the Messenger

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The Story of a "Useful" Life—the Planner as Believer

BY PATRICK T. REARDON

Judith McBrien's documentary on Daniel Burnham—which premiered on September 26 at the Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park in Chicago—looks at much more than Burnham's role in the creation of the Plan of Chicago.

It focuses on his long career as an architect and city designer in Chicago and across the world, and on the impact his Swedenborgian faith had on that career.

Indeed, I came away from watching the film *Make No Little Plans: Daniel Burnham and the American City* with the sense that, for Burnham, architecture was an expression of a practical spirituality—or a spiritual pragmatism.

"One of the tenets of Swedenborgianism is to be useful," McBrien told me during an interview before the screening. "His parents were leaders in the church. He was steeped in this belief of being useful, and of God as a positive force in the universe."

"Useful" is a word that occurs often in the early part of the movie. For instance, a letter from Burnham's mother is read and shown in which she applauds his decision to go into architecture because, she writes, it is "a useful occupation."

Photo courtesy the Chicago History Museum

Plan of Chicago plate 107: the Chicago River at Lake Street

Later, his father sends a letter to an architectural firm, saying that Burnham will "make himself useful" if he's hired.

From his boyhood, Burnham was "a natural leader," McBrien told me. "He was able to bring diverse people together to achieve a common goal that an individual could not do alone. He had the confidence that inspired a lot of people to follow him. Where that came from, who knows?"

My guess is that source of Burnham's confidence and leadership was his religious faith.

If you believe that your role is to be useful and do good—to make the world a better place—you're able to throw yourself into the task of bringing order and beauty to the cityscape. You're not just doing your own work. You're doing God's work.

Of course, the film makes clear that Burnham was also a man of great ambition and drive—and organizational skill. As the construction director and organizer of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, he oversaw nearly 20,000 workers. As the leader of the

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The Editor's Desk

Daniel Burnham

The centennial celebration of Daniel Burnham's Plan for Chicago is winding down as 2009 comes to a close. *The Messenger* reported on lectures about Daniel Burnham cosponsored by the Swedenborgian Library as part of the centennial celebration in the May 2009 issue. In this issue, we report on a documentary film about Burnham premiering as part of the celebration. We are reminded once again how important Burnham is to the history and future of both the city of Chicago and the Swedenborgian movement. You need not reside in Chicago to visit the centenial web site, http://www.burnhamplan100.com. Explore the multitude of pages and links there to find fascinating reading and images.

Editorial Policy

The Messenger announces in its masthead monthly that the views and opinions expressed by authors in its pages do not reflect the position of *The Messenger* or the Swedenborgian Church. Because *The Messenger* serves a variety of uses—newsletter, journal, and public relations outlet—questions sometimes arise about the propriety of the content of some articles that appear. The printing of the Rev. Alison Longstaff's ordination sermon in the September issue engendered some questions of that kind. I have received feedback that some found the views expressed about the General Church and the tone in that article offensive and unsupportable. As editor, I do not censor or edit for content certain articles that the readership expects to see published in *The Messenger*. Among those articles are ordination sermons.

I want to make clear that, although there are serious doctrinal differences between them, members of the General Convention and the General Church have generally chosen in recent years to explore their common heritage and beliefs while avoiding rancor over their differences. They have, for example, joined together to support the publication of the New Century Edition of Swedenborg's works. By publishing this article, neither *The Messenger* nor the General Convention has chosen to attack the General Church over doctrine and practice.

I believe that in one instance, as editor, I could have been more proactive in avoiding offense and unnecessary

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Correction

On page 119 of the June 2009 Messenger, LaPorte (New Church) was erroneously spelled Laporte.

Church Calendar

October 10–12: SCYL Columbus Day Retreat • Blairhaven Retreat Center, Duxbury, Massachusetts

October 10–12: Pacific Coast Association Annual Meeting • El Cerrito, California

October 23–24: SHS Board Meeting • Berkeley, California

November 6–7: General Council fall meeting • Framingham, Massachusetts

June 23–27, 2010: Annual Convention • St. Paul, Minnesota

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Editor: Herb Ziegler

Design and production: Herb Ziegler

Editorial assistance: Robert Leith

Printing: Town and Country Press, Plymouth, IN

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

Tel: 617.491.5181

Email: hziegler@springmail.com

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

In Memoriam

A True Guide On The Path

The Rev. Marlene Kay Laughlin: 1945–2009

The Rev. Marlene Laughlin's obituary appeared in the September, 2009 issue of *The Messenger*.

