to the Ministry to the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers
- Accept the American New Church Sunday School Association funds as agency funds within the Common Fund

Questions or comments about the meeting should be directed to members of General Council or to Central Office: manager@swedenborg.org. ☩

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.

Book Review

A Concise Report on the Lives of Angels

REVIEWED BY HERB ZIEGLER

The Lives of Angels

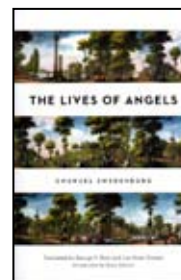
Translated by George F. Dole and
Lisa Hyatt Cooper

Introduction by Grant Schnarr
Swedenborg Foundation Press

The Lives of Angels is an introduction to Emanuel Swedenborg's experiences with angels in heaven. It is a unique, thought-provoking vision of heaven and its inhabitants.

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) was a Swedish scientist, nobleman, and theologian who spent his life investigating the mysteries of the soul. Between 1743 and 1745, he began to have visions of heaven and hell that resulted in a stream of books about the nature of God, the afterlife, and the inner meaning of the Bible. For decades after his experience of spiritual awakening, he visited the afterlife and wrote firsthand accounts of what he saw there. Scattered throughout his writings are descriptions of how angels live—their homes, their communities, and even their romantic relationships. *The Lives of Angels* brings his most striking insights together in one compact volume.

Angels have been much in the zeitgeist in the twenty-first century, and many who have read Swedenborg won-



der why his experiences with angels are not better known. This book sifts his work to tease out a compelling narrative on angels that does not require such a large commitment of mental energy and time as does

reading in their entirety all the books excerpted here. The excerpts come from *Heaven and Hell*, *Marriage Love*, and *Secrets of Heaven*. (New Century editions of *Heaven and Hell* and *Secrets of Heaven* are available from the Swedenborg Foundation).

The introduction by Grant Schnarr helps readers dip their toes into Swedenborg's spiritual world, framing Swedenborg's vivid, compelling recollections of things seen and heard in other realms in terms that appeal to anyone with an interest in angels.

The book is organized into themed sections: Our Ideas of Heaven, Getting Around in Heaven, Daily Life, Love and Marriage, Angelic Communication, and Eternal Springtime. For readability in a compact volume, some passages are edited, and section numbers that organize all of Swedenborg's books are omitted. ☩