

Training, Serving, and Hope SHS Students Explore Swedenborgian Rites and Sacraments

BY JANE SIEBERT

At the Swedenborgian House of Studies (SHS), we just concluded a winter intensive course that brought nearly our entire student body to California from across the United States and Canada for five days to explore Swedenborgian rites and sacraments from theological, spiritual, and practical aspects, with time also to engage cohort-style students' paths in ministry and ministry training.

The hospitality support of Hillside Community Church, where all the sessions took place, was beyond belief, and the whole experience seemed rich and full indeed. It was an expensive educational experience to provide, but it met expectations. Jane Siebert wrote down some thoughts about the week on the way home.

—Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence,
Dean of SHS

At present, there are ten students preparing for ministry in General Convention (the Swedenborgian Church). Four are on the licensed pastor path and six are working toward full ordination.

Each January the Swedenborgian House of Studies (SHS) arranges for a winter intensive program so the students, who live and study in locations all over the country, can come together to study a variety of subjects and, equally important, can share in community.

Eight of the students cleared their busy schedules this January to make time for a full week of class. Joy Bar-

nitz was unable to attend due to her participation in another class at the Pacific School of Religion (PSR) during the same week and Christine Campbell was unable to attend due to pastoral care needs at Temenos (our Swedenborgian retreat and spiritual growth center near Philadelphia).

Students have been asking for classes on the practical aspects of ministry rituals: communion, baptism, confirmation, weddings and funerals. Dean Jim Lawrence invited several ministers to help with the training and presentations. Rev. Ken Turley and I were able to stay for the full week. Rev. Dr. Rachel Rivers, Rev. Kathy Speas and Rev. Junchol Lee (local area clergy) dropped in for a day or two to share about specific topics.

The students practiced the sacrament of baptism using a ten-pound bag of potatoes to represent the baby. The sacrament of communion was shared over and over again in small groups to get everyone comfortable with balancing the Book of Worship in one hand and sharing the elements with the oth-



Sunset reflected in a window of Hillside Church as Lisa Solwold, Karen Feil, Terry Schnarr, and Thom Muller relax after class

er—it looks easy, until you have tried it, and takes a lot of practice. We used grape juice so the gathering wouldn't get out of hand.

Funerals were discussed in detail, and then small groups of students were challenged to prepare a service for a variety of difficult scenarios based on true challenges the ministers have faced, like the request for "no God talk" during the service. A similar process was used for the weddings, so the experience would include the pre-marital meeting to plan the wedding. A book of resources was compiled and the students left with wonderful experiential learning as well as written materials to use.

For me, the highlight of the week was our gathering on Friday where stu-

Continues on page 29

The Editor's Desk



Getting Along

Representative Tip O'Neill, my representative to Congress in the second half of the twentieth century, famously said, "All politics is local." We could use his pattern of generalization to say, "all religion is politics." Like all generalizations there is some truth in that statement and, because it is too broad and simple, numerous ways to take issue with it.

In fact, we might extend the generalization to say all life is politics. Most of us follow the politics of government to some extent. Many decry the failure of our elected leaders to stick to their guns and get something done, that something being what we want done, and disdain politicians who appear changeable and spineless because they pursue compromise at the cost of political principles.

The politics of religion are more

troubling, because we like to believe religion is built on inviolable principles and because we like to think of (at least our) religion as above and beyond politics, that messy and impure activity of the earthly plane. But, politics infuses all aspects of our earthly lives, often by different names. Like political partisans, believers in an organized religion recognize the truth of their creed; and, of course, all religions have conflicting truths. Even a religious doctrine that declares there are multiple truths, that they are culturally determined but lead to the same ultimate truth, is in conflict with the majority of religious doctrines that see that view as untrue, often as evil, because it contradicts their doctrines.

Religious politics sometimes results in open warfare, as happened in American domestic politics in the Civil War, sometimes terrorism and murder. Sometimes religious politics is about power, or controlling wealth or people. There is always disagreement within denominations and religions, resulting in political behavior from benign to violent.

In the current phase of American politics, adherence to principles, or at least established positions, is trumping compromise, which has become a dirty

word to most even though America has progressed and survived through compromise.

But how do religions compromise? Swedenborgians are willing to accept other religions and their beliefs as acceptable paths to God. But we refuse to compromise our positions on such issues as justification by faith alone and the authority of a pope.

Emanuel Swedenborg informs us that we are in the final religious era, when the New Church brings the whole world together. We, as Swedenborgians are working to understand exactly what that means and how to be part of it.

—Herb Ziegler

Contents

Training, Serving, and Hope	17
The Editor's Desk	18
Letter from the President	19
What Really Matters?	
Toward a Newer Church, part 3	20
Social Concerns— Connect with Us	21
Young Adults Meet Up in LaPorte	22
Gathering Leaves 2015: A Swedenborgian Women's Retreat	23
The Dole 3 Miler	24
MLK Weekend SPLATz Retreat in LaPorte	26
Rev. Louis Dole Sermon Archive	27
SHS Spring Semester	27
Through Others' Eyes	28
History Behind the Glass	28
Call for Nominations to Elected Positions	30
Passages	31
2015 Annual Convention The Year of Regeneration: Toward A Newer Church	32

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Church Calendar

- April 18: General Council Spring Conference Call Meeting
- April 24–25: SHS Spring Board Meeting, Berkeley CA
- June 4–7: Gathering Leaves—a Swedenborgian Women's Retreat, Cincinnati OH
- June 27–July 1: Annual Convention 2015, Bridgewater MA

the Messenger

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Letter from the President



2014–15
*The Year of Regeneration:
The Way of Change*

Dear Friends,

Last month I spoke of change, the inevitability of transformation as the way of life. It was a reflection elaborated on with observations and metaphors of the natural world. Today, I am filled with a similar sense, only today my observations and metaphors are drawn from having shared time and space with a number of other souls for whom which the natural plane was only a means for sharing, experiencing, and delving into the realm of spirit.

I am referring to the past week spent in an intensive seminar at the Swedenborgian House of Studies in which, as a group, we explored, shared, and learned about the spiritual experiences and transformations that take place within people while, as ministers, we serve as guides using various forms of liturgy and service to shepherd, direct, and “color” those transformational experiences (see [“Training, Serving, and Hope” on page 17](#)).