The Rev. Marlene Laughlin was a chapel minister at The Wayfarers Chapel from 1997 to 2004. She came to the Chapel from pastoral assignments in Watertown, Brookline, and Bridgewater, Massachusetts. She was ordained in 1986 from the Swedenborg School of Religion in Newton, Massachusetts, and held a M.S. in biology from Ball State University in Indiana. Marlene is greatly missed by her partner Larry Bowers, daughter Kim Tuttobene, granddaughter Erika, brother Jim Laughlin, her extended family, friends, and her congregation and colleagues at Wayfarers.

Larry Bowers and Marlene Laughlin

Emanuel Swedenborg teaches us that the reality of our faith is displayed in the way we treat others and in the manner and usefulness in which we conduct our lives. Rev. Marlene was a living example of this. Marlene was an inspiration to us all, not just by the prophetic words of which she spoke, but also by the way she led her life. Her honesty with herself, and with all of us who were fortunate to have known her, brought a standard to not only her life, but also to the Wayfarers Chapel and the community it serves.

During her years as a minister at Wayfarers Chapel, its congregation significantly grew by word of mouth as Rev. Marlene gave new dimensions to the services. Her sermons were uplifting—clear, yet revealing; sober, yet humorous—and attracted a diversified population. Marlene made everyone feel welcome and very special.

As a chapel leader, Marlene was optimistic and enthusiastic and pursued her projects with great skill and confidence. Marlene led the way to expanding Wayfarers Chapel's global outreach through the use of the Internet. In 1999 she was instrumental in giving birth to the Chapel's first Web site. Six months later, guests from far and near would witness a wedding over the Internet. Through Marlene's community involvement in interfaith groups and ecumenical councils, Marlene put Wayfarers Chapel on the religious map in the South Bay. She was a respected board member of the South Coast Ecumenical Council, and a co-founder of Dawn Unity Interfaith Group, a predominantly male group that drew up to 500 people to its panel discussions.

I am fortunate to have worked closely with Rev. Marlene over the last five years before she retired from the Chapel for health reasons. We became close friends. Before she passed, I asked what cancer had "done" for her. Marlene replied, "I was so busy before. Now I am able to work through issues that were left undone. Getting cancer is like reinventing yourself. Suddenly you are stopped in your tracks. And learning to receive is a big thing!"

How lucky we are to have had Rev. Marlene with us. By her presence alone, she gave a new meaning to the beauty and spirituality of Swedenborgian living. She not only guided us, she walked right along beside us. Thanks to her presence, the Wayfarers Chapel has become a home and a spiritual meeting place for our families both in and out of state. Now she is watching over us.

Below is Marlene's own parting message to us.

—Unni de Presno

Beyond the blue horizon
Where earth and souls shine there
Where God is joy and love.

I will be waiting
To rejoice with you
As you join us in one voice
Of love and peace,
Here with our creator
You will find love and
Peace at last.

—Marlene K. Laughlin

Forever

Another Great FNCA Summer Session

BY TREVOR

Once again, the Fryeburg New Church Assembly (FNCA) family camp had a terrific session the during first two weeks of August. Around 80 people attended, including several newcomers, quite a few second-timers, a bunch of returnees who hadn't been for a while, and the usual assortment of old-timers who are at camp year after year after year.

Bill and Louise Woofenden with granddaughters, Heidi Woofenden (L) and Emily Woofenden (R).

Speaking of old-timers, one of the highlights for me was the return of my parents to camp for more than just a day visit. Both in their eighties, the Rev. Dr. Wm. R. "Pop Woof" and Louise Dole "Mom Woof" Woofenden have been unable to attend camp for several years. But this year under the direction of number three son, Ian, and round-the-clock care from their attending off-spring, Mom and Pop were at camp, in their own cabin, for three delightful days.

Their presence was thoroughly enjoyed by all who know them—which means nearly everyone at the Assembly—and they were thrilled to be able to attend again. During the Q & A period after the Flames lecture presentation, Pop said, "Hi I'm Bill—some just call me Pop. I'm probably the oldest person here. If you want to challenge me, I'm 88. I came here as a young person, and I've always come back whenever I could. And it's been the greatest place in my life. That's all."

What he was responding to was the Flames lecture presentation. For the second year in a row, the Flames (that's the teens at camp) were invited to give a presentation during one of the lecture periods. Now, the Flames are a very active and viable part of camp. They have a full schedule of activities and make life-long friends during those two weeks. But probably just because they're teenagers, they don't have deep, involved conversations with the Bonfires (adults) and the Embers (elders) very often. But this particular "lecture" was very deep, very involved, and very intense.

For 45 minutes or so, one by one, about ten of the Flames stood up and spoke about something that changed his or her life. A few of their tales were joyful, a few were funny, and a few were just plain heart-wrenching. There were big smiles, big laughs, as well as big tears from teens and adults alike. It was extremely powerful. These teens are simply amazing!

And just for the record: the rest of the lecture schedule was also excellent. In fact, the discussion periods after the lectures were the liveliest in years.

One thing that wasn't excellent for the first week and a half, though, was the river. Some of you may recall from our report in *The Messenger* last year that the Saco River was swollen beyond safety for the entirety of camp due to a very rainy July and August. Well, some of you may also recall how rainy it was this July, so we were prepared to deal with (and experienced!) high waters again this year. But as luck would have it, the waters began to recede in earnest over middle weekend. And by Thursday of the second week, we were able to swim and canoe and bask on the beach to our hearts content for the rest of the session. Yay!

Middle weekend at the FNCA we hold our annual meeting, which includes reports, receiving new members, making some decisions, and voting for our camp director and board of directors. So I'd like to officially welcome back Debbie Cook as our camp director. She stepped back into the camp director's shoes again this year at the last minute because our elected camp director couldn't make it to camp. I'd also like to warmly welcome Dave Keating of Conway, New Hampshire, to the FNCA board and to thank outgoing board member the Rev. Ken Turley for over a decade of excellent service.

The FNCA board of directors elects it own officers after the annual meeting board elections. Our officers this year are: Colgate Searle, president; Beki Greenwood, vice president and assistant treasurer; Bob Perry, treasurer; and Jesse White, secretary. The board re-appointed the Rev. Susannah Currie as religious education director, Nancy Little as registrar, and yours truly as activities director; and we would like to welcome Jason Greenwood as our new Flames representative to the board.

One activity that's looked forward to by pretty much everybody at camp is that all-around funny fundraiser, the annual Sales Table Auction. Special thanks to Alex Dyer, auctioneer; MaryBeth Bernier playing the part of Carol Merrill; Caleb Woofenden, run-

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ner; Lois Dole for the refinished and re-caned old camp chair; Betty Guiu for the Anne Cary Bradley painting; Bob Perry for the gift certificates to his Boston area restaurants, The Elephant Walk; and to newcomer Anna Rich, artist, for her beautiful book and three paintings. Due to these major donations, and Alex's awesome auctioneering skills, we broke all previous records this year and raised an amazing $953.75 for camp! Wowie zowie!

The Flames after their first ever Annual Water Balloon Fight. A good time was had by all.

And from a poll of campers, other FNCA 2009 highlights include, in no particular order, the young adults joyfully playing a wide variety of games in the Dole Wing; Heidi Woofenden's slide show of her college trip to Jordan; the Rev. Susannah Currie's presentation on angels; the baptism on the front lawn of a fifth generation(!) camper: Seamus Woofenden; the first annual Flames water balloon fight on the back lawn (see the video on Facebook!); the showing of the Gathering Leaves DVD; the young adults ages 18–22 enthusiastic acceptance of the board's proposal to reclassify them as "Senior Flames"; the enthusiastic reception of Colgate Searle's miniature village (now dubbed "Colgateville") that he's been working on during lectures for decades; the many trips to nearby lakes the first week and a half of camp; the inter-generational camaraderie; the fresh flowers on the tables in the dining hall second week; Sparks Games; Flames Games; nearly the entire camp (all but four people!) going to the ocean at Scarborough Beach State Park together for Outing Day the first week; sing-along before Chapel each day; the after-hours adult gatherings in Adrienne Frank Fellowship Hall; and Polar Bear Swim (check out "The FNCA Polar Bear Song" on YouTube.).

Parachute games on the lawn, led by Trevor, are enjoyed by all ages.