I have come to see ministry as a profession, actually more importantly as a vocation, in which our purpose is to accompany people through times of transition and contribute to and help focus and bring to light the presence of the Divine within the all too human experiences unfolding around us.

We live in the world, where we gather, present, and manipulate the physical aspects and tools of books, props, and symbols, present environments, time and space, and, of course, people. But our deeper focus and ultimate goal is to reach into and share, and ultimately affect, focus and direct it to-

ward God and the qualities of heaven, the spiritual awareness and state of being of those to whom we seek to minister.

The past week was one of mystery and illumination, physical practicality, and inner transformation, of professional competency and spiritual growth. It was gratifying to gather in and share the material and accompanying personal experiences around the topics of baptism, marriage, birth, and death, and confirmation into the Church. While we shared the beautiful, comfortable and supportive space of the Hillside Church in El Cerrito (I will confess to feeling no small amount of guilt while I enjoyed the warm and sunny weather of the Bay Area while back home Laurie was shoveling out from under a foot of snow in single digit temperatures), we also shared and explored the exciting, moving, disparate, and at times challenging variety of spiritual spaces from which, and within which, we came from and met.

It was informative, inspirational, and transformational. I venture to say that all who attended, whether labeled student or teacher, left the experience with a deeper understanding of our church’s sacraments. And not only a deeper understanding but an enlivened and deepened commitment to our personal choices and ongoing development to serve God and “the neighbor” as pastors. Like the sacraments we studied, the specific physical time, space, and action were imbued with spiritual meaning that affected us deeply and which we will carry with us out into the world, with the result that our attitudes, our intentions, and our actions will be more closely aligned with the heavenly spirit to which we all aspire. The physical realm pales in comparison to the spiritual experience, and yet, ironically and representing both the beauty and the limitations of the human condition, the experience of the spiritual realm could not have happened except for the efforts undertaken and followed through in the material realm (much gratitude to our hosts Rev. Jim Lawrence, organizer and leader, and Linda Baker,

Continues on Page 31

Toward a Newer Church, part 3

What Really Matters?

BY GEORGE DOLE

This is the third in a series of six columns in which Rev. George Dole reflects on his reading of the theological works of Emanuel Swedenborg in light of our aim to become a Newer Church. In this installment, the reader finds George's invitation to see that "the good of love" is like our "yearning to join with others," and that the "truth of faith" is like our "yearning to experience our distinctness." He points out that the seeming tension between these ideas is actually their relation to each other, and is "the Lord's life in us," experienced as "the fundamental motion of life itself."

Please accept Rev. Dole's invitation to test these ideas within your own relationships to see where doing so might lead in the process of regeneration. Enjoy!

—Rev. Dr. Gard Perry

This month I'd like to take a closer look at *The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* (NJHD). This was one of five works published in 1758, about two years after the publication of the last volume of the *Arcana Coelestia* (AC or the *Arcana*), and after Swedenborg's experience of the Last Judgment. Its preface begins by quoting the description of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21, insisting that this description is not to be understood literally, and that more deeply understood, it is telling us that "a New Heaven and a New Earth" means a New Church, both in the heavens and on earth. (§1)—probably the first clear mention in the theological works of "The New Church" as we understand it. There follows a very condensed presentation of the spiritual meaning of the individual features of that city. (We'll be looking at selections from a later, more extended version of that in April and May). Then we have sections about the new heaven, the new earth, and Jerusalem, with

reference to the Last Judgment that has just taken place.

Next comes an introduction to the doctrine itself, featuring part of the passage from the *Arcana Coelestia* that I mentioned in the December article, to the effect that the ancient churches had a doctrine of charity that made one church out of many; "For they acknowledged all those as men of the church who lived in the good of charity, and called them brethren, however they might differ respecting truths, which at this day are called matters of faith." The introduction goes on to la-

The most intimate understanding we can have of divinity comes from encounter, from what we experience in our hearts and minds.

ment the loss of that early doctrine of charity, and closes by highlighting the two great commandments as representing the whole content of the Word.

The first chapter of the doctrine itself is fascinating. It tells us that nothing is more important to know than what we mean by "good" and "true" and how these relate to each other. It then defines neither, but focuses on how they relate to each other, insisting that they must be united, not separated, and that heaven itself is the marriage of the two. It then contrasts this with the marriage of "evil" and "false," and concludes by saying that "No one who is in evil, and thence in falsity from confirmation and life, can know what good and truth is, for he believes his own evil to be good, and thence he believes his falsity to be truth; but everyone who is in good and hence

in truth from confirmation and life may know what evil and falsity are" (§19). Right back to AC §3207:5, "It is the good that enables the truth to perceive."

The next thirteen chapters—more than half of the total—might best be called a spiritual developmental psychology. They are not about such obviously "theological" subjects as God, creation, incarnation, salvation, the church, and revelation, but about our human nature and the process by which we can become angelic, closing with chapters on repentance, regeneration, and temptation. Only then does Swedenborg write about baptism, the Holy Supper, immortality, heaven and hell, the church, the Word, providence, and finally, the Lord. Well, almost finally. There is a brief chapter on ecclesiastical and civil government, unlike all the other chapters in having no second section with references to the *Arcana*. It doesn't have the label "Appendix," but to all intents and purposes, that's what it is.

This is surely a radical approach to theology—just six pages (Standard Edition) about the Lord, placed at the end of the book, and seventy-five or eighty pages about us. What comes most forcefully to mind for me is a verse from Psalm 139: "I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." The most intimate understanding we can have of divinity comes from encounter, from what we experience in our hearts and minds. Books can help us make sense of that experience, but they are no substitute for it. So the chapter on the Lord in NJHD begins with a simple statement that there is one God of heaven and earth, and then turns immediately to us: "There are two things which make the life of heaven with man, the good of love and the truth of faith. Man has this life from God, and nothing at all of it is

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from man" (§281). We have come full circle, right back to that opening statement that nothing is more important than to know what we mean by "good" and "true," followed by the insistence that we cannot know this if we live evil lives. There is not much point in reading a chapter about the Lord unless we are trying to live lives of charity toward the neighbor.