Despite the high river, the Polar Bear Club still managed a quick (but safe) swim in the Saco River each morning before breakfast; we just had to stay very, very, *very* close to the bank where the water does not flow quite so swiftly. Special mention here to MaryBeth Bernier. In the middle of second week, MaryBeth managed to mangle her leg badly and was suddenly unable to swim, let alone get down the hill to the river on crutches, and she missed Polar Bear Swim for the first time since she first started coming to the Assembly at age 13 five years ago! So the Polar Bear Club would like to send both our deepest condolences and a heart-felt BRAVO to such a stalwart member.

And in closing, dear reader, I'd like to clear up a lingering rumor. Around the turn of the millennium, the good old FNCA was embroiled in a deep imbroglio, a quagmire of a quandary, a bit of a sticky wicket—in short, a complicated situation that was pulling us apart at the seams. At the annual convention this past summer, way too many people approached my lovely wife and asked about that situation with great concern.

Well, I'm here to report that not only is that over but it is way behind us now. We've healed and grown and are all the stronger for it. The good old FNCA is once again (and has been for quite a few years now) the good old FNCA, bigger and better than ever. Hurray! It truly is a "little slice of heaven on earth," and you would all be doing yourselves a favor to attend next year and bring your family and friends. Like FNCA veterans and newcomers alike, you will be very, very glad you did!

For more info about the Fryeburg New Church Assembly, please visit our official website http://fryeburg.org. For more connection with campers, please join the FNCA's Facebook group or fan site.

Trevor has been on the FNCA board of directors for over three decades. He has served as Flames president, the very first Flames representative to the board, Flames advisor, lifeguard, waterfront director, children's religion class teacher, Sparks and Flames games leader, and is now safely ensconced as the camp's activities director and as such is ex officio on the FNCA summer session committee. Visit his website at http://trevorthegamesman.com.

Book Review

Beyond the Good Death: The Anthropology of Modern Dying

REVIEWED BY PAUL ZACHARIAS

Beyond The Good Death: The Anthropology of Modern Dying
By James W. Green
University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 2008.

James Green, professor of anthropology at the University of Washington has written a very interesting and informative book on death and dying. In fact, he tells you just about everything you ever wanted to know about death and dying. The subtitle says it all: *An Anthology of Modern Dying*. This is a fairly scholarly work, not suitable for bedside reading.

Green primarily describes how rituals and practices surrounding death have evolved and changed over the past century, and he does this in many different ways. He begins by talking about how modern science has complicated the dying process, using as examples the well known cases of Dr. Kevorkian and Terri Schiavo. There are huge ethical issues involved here that he touches upon. Death isn't quite as simple as we once thought.

The popular book and movie *Tuesdays With Morrie* receives some attention in the chapter titled, "The Art of Dying Well." Morrie Schwartz's life and death was a modern media event. He rarely spoke of God or personal existence following death, rather he emphasized personal growth to the end, and reconciliation with others and oneself. Using Schwartz as an example Green brings out the stages of the dying process as pictured by Elisabeth Kubbler-Ross: denial, anger and resentment (for many, this is the most difficult stage of dying), bargaining for a reprieve (patients hope to cut a deal with God), depression, and finally acceptance. These stages vary from person to

person, depending a great deal on the depth and reality of the individual's faith system. What we really believe makes a big difference. Belief is defined as "Acceptance that certain things are true or real, even where absolute certainty may be absent."

Green touches on so many fascinating subjects related to death and dying. Modern day funeral practices are looked at with a sharp eye. In recent years memorial services instead of funerals are becoming more popular. Nowadays the trend is moving toward a "celebration of life" instead of a sombre funeral atmosphere. The whole subject of death is pretty well out of the closet (where it once co-existed with sex) and is now much more openly discussed. Years ago people "passed on"; children were shielded from death; the grieving family was left in seclusion. Green checked out a number of Christian eulogies and discovered that in most of them little was said regarding the concept of personal immortality, except in very vague, general terms. Most of the messages stressed the importance of remembering the deceased and celebrating their lives. Seldom was there much insight into the concept of personal immortality.

There's a chapter on obituaries and gravestone inscriptions. It seems that in recent years the idea of writing one's own obituary is gaining momentum. One John Carver's obituary, in the Winston-Salem Journal begins: "If you're reading this right now, I guess I'm dead. . . . I've got some bad news for you (besides the fact that I'm dead) . . . . just as I've always suspected, God is a Republican."

For our purposes, chapter four, titled "Soulscapes," is the most fascinating. Here he writes about the concept of immortality as found in three sources: the Mormon Church, people who have had near-death experiences (NDE), and Emanuel Swedenborg.

I believe he gives an accurate and insightful picture of all three points of view. I'd like to quote at some length his interpretation of Swedenborg's views.

> Emanuel Swedenborg, eighteenth century aristocrat, engineer, biologist and metallurgist, gets credit for proposing the first distinctly modern view of the afterlife. *Heaven and Hell*, first published in 1758, broke with the medieval past and laid out notions of the afterlife that are with us still.
>
> In Swedenborg's view, communication between the natural and supernatural is not difficult since the dead exist in a world parallel to our own, separated only by a thin, porous veil. Spiritual travel across that boundary is easily done, and Swedenborg himself made that trip many times, writing extensively about what he saw. Heaven, he said, is a world essentially like our own, only better. It is not a place of "rest" or, in the older mediiecal view, nonstop adoration of the Divine. It is an active place, where the newly dead are not always aware that they are really dead since they have entered a realm similar to the one they have left. (Then he describes the natural, spiritual and celestial heavens.). Our task in heaven is to grow in wisdom and

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Fryeburg New Church Minister Search

The Fryeburg New Church is actively seeking a full time minister. As the Rev. Ken Turley looks forward to his exciting and challenging new position as president of the Swedenborgian Church of North America, we in the Fryeburg New Church congregation are looking forward to finding a new spiritual leader for our church who has the warmth, enthusiasm, wisdom, and leadership skills to guide us with care into the future.

We are a friendly, loving, service-oriented congregation strongly engaged in our community. Our church has a thriving Sunday school with four classes for youth along with an adult class. We have a talent-filled and inspiring music program with an enthusiastic choir. We are looking for a minister well versed in New Church doctrine with the ability to communicate these teachings to different age groups who have a range of Swedenborgian familiarity. We seek a friendly, personable minister willing and able to carry out the vision of the Fryeburg New Church. Our mission is to illuminate the path for those seeking God in their lives. We offer a place for those seeking regeneration and spiritual growth. We support each other as well as those in need in the community.

Our church is located in the town of Fryeburg, Maine, which is nestled

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love. Like mortals, angels experience mood swings and their interests change, thus life experiences are as diverse as here on earth.

Among the most intriguing and humanizing aspects of Swedenborg's views on heaven are those on love and marriage. Love literally makes the world go 'round, both this world and the next, and in heaven we are all destined to have a celestial partner who may or may not be the person we are with now. . . . As with earthly marriage, spiritual partners procreate. But in heaven they produce truth, not babies. In fact, this production of truth is the job of everyone, and each angel has a specific task that in its own way advances wisdom. What distinguishes heavenly labor from that of this world is that in paradise all work is for the sheer love of doing so, as a contribution to the general good without thoughts of personal glory or gain. Our joy in the afterlife will be doing perfectly what we do now, merged spiritually with a perfect mate, and all out of greater love and usefulness to others, the whole expressive of God's intentions for humankind.

There are four modern elements of the Swedenborgian afterlife. First, heaven is real, potentially within and certainly all about us. When we die, we enter the spiritual world immediately. Second, heaven is a sensate place with dimensions and substances similar if not exactly like what we know now. We will be recognized in it. What we will look like is not really important; it is who we are as persons and what made us useful and lovable human beings that will be manifest. Third, heaven is an active place. It has its grand structural order, and we will have a job description made for us. Our spiritual journey begun in this life will continue and have no end. Finally, the love God has for us is expressed through human love, and the next stage of it will be unencumbered by physical attractiveness or the size of our bank account. We will love spiritually and in purity, just as God does.

This gives you a little taste of what he writes about Swedenborg. The Mormon and NDE accounts are also most interesting.

I'll close with the last sentences in the book.

The mystery is not that we live and die—bugs and trees do that too. It is that we know the difference and do not have to take it, as it were, lying down. Eschatological imagining is a last defence against what nature is going to inflict on us. Given the odds, it seems a reasonable thing to do. ✠

The Rev. Paul Zacharias is a retired minister of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario.

The Almont New Church Assembly and Summer School

BY KEVIN BAXTER

The summer session of the Almont New Church Assembly is divided into two weeks, each with a different purpose. The first week is an un-programmed week where people prepare the facilities for the programmed summer school session, which is the second week. While that first week has historically attracted only a handful of people, we noticed a marked increase this year. The fellowship and work of this week create a joyful community as the camp is made ready for summer school.