NJHD is, I believe, saying in relatively impersonal, abstract terms what object relations psychologist Robert Kegan says in more experiential language.

Of the multitude of hopes and yearnings we experience, . . . two seem to subsume the others. One of these might be called the yearning to be included, to be a part of, close to, joined with, to be held, admitted, accompanied. The other might be called the yearning to be independent or autonomous, to experience one's distinctness, the self-chosenness of one's directions, one's individual integrity. . . . what is most striking about these two great human yearnings is that they seem to be in conflict, and it is, in fact, their relation—this tension—that is of more interest to me at the moment than either yearning by itself. I believe it is a lifelong tension. Our experience of this fundamental ambivalence may be our experience of the unitary, restless, creative motion of life itself.¹

In other words, "A form makes a unity more perfectly as its constituents are distinguishably different, and yet united," and "It is the intent of Divine Providence that everything created, collectively and in every detail, should be such a whole, and that if it is not, that it should become one" (*Divine Providence* §4:4, §7, NCE translation). That is, let's take Kegan's words about

the "motion of life itself" and overlay it with Swedenborg's repeated insistence that the Lord is life itself. Let's lay "the good of love" over the "yearning to be joined with" and "the truth of faith" over the "yearning to experience one's distinctness"; and then lay all of the above as a kind of template over our own life relationships. Then we may proceed through the chapters that sketch the relationship between heart and mind and between inner and outer, our different loves, and the various states through which we are called to pass on our way to a deeper union with the Lord—the Lord from whom we have all of this "unitary, restless, creative" life.

Bear in mind, too, that word "collectively" in *Divine Providence* §7. This creative tension between distinctiveness and integration applies to groups as well as to individuals. It applies to the relationship of our church to other churches and to the relationship of our nation with other nations. I would suggest also that it certainly applies to the relationship between the human species and other species, and more largely yet, to our relationship to the biosphere on which our physical lives depend.

The Rev. Dr. George Dole is a Swedenborgian minister who teaches part time at the Swedenborgian House of Studies at the Pacific School of Religion. He is a past pastor of churches in Maine and Massachusetts and taught at the Swedenborg School of Religion. He lives in Bath, Maine, with his wife, Lois.



Lois and George Dole

Social Concerns— Connect with Us

The Social Concerns Committee wants to hear from you. Please tell us how your congregation is living out the commandment of Isaiah 58:10, "Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be bright as noon." James 2:16 reminds us, "If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?" Emanuel Swedenborg wrote in *Divine Love and Wisdom* 47, "Love consists in wanting to share what we have, and in feeling the joy of someone else as our own joy. That is what it means to love."

Co-chairs Rev. Nadine Cotton and Lois Krebs are interested in learning how your group has been living your loves. Please go to our Facebook page, "Swedenborgian Church Social Concerns Committee," <http://tinyurl.com/l8ud2eu>, where we welcome your posts, shares, and likes. Send us links, photos, messages, and pokes. We would like to help your church connect with others, since we are mightier as an army of God than as individual soldiers.

Onward, Christian soldiers!

Rosthern Church Begins New Life

On November 14, 2014 The Rosthern (Saskatchewan) Church of the New Jerusalem transferred ownership of their house of worship to the Mennonite Historical Society. The building was originally a Mennonite church, and the Rosthern Society has many historical connections to the Mennonites in Rosthern. The new owners are developing an interpretive center that will include the history of the Rosthern New Church.

¹ Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), p 107.

Young Adults Meet Up in LaPorte

Young Adults in the Swedenborgian Church keep in touch with one another and gather for retreats as the Transitions. Many have "transitioned" from the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL), where they experienced the power and warmth of their Swedenborgian association.

Friday, December 26, 2014, commenced a weekend of relaxation, spiritual enrichment, and innumerable expressions of love and support as the Transitions met up for their annual post-Christmas retreat at the LaPorte New Church's Manna House in LaPorte, Indiana. This year's gathering was a bit smaller than last year's—five transitioners and two adult leaders as well as some locals who made appearances throughout the weekend. Although I greatly missed my friends who were unable to attend this year, I also loved the feeling of closeness brought on by having a smaller group. We did everything together whether we were washing dishes, playing intense games of Egyptian Rat Slap (a very bizarrely-named card game), or discussing good versus evil, our theme for the retreat.

The sessions presented by Rev. Elizabeth Blair were thoughtful, well-organized, and fascinating, as always. Through our discussions we attempted to tackle the big questions of what, according to our theology, is good and what is evil, although at times we strayed a bit from Swedenborgianism, discussing the inherent goodness/evilness of an array of polarizing topics from gay marriage to prostitution. We also read the Letters to the Seven Churches from the Book of Revelation and attempted to unveil the correspondences of the evil actions committed by the people in the letters. Overall the

sessions were quite intellectually and spiritually stimulating!

And we of course had our much-anticipated "Tam Talks" (named after one of our courageous leaders, Tam Mounce), during which we discussed in a loving, non-judgmental environment whatever issues life has thrown our way. These talks have always been a highlight for me during every camp session and retreat, and this time was no different!

Another highlight of the retreat was attending the LaPorte New Church Sunday service. During the service, Tam, Alice, Audrey, and I had the opportunity to sing Cat Stevens's "If You Want to Sing Out, Sing Out." I always love any chance I get to "sing out" with these lovely, talented ladies! The church service was very enjoyable, and everyone was so welcoming of us. It is always a joy to connect with other Swedenborgians, whether I see them at Almont, Fryeburg every summer, or other Swedenborgian gatherings, or I'm meeting them for the first time.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this retreat happen. To Alice and Tam and Kurt and everyone else who was key in the planning stages, to Elizabeth who presented our amazing sessions, and to Tam, Elizabeth, Alice, Mariel, Adam, David, Audrey, Emily, and Danny for showing up and making the retreat so much fun. Also a very special thank you to Tam for cooking us some top-notch meals. I am already looking forward to next year!