Directed by Kevin Baxter, a group consisting of both laity and clergy help teach campers of all ages about the faith of the Swedenborgian Church. This year, we had over 140 campers registered with a daily population of more than 120 at its low point. The theme this summer was The Kingship of David, and each of the lecturers took on a different part of the life of David.

Photo: Barb Halle

Barb Halle's granddaughter, Laine Balcerak, in her duck, surveys the beach.

Opening Sermon: the Rev. Kevin Baxter, The End of Saul's Reign and David's Music
Monday: the Rev. Jennifer Tafel, David's Anointing
Tuesday: the Rev. Ron Brugler, David and Goliath
Wednesday: the Rev. Renée Machiniak, The Friendship of David and Johnathan
Thursday: the Rev. Sage Currie, The Davidic Wars
Friday: Leah Goodwin, M.Div., David and Bathsheba
Saturday: the Rev. Dr. David Fekete, The Ark Comes to Jerusalem
Closing Sermon: the Rev. F. Robert Tafel, David's Last Words

The kings represent different levels of our reception of the Lord's truth. Saul is the most natural and deals mostly with appearances. David corresponds to the spiritual or the good of the Lord's truth. Or, in other words, the story of the kingship of David is about our learning to live our faith and love it. It is much easier said, for as the lecturers pointed out, David was anointed king long before he could take office. He had to face big, bad guys before he could become king. Even afterwards, he faces conflict and missteps. I would say his journey is much like our journeys even after we have acknowledged and love the lessons our faith is teaching. Knowing them is one thing, but living them is another.

The camp is blessed with a dedicated staff of teachers, dorm parents, activity coordinators, and support staff who helped keep our campers engaged and safe.

On the last Sunday of camp, we confirmed three people into the faith and aims of the Swedenborgian Church, which is always a joy. Each and every year I am restored and find it a blessing to realize how many lives are touched by Almont Summer Camp. Year after year family and friends gather together to learn more about the faith

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Le Clézio on Swedenborg

Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio, the winner of the 2008 Nobel Prize for Literature, voiced his admiration for Emanuel Swedenborg in his post-prize press interviews.

Le Clézio, a French writer who has spent his life traveling the world, was born in Nice. He lived in Africa as a young man and studied at universities in England and France. He published his first novel, *Le Procčs-verbal* (*The Interrogation*) in 1963 and has written over 40 works since then. While he is acknowledged as one of the greatest living French writers, relatively little of his writing has been translated into English. Le Clézio gave Swedenborg a nod in his Nobel acceptance speech when he listed Swedenborg's writings as one of the most powerful texts of humankind (http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2008/clezio-lecture_en.html).

In a follow-up interview with the Spanish-language news portal ABC.es, he said the following:*

Interviewer: To all appearances, at times, it might seem that you are more interested in oriental, American, and African cultures than in the cultures of old Europe.

Le Clézio: No! A short while ago, I was in Sweden. That has nothing to do with the Nobel, eh? I was in Sweden, and the first thing I did in Stockholm was inquire about the house of Emanuel Swedenborg. You know, the Swedish genius scientist, philosopher, and theologian. And they showed me the house where Swedenborg used to talk

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Changes in the Certificate Program for Swedenborgian Students

At the annual convention in Seattle, Dean Jim Lawrence of the Swedenborgian House of Studies (SHS) at the Pacific School of Religion (PSR) in Berkeley, California, announced changes in the certificate program for Swedenborgian students. Following are the details of those changes.

With many SHS students working from a distance, the staff and faculty of SHS and PSR recognized a need for change in the way they provide ordination track students in the Swedenborgian Church with the coursework required by the denomination for ordination. They saw as well an opportunity to provide a structured course of Swedenborgian Studies for M.Div. students, M.A. students, M.T.S. students, and laypersons who desire this concentration.

Beginning with the 2009 fall semester, the Certificate of Swedenborgian Studies will become the Certificate of Swedenborgian Theology (CST) and will be administered by the Pacific School of Religion. All courses will be taken in the form of accredited courses for which distance students must register through the PSR registrar.

All new students, both on-campus at PSR and distance students, will be required to gain admission into the new CST program. Continuing students will be allowed to continue towards the current Certificate of Swedenborgian Studies, but will need to apply for special student status at PSR in order to register for courses in the future.

Certificate Course Requirements

Just as with the Certificate in Swedenborgian Studies, the CST consists of 21 units of coursework broken down as follows:

- Six units must be Swedenborgian Exegesis.
- Three units must be Introduction to Swedenborgian Thought.
- Three units must be Swedenborgian History.