—Nina Sasser



Nina Sasser



Alice Henderson

The retreat this year was another great success. While there were fewer in attendance, we had many a productive discussion, not only on our retreat topic but also on the future of our group. On our final day, we drafted a sort of statement of purpose as follows:

As we grow from our teenage years to life beyond, Swedenborgian Transitions aims to continue our presence in each others lives and in the General Convention. We meet as a community of young adults to regenerate, to rest, to share experiences, to explore our religious heritage, and to expand our understanding of religion as a force affecting our world today.

—Alice Henderson

Coming Soon The West Coast Swedenborgian Retreat

May 22-25, 2015

**Registration deadline
April 30th**

With workshops by Prof. Devin Zuber, Rev. Anna Woofenden, Thom Muller and many more!

Also: Yoga, Meditation, Art Projects, and forest walks!

For more information and registration forms, visit

<https://swedenborgretreat.wordpress.com>

GATHERING LEAVES 2015

A Swedenborgian Women's Retreat

"Deeds inspired by charity are alive. They are said to send roots below and yield fruit above"

—Emmanuel Swedenborg

Women from various branches of the Swedenborgian Church will be gathering in Cincinnati on June 4–7, 2015, at the Transfiguration Spirituality Center.

The retreat will begin with dinner on Thursday evening, followed by presentations by women of the New Church of Australia, the General Church, the General Convention, and The Lord's New Church. They will be sharing stories about our foremothers' accomplishments and contributions to

the Church.

On Friday, we will be exploring the fruit of our love for the Church: what women are involved in at this time. There will be a choice of workshops to attend later in the day. After dinner, there will be a guest speaker.

Saturday will see us brainstorming how to help one another plant seeds for future growth and use. There will be an optional outing on Saturday afternoon to the Cincinnati Freedom Center, and in the evening a joyful celebration of our time together.

We will close Sunday with worship at the Glendale New Church, a beautiful, historic Swedenborgian Church.

Throughout the weekend we will

worship together, meet new friends, enjoy the company of old friends, and connect with the heart to our spiritual sisters from throughout the world.

Please join us for this inspirational event. Registration deadline is March 31, and space is limited. Please register online at <http://tinyurl.com/nxldjzo> or mail the form below with a check to: Rev. Susannah Currie at 54 Wannisset Ave, Riverside, RI 02915.

For information about scholarships, please contact Gloria Toot at groot46@gmail.com. If you would like to support scholarships to help your sisters attend Gathering Leaves, we will gratefully accept your donation.

Gathering Leaves 2015 Registration

gatheringleaves.weebly.com/gathering-leaves-2015.html

Name _____ Mobile/Home Phone _____

Address _____ Unit/Suite/Apartment _____

City _____ State/Province _____ Postal Code _____ Country _____

Registration Fee (required for all participants) \$25.00

Optional Outing \$11.00 _____

Full Event Rates- 3 days/Thursday Dinner through Sunday Lunch

Full Event (room & meals) \$220.00 _____

Full Event (meals only) \$135.00 _____

Daily Rates : Indicate Which Night(s)

Daily Rate (room & meals) _____ \$ 90 _____

Daily Rate (meals only) _____ \$ 45 _____

Total: _____

Arrival Information:

Airline _____ Flight Number _____ Arrival

Time _____ ☐ I will be driving and willing to carpool

☐ I have these special dietary needs: ☐ Vegetarian ☐ Vegan ☐ Lactose intolerant ☐ Gluten free ☐ Other: _____

Accessibility Information: ☐ have special needs that would affect my housing options. (walking, climbing stairs)

Please describe: _____

If it is necessary, I would like to share a room with _____

To assist a sister to attend, I would like to make a donation of \$ _____

Accommodations:

There are 18 private en suite and 3 double en suite rooms in the main building, along with meeting rooms and the dining room. There are 17 single rooms with sink and shared bath in a separate building a short walk away. The total on-campus accommodations are for 41 women, so register early.

www.tscoretreats.org

The Dole 3 Miler

BY TREVOR

The Fryeburg New Church Assembly (FNCA) is thrilled to report the unqualified success of the first annual Rev. Dr. George F. Dole Celebration Three Mile Road Race on Saturday, August 9, 2014, on the Mountain Division Trail, which begins directly across the road from the Assembly grounds.

To quote the official race website, www.dole3miler.com/,

The Dole 3 Miler is a friendly three mile road race celebrating the life and achievements of Rev. Dr. George F. Dole. A native of Fryeburg, Maine, Rev. Dole was a participant in one of the most famous sporting events in world history: The Four Minute Mile. On May 6, 1954, Sir Roger Bannister became the first human to run a mile in under four minutes. George started at the pole position that great day, and finished fifth. What better way to celebrate the 60th anniversary of that historic event than to have a road race? So, there you have it: The Dole 3 Miler!



George Dole ran wearing the shorts he wore in the historic race in 1954.

This race began as an idea of FNCA Outreach Committee member Nancy Little, and quickly grew so big it required a committee of its own. This committee, chaired by race director Jon Crowe, an active member of the local running community as well as vice chair of

the FNCA Outreach Committee, did an excellent job of planning, promoting, staffing, and running (pun intended) this race.

There were seventy-two runners in this inaugural race, with Nathan Buck (age twenty-four) of Portland, Maine, taking first place with a time of 16:15. The first FNCA member to cross the finish line was nine-year-old Zed McNaughton (grandson of the late Ray and Betty Guiu) in eighth place with



Overall winner Nathan Buck (in white jersey) setting the pace

a time of 21:12! Rev. Dole (age eighty-three) finished thirty-seventh and first in his age division, with a very respectable time for an octogenarian of 30:06. "Better than I thought I'd do," he said afterwards.

The evening before the race, Rev. Dole gave a very enthusiastically received talk about the historic Four



Bannister's historic finish, framed and signed



Young assistants offering water at the finish

Minute Mile race and his part in it. The Assembly dining hall was fairly well filled with not only FNCA members but dozens of local runners who hung on Rev. Dole's every word, eager to hear as much as they could about one of the most famous sporting events in world history from someone who was not only there, but an actual participant in the race.

Many outside attendees of this lecture were also delighted to discover, to quote one runner, "what all the brown buildings in the woods down by the State Line" are all about, with quite a few remarking about the natural beauty of the FNCA grounds.

What follows is an interview of race director Jon Crowe by FNCA Outreach Committee member Beki Greenwood.

Beki Greenwood (BG): How was the original idea for the race developed?

Jon Crowe (JC): The FNCA Outreach Committee had been discussing a race for a couple of years. At the 2013 annual meeting, I volunteered to ask



Zed McNaughton in high racing form



Beki Greenwood

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George Dole and race director Jon Crowe

the Fryeburg town manager for permission to hold a race on the Haley-Town Road [which starts directly across from the camp's main entrance]. This route was chosen as it has been a popular route for George to run while he is at camp. That idea was denied due to the logistics of closing the road, so the Rail Trail was offered as an alternative. As it turned out, this was a much better choice. Although George ran in the historic race when Roger Bannister broke the four minute mile, we thought a mile was too short, so we decided on three miles since, as [race committee member] Dan Dyer stated: "It's a good Swedenborgian number."

BG: What was George's reaction when he was told about the race?

JC: Well, it was via email so it is hard to gauge his level of excitement, but he did respond favorably and with his signature sense of humor replied, "I think I can manage 5K in about half an hour, and if the usual assortment of runners shows up, I'd have a little company." He was very engaged in the race details and offered many helpful suggestions.

BG: What were you feeling when the race got underway?

JC: Nervous! It was overwhelming

at first, but once the starting gun went off, the excitement took over. It was so great to meet the runners that I had been corresponding with. Thanks to all our great committee members and volunteer helpers, I settled into a sort of dream-like euphoria that it was all working out so well. Everyone's excitement was contagious.

BG: What is your first thought after watching the video of George crossing the finish line? (<http://tinyurl.com/nq3lwfu>)

JC: As he approached the finish line, I looked at the time and realized it was about to turn to thirty minutes so I cheered him on to beat the clock! It wouldn't have been the same without George and his casual inspiration. Look at the ease with which he runs. It is the same way he conducts his life.

BG: Do you consider the race a success?

JC: Absolutely! The race brought attention to the FNCA, attracted a lot of people that haven't attended camp in a while, and is being recommended by six local running groups for next year. However the greatest achievement was honoring George in a fun way. I received a wonderful thank you letter from [his wife] Lois Dole. Knowing that she was pleased made it all worth while.

BG: Will the race be a yearly event?

JC: Yes, the same day: the second Saturday in August during the middle weekend of camp.

BG: Is there anyone you would like to thank here?

JC: Everybody! The list is huge. So many people helped in so many ways it would take an entire page to list them all. Even runners helped clean up and the walkers cheered on the runners!



The winners: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd men's and women's, 5th overall (George's placing in the 1954 race), and George.

Several people commented on how wonderful that was! Apparently it is uncommon!

BG: If you could sum up the whole experience in one or two words, what would they be?

JC: (in my best Worcester/Maine hybrid accent): Wicked awesome!



Lee Dyer, Bob Perry, Dan Dyer, George Dole, and Jon Crowe—presentation of a signed, framed photo of the famous race

The Second Annual Dole 3 Miler will be on Saturday, August 8, 2015.

Special thanks to 2014 Race Committee members Jon Crowe (race director), Dan Dyer (assistant race director), Lee Dyer (secretary), Bob Perry (treasurer), Adam Lane-Olsen, and Dave Richardson, as well as dozens and dozens of other volunteers who helped with absolutely everything from beginning to end. Please like us on Facebook,

www.facebook.com/dole3miler.

Trevor is the chair of the FNCA Outreach Committee, a long-standing member of the FNCA Board of Directors, and a life-long attendee at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly.



George Dole's grandson, also George Dole, calling the finish

MLK Weekend SPLATz Retreat in LaPorte



BY KURT FEKETE

Three girls and thirteen boys (wow!) packed into Manna House (LaPorte New Church [LPNC] in Indiana) over the Martin Luther King weekend to enjoy a SPLATz retreat that was all about animals. Adult leaders Kurt Fekete, Lori Gayheart, Heather Jerrett-Guzik, Rachael Sbrocco, and Rev. Jenn Tafel did their best to contain the energy, excitement, and enthusiasm from spilling over into the out-of-control realm. What a fun time we all had working and playing with this group of young people!

Jenn and Heather drove a vanload of kids from Michigan and did a won-

derful job helping with supervision and cooking.

Sessions centered around Bible stories featuring animals. Some of the Bible stories we discussed included the serpent from the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3, fish and birds from the Day 5 creation story in Genesis 1, the lamb from Revelation 21, the lion in Daniel and the Lion's Den from Daniel 6, and insects from the Plaques in Exodus 8 and 10. We also learned about the spiritual meanings of a great number of other domestic and wild animals and had an interesting time discussing different animals and how their behaviors can be seen in ourselves.

Rachael and Lori led some wonderful crafts related to the animals that we talked about. The youth made duct tape braided snakes, foil fish and birds, cute clothespin



Fish and bird craft

and yarn lambs and wolves, and insect jars for paper butterflies and bugs that can also be used to hold real insects!

On Saturday we visited the library and on Sunday, after worship and a delicious lunch, we went on a fantastic sledding outing at the Tukos's house. After numerous runs down the hill, we returned to

Manna House to enjoy lots of rich hot chocolate. Thank you to all the retreat leaders and all the folks at LPNC for hosting such a great retreat. Just writing this up is getting me excited to plan the next one!

Kurt Fekete is the youth director of the Swedenborgian Church



Boys with snakes



Insect jar craft

Rev. Louis Dole Sermon Archive

A recently launched website makes the sermons of Rev. Louis A. Dole widely available to the public:

<https://louisadole.wordpress.com>

The Rev. Louis A. Dole (1885-1964) served as assistant pastor of the New Jerusalem Church in Urbana, Ohio (c. 1916-1920). During those years he also taught at Urbana Junior College (now Urbana University), and in his last two years there served as its Principal. He then served as pastor of the New Jerusalem Churches in Fryeburg, Maine (c. 1920-1937) and Bath, Maine (1937-1964).