The other nine units may be drawn from any courses offered in Swedenborgian Studies.

The two-course sequence in Swedenborgian Exegesis is currently offered every year, and the other two required courses will be offered at least every other year. In addition, at least nine units will be offered every year in various aspects of Swedenborgian Studies in addition to the required basics.

A crucial change is taking place in the delivery of some of these courses and the mode in which students must take them.

Enrollment and Course Delivery Formats

Each Swedenborgian student must be enrolled in one of the following ways:

- At PSR in a degree program
- At PSR as a special student
- At an accredited seminary by previous permission of the Committee on Admission to the Ministry

Course work formats and requirements are as follows:

Six of the seven required courses must be taken in a real-time, face-to-face format. One course can be taken through an on-line, non-live feed format.

Face-to-face classroom environments may includethe following:

- The traditional three hour per week, semester-long on-site classroom instruction
- Video conferencing in real time for three hours per week over the course of a semester
- Intensive courses that meet all day for one week or half-days for two weeks in Berkeley or at some other location

Tuition and Fees

Students who are enrolled only as special students at PSR will pay standard tuition for each course and be entitled to the privileges of that status, such as interlibrary loans, student discounts where they apply, and the like.

Current tuition is $620 per unit, making the total cost of a three-unit course $1860. Tuition is subject change on an annual basis.

Students enrolled at other accredited seminaries must also apply to PSR as special students and must pay the standard PSR tuition rate. Such students will need to verify whether courses taken through PSR will transfer to their degree programs.

Scholarship Support

Scholarship support is reserved for PSR-based students only.

Faculty and Course Offerings

At present, adjunct professor George Dole is teaching both courses in Swedenborgian Exegesis. Professors Inese Radzins and Jim Lawrence take turns teaching Introduction to Swedenborgian Thought and Swedenborgian History, and Professors Radzins and Lawrence also will take turns teaching the rest of the offerings in Swedenborgian Studies.

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and are reminded of the goodness of the Lord through the friendships and larger sense of family that the camp offers.

LaPorte Members Aid Play Development

BY CONNIE REYNOLDS, WITH ADDITIONS FROM TINA YOUNG-SCHERB

The White City: Burnham's Dream was wonderful. It follows the life of Swedenborgian Daniel Burnham and his planning and building of the Chicago Exposition in the 1890s. Had it not been for David Burnham and his friend this major event in Chicago's history would never have taken place. *The White City: Burnham's Dream* is actually an unfinished play on its way to being a major theatrical production in Chicago; the first act was presented at the Lubeznik Center in Michigan City on a Sunday afternoon in July. The creators wanted audience feedback to "see if we're on the right path." Connie Reynolds, Tina Young-Scherb, and Dorothy and Marcos Levy from LaPorte New Church were in the audience, the women broadly grinning at each other when the Swedenborgian Church and philosophy were mentioned. The story line is great. Daniel Burnham, the great American architect, had a dream of the City of Chicago, which in the 1890s was considered the backwoods of the United States by many. He wanted an exposition that would bring the world to Chicago. It was his idea to get many great architects together to lay out a plan from beginning to end on how and where it would be built.

Burnham was a Swedenborgian, and this theater production presents Swedenborg and what he believed. The story line speaks of the importance of "uses." There were several instances where Burnham's great faith in the New Church teachings was revealed.

The acting was superb and the singing wonderful. And what a pianist! You should have seen her fingers fly over the keys. She is also the composer of the extraordinary tunes for this musical.

The acting, the singing, the pianist's fingers jumping across the keys, and the narration by Daniel Burnham's great-grandson made it all so real for us.

The play was presented as one act; the idea was to bring it to the area, present a reading, and get audience feedback on whether a second act would work and if it seemed to be a good play or not.

After the first act there was a question and answer period. The director was asked if in the second act more would come out about Burnham and his Swedenborgian beliefs and the fact that Burnham had supposedly placed writings of Swedenborg in the time-

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Planner as Believer

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three-year effort to produce the Plan of Chicago, he synthesized scores of ideas from myriad planners into a single integrated document.

Burnham the Architect

McBrien, who wrote, produced and directed *Make No Little Plans*, has spent the last fifteen years making films about Chicago architecture. And, to some extent, this documentary, like the 2003 book by historian Kristen Schaffer *Daniel