Rev. Louis A. Dole
(1885-1964)

Louis Dole was married to Anita S. Dole, who was an outstanding Bible and Swedenborg scholar in her own right. She wrote an excellent and extensive set of Bible Study Notes that are still in print today. The Louis A. Dole Sermon Archive now brings the fine New Church (Swedenborgian) scholarship of her husband to the public.

The sermon texts archived on this site are based on scans of the original typed sermons. They are edited only slightly for the convenience of present-day readers. For example, Roman numerals have been changed to Arabic numerals, and the formatting has been modernized. Aside from an occasional typo fix, the text itself is otherwise unchanged. For each sermon, a link is provided to an Acrobat file of the original sermon scan.

Very few of the original sermons are dated, nor do most of them have titles. For the untitled ones I have supplied titles from the Bible text that is the focus of each sermon.

These sermons hail from a bygone era. As such, they may present a challenge for present-day readers. However,

for those with the dedication to master their terse and direct style, they contain many gems of spiritual and practical wisdom.

I have found that one reading of a Louis Dole sermon is not enough to gain access to that wisdom. I recommend re-reading and meditating on each sermon until the spiritual light begins shining through those precious gems into your mind and spirit.

On a personal note, the Rev. Louis A. and Anita S. Dole were my grandparents. Though they died when I was very young, their legacy of reading and meditating on the Word of God in the light

of the spiritual teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), and sharing with the world the precious insights gained, lives on in my heart, mind, and life.

This archive, then, is also a tribute to my maternal grandparents' lives and work.

—Rev. Lee S. Woofenden,



Some readers might be interested in two of my recent blog posts, "Homosexuality, the Bible, and Christianity" and "What does Emanuel Swedenborg Say about Homosexuality?" at *Spiritual Insights for Everyday Life* (<http://leewoof.org>). The first article contains the more general (and much longer) consideration of the subject, for a general Christian audience. The second article focuses more specifically on the passages in Swedenborg's writings that conservative Swedenborgians commonly quote to support their position on homosexuality.

SHS Spring Semester

At the Swedenborgian House of Studies and Pacific School of Religion this spring, Dr. Devin Zuber is teaching "Swedenborg in History" to five students, all of whom are connected with Swedenborgian training in some way, including our newest student, Bill Rotella, who is studying for the accredited Certificate in Swedenborgian Theology. Also, Dr. Zuber is teaching "William Blake and Counterculture" and co-teaching "Religion and Science in Cinema."

Several Swedenborgians are taking "Advanced Swedenborgian Bible" with Rev. Dr. George Dole; Rebecca Esterson is the teaching assistant for this course, again in the learn-from-George mode. I am teaching a new course, "Introduction to Comparative Mysticism," which garnered eighteen enrolled students. Although none are Swedenborgians, Swedenborg will make a number of appearances along the way in that course.

—Dean Jim Lawrence

Bath Church Receives Award

Many Bath, Maine, locals have smiled and expressed delight to see the Bath Church of the New Jerusalem looking so good. In fact, the Sagadahoc Society president Rob Lawson and I accepted an Historic Preservation Society award, granted to us for the work we have done on our stately Bath Temple over the past year, so delighted have they been to see the care we have put into her. May we continue to find the spiritual and physical resources to keep our sacred space open and welcoming to all for many years to come.

—Rev. Alison Longstaff

Through Others' Eyes

BY JOY BARNITZ

“I know why docents love their work,” begins the blog post of one of my fellow students, Lori Ortiz, in “Transformation Through Transcendence”; an immersion course in the arts, spirituality, and social action conducted during the last two weeks of January 2015 by Professors Devin Zuber, PhD, of the Swedenborgian House of Studies, and

Rossitza Schroeder, PhD, of the Center for the Arts, Religion and Education, at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. Fifteen urban pilgrims (counting the professors) gathered in the San Francisco Bay Area from varied spiritual communi-



The bell tower of the San Francisco Church

ties: the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church, the Unitarian Universalist, Buddhist, Orthodox, Swedenborgian.

Preparing to serve as the docent for the group's visit to the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, Lori explains how she set the stage for her presentation on the church to the class so that we, her classmates, could have our own, uniquely individual experiences of the space. An accomplished woodworker herself, she focused on how wood holds its “vibrational life force” even after

Continues next page

History Behind the Glass

Conservation of a Stained Glass Window Provides New Insights into the Founding of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church

BY DOUGLAS STINSON

In *True Christianity* §824, Emanuel Swedenborg wrote, “The worship of saints is such an abomination in heaven that when it is merely heard of it excites horror.” Then how could a stained glass window depicting Saint Christopher end up in the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church? Particularly a window designed by a man the *San Francisco Call* described as an inebricated “hoodlum miscreant?”

These are just two of the mysteries explored in my new book, *The Most Creative Bit of Glass Work in the City: The Story Behind the Art and Conservation of Bruce Porter's St. Christopher Window*.

The book had its genesis when the San Francisco Church discovered that one of its three stained glass windows, all by the artist Bruce Porter and installed around the time the sanctuary was constructed in 1895, was on the verge of disintegration. The window is an integral part of the building's designation as a National Historic Land-

mark, and so urgent action was required. The church hired the respected firm Nzilani Glass Conservation, to conserve the window.

Through discussions with Ariana Makau, founder and chief conservator at Nzilani, I discovered that glass conservation requires a unique blend of art, technology, and craft. I was fascinated and felt that what I learned about the intricacy of this work need-

ed to be shared.

But what started out as a guided tour through the world of art conservation, ended up as much more. I discovered that you can't restore a piece of art without knowing something about the artist and the historical context in which he or she worked. That led to investigations into an American revolution in stained glass design, Porter's leadership in a West Coast cultural renaissance, and an unlikely friendship between the flamboyant Porter and the reticent first pastor of the San Francisco Church thirty years his senior, Rev. Joseph Worcester.

Then when Ms. Makau experienced what could be interpreted as a midnight visit by Porter's ghost, I knew I had to tell this story.

The book is available in hardcover and paperback at www.lulu.com/spotlight/D_G_Stinson.

Douglas Stinson is a member of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church Council and serves as its treasurer. He is a freelance photographer and writer as well as a consultant in new product development, focusing on medical devices.



Ariana Makau putting finishing touches on the Saint Christopher window

Continued from preceding page

harvesting. The wood frame of the St. Christopher window, as described by the master carpenter in *The Most Creative Bit of Glass Work in the City* by Douglas Stinson and Ariana Makau (see “History Behind the Glass” on page 28), provided an entry point for us before we set foot in the sanctuary. Weaving the story of how the founding pastor, Rev. Joseph Worcester, formed a collaborative group of artists, poets, and architects that created this National Historic Landmark church together with the story of how the St. Christopher Window was conserved brought the past into the present for her fellow students. Inspired by Worcester’s practice of engaging people in conversation over tea and homemade marmalade, she accompanied her presentation with homemade cookies “because a little sugar and cinnamon can help to wake up the senses.”

Entering the sanctuary, the class explored the space in quiet for several minutes before gathering together for conversation—questions, answers, stories. Watching my classmates slowly walk the space, stroking the peeled madrone logs that arch overhead, feeling the roughness of the clinker bricks



The pinecone cross

that compose the asymmetric fireplace, and caressing the conch shell baptismal font and the pinecone cross above the altar lured me into seeing anew this familiar place.

The afternoon at the San Francisco Church was a chance to rest in a peaceful oasis, a quiet garden, a sanctuary nestled in the city, a place of integration where, prepared by our readings, the presentation, and the tea and cookies, we reflected on our collective urban pilgrimage to other sacred spaces

Training, Serving, Hope

Continued from page 17

dents shared their journeys towards ordination or licensed pastor and their hopes and plans for the future as Swedenborgian ministers. We then workshopped their gifts, callings, and preparation. As each individual talked, I



was struck by the many sacrifices she or he was making to prepare to be a Swedenborgian minister. In addition to their seminary training, the ordination-track (MDiv) students take seven Swedenborgian courses, attend a Swedenborgian summer camp and spend time visiting with and learning from other Swedenborgian ministers. Students on the licensed pastor path are serving local congregations and cen-

ters as they take classes and help lead Swedenborgian churches that do not have a minister. These are mothers and grandmothers; fathers and grandfathers; teachers, business people, and chaplains; they are full time and part time students, some already ordained in other traditions, many balancing jobs and service in other fields and to

their local church. The common theme was their desire to serve and their love of Swedenborgian tradition and theology. And to a person, they were thankful to General Convention and SHS for welcoming them while offering a path to expand and fulfill their dreams.

I am proud of each one of them and proud of our denomination and the training offered. I am proud to be a Swedenborgian with renewed hope for the future. God keeps calling and people keep answering the call to be a Swedenborgian minister. It may not be a secure financial job that is calling them. It is their desire to share with other seekers “a substantial philosophical theology that beckons to a deep-thought world with a tolerance and acceptance of different paths.” (SHS/PSR student Thom Muller)

There are many hungering and searching for this opportunity and others called to prepare to share it. That is charity. Thanks be to God.

Rev. Jane Siebert is a graduate of SHS, a past chairperson of the SHS Board of Directors. She has served as a chaplain and as minister to the Pretty Prairie and Pawnee Rock Swedenborgian Churches in Kansas..



es in San Francisco, such as Grace Cathedral, Mission Dolores, and Sherith Israel. Embraced by the warmth of the cozy sanctuary, we experienced how the art and architecture of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church come together to create a natural space that does not feel like “inside.” Rev. Worcester’s building is still teaching its lessons after 120 years.

Joy Barnitz is a Masters of Divinity student at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. She holds a Certificate of Swedenborgian Theology, is a past council member of the San Francisco Swedenborgian



Church, and serves on the Wayfarers Chapel Board of Directors. Joy holds a PhD in molecular biology and consults in new product development in the biopharmaceutical industry.

Call for Nominations to Elected Positions

Candidates for positions in the Swedenborgian Church are elected at the annual convention. The following positions will be open at the 2015 Annual Convention in Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

- President (three-year term)

The president's three-year term begins at the 2016 Annual Convention. The elected nominee serves as president-elect from 2015 to the 2016 Annual Convention.)

- Vice-president (one-year term)
- Secretary (one-year term)
- Treasurer (one-year term)
- General Council (one minister and two lay members for three-year terms):

General Council is the governing body of the Swedenborgian Church. It meets face to face at the annual convention and in the fall (travel, room, and board provided). All other business is conducted by conference call and email.

- Communication Support Unit (three-year term):

COMSU promotes communications both within and outside of the denomination across various media, and also oversees the production of *the Messenger*. Meetings are by email and conference call.

- Education Support Unit (three-year term):

EDSU facilitates activities that enhance the understanding and the skills needed for the realization of the Swedenborgian Church's purpose. This unit is concerned with resources, personnel, and programming (specifically, annual convention mini-courses). Meetings are by email and conference call.

- Information Management Support Unit (three-year term):

IMSU's focus is on gathering, storing and distributing data pertinent

to the fulfillment of the Swedenborgian Church's purpose. Its primary focus has been the denomination's website. Business is conducted by email and conference call.

- Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit (three-year term):

The central focus of FPRSU is on the wise use and development of such resources as are directly under the Swedenborgian Church's control. FPRSU oversees the management of the Swedenborgian Church's properties and investments, seeks new sources of material support, and provides consultants for the Swedenborgian Church's collective bodies and the best-coordinated use and development of the body's financial and physical resources. Meetings are face-to-face, by email, or conference call as required.

- Ministries Support Unit (two for three-year terms):

MINSU is charged with facilitating ministries within the Swedenborgian Church and activities that increase the number of individuals and groups consciously committed to the realization of the Church's purpose. It meets face-to-face once a year (expenses paid) and by email and conference call.

- Nominating Committee (two to be nominated, one elected for a five-year term):

It is the duty of NomCom to present at the annual convention nominees for the officers of the Swedenborgian Church and vacancies in the elected members of the General Council and all other elected boards, support units and committees. The nominating committee proposes a slate representative of the Swedenborgian Church's overall constituency. Meetings are by email

and conference call.

- Committee on Admission into the Ministry (one clergy member for a three-year term):

CAM meets with ministerial candidates to review and recommend qualified candidates for ordination. Meetings are by conference call and face-to-face (travel, room, and board provided).

- The Board of Trustees of the Swedenborgian House of Studies (SHS) (two for three-year terms to be elected to the representative class. Two more are elected to the at-large class at the SHS Annual Meeting.) The SHS Board manages the business and affairs of SHS (aka the New Church Theological School). Meetings are face-to-face (travel, room, and board provided).

Please contact acting chairperson Martha Richardson, one of the other members of the Nominating Committee, or Renée Hellenbrecht at Central Office if you are interested in serving. All can be reached at:

manager@swedenborg.org ☩

Annual Convention 2015

It's not too soon to start planning for the 2015 Annual Convention. The Council of Ministers arrives June 24, General Council arrives June 25, and delegates and guests arrive June 26 for the opening session on Saturday evening. Closing worship is Wednesday morning, July 1.

Your group or ministry is invited to sponsor a reception or coffee break at Convention 2015.

Contact Renée Hellenbrecht, operations manager, at Central Office for more details: 617-969-4240 or manager@swedenborg.org.

Passages

Births

Rebecca, Rafi, Ari (Aaron), and Moses Esterson are delighted to inform you of the birth of **Miriam Joan Esterson** January 13, 2015. Mother and baby are both well. Ari and Moses are fantastic big brothers, and Miriam is excelling as a baby sister! Miriam



rounds out the hat-trick of the biblical children of Amram and Yokheved, while the name Joan is given in honor of her maternal great-grandmother, Joan Dunlap, matriarch to a line of strong matriarchs.

New Members

Dan Linna and **Mary Kleiss** joined the Royal Oak Michigan Church of the Holy City on Sunday, February 8, 2015. Dan was raised in a close-knit family sized Lutheran Church in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. He is a retired school teacher and superintendent who enjoys coin collecting and baseball. Mary was raised both Catholic and Lutheran in Southeast Michigan. She brings to the congregation a strong connection with Native American spirituality. Both are open minded, service oriented individuals who already contribute generously to the life of the church.

Transitions

Rev. Sage Currie has accepted a call from the Cambridge Society of the New Jerusalem (Swedenborg Chapel, Massachusetts) to become their pas-

tor. She and her family will be moving to the Boston/Cambridge area from Alaska.

Rev. Renée Machiniak has accepted the position of oncology chaplain at Royal Oak (Michigan) Beaumont Hospital. This is a part time position that works well with her part time parish ministry. She visit patients, serves on the hospital's Ethics Committee and works with the "No One Dies Alone" program and the monthly Ovarian Cancer Support Group.

Deaths

A longtime member of the Royal Oak Michigan Church of the Holy City, **Eleanor Geraldine (Dean) Trombly**, entered the spiritual world, January 27, 2015, at the age of 98. Dean played the piano for many years for the church and was lovingly known as "Dean the Queen" of the Almont



Dean Trombly with Maynard Zimmerman

Correction

In the article "2015 SCYL Officers Elected" in the January 2015 *Messenger*, a photo of Savannah Ellsworth was misidentified as Riley Tishma. Here are the photos with the correct identifications.



Savannah Ellsworth



Riley Tishma

Summer School. She is greatly loved by many and will be remembered for the beautiful music she played, her quick wit, her love of gardening, her love of Almont Scrabble and A-Mart specials, as well as her unique and creative sense of style. Dean was always wearing clothes, hats, purses and jewelry she made or touched up herself. A resurrection service was held for her on January 29, the Rev. Renée Machiniak officiating, with contributions from Rev. Jennifer Tafel, Rev. Dagmar Bollinger and Rev. Theron Cromwell. Another memorial service will be held for Dean at Almont Summer School in its chapel this summer.

Letter from the President

Continued from page 19

hostess and chef).

We are spiritual beings inhabiting natural bodies in the material realm.

All that we aspire to that is of ultimate importance is spiritual, and yet, we are constrained to work in, with, and through the material. A most beautiful and frustratingly paradoxical juxtaposition in which we, as material beings, seek to find spiritual enlightenment: enlightenment to be a goal which, continually pursued, is never acquired, and the only constant being that change and transformation are the given means within and through which we not only exist, but become.

I spent more than a few moments staring in wonder out across the San Francisco Bay and admiring the beauty of the physical vision, while inwardly wondering at the beauty and struggle of the inner spiritual transformations that were happening with each of the people with whom I was sharing the week. It was truly wonderful. It bodes very well for the future of our church.

The Year of Regeneration: the Way of Change.

—Blessings, Rev. Ken

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 questioning 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.

In his theological writings, Swedenborg shared 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.

2015 Annual Convention The Year of Regeneration: Toward A Newer Church

Readers of *the Messenger* and friends of the Swedenborgian Church are invited to attend the 2015 Annual Convention hosted by the Maine Association at Bridgewater State University in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, from Saturday, June 27 to Wednesday, July 1. Please mark your calendar!

That the Maine Association can host a convention in Massachusetts is not a problem, as you will be treated to the best of both worlds: Maine hospitality in a university setting within reach of public transportation from Boston's Logan Airport.

Our program highlights a keynote address by Rev. Dr. George Dole, who has engaged qualities of the New Church that he finds embedded in the inner meaning of Revelation, Chapter 21—our own denomination's charter. There will be opportunity for thoughtful responses to Rev. Dole's ideas in several areas of denominational life: our digi-

tal presence; our response to issues of social justice; the traditional and emergent

places where we engage in face-to-face ministry; youth programs; and our connection to the doctrinal roots of our tradition.

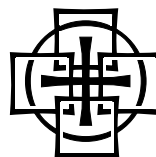
It is important to note that our conversations in each area will be illuminated in light

of this Year of Regeneration, and will be focused in the direction of our becoming A Newer Church. Moreover, in my role as chair of the Program Committee, I have asked presenters to engage the dynamic that pertains between individual regeneration and spiritual community renewal. Please join the conversation!

Consider yourself invited to attend our 2015 Annual Convention at Bridgewater State University and mark your calendar: Saturday, June 27–Wednesday July 1. See you there!

—Rev. Dr. Gard Perry,
Chair, 2015 Convention
Program Committee

**The 191st Annual
Swedenborgian Convention**



**The Year of Regeneration
The Way of Change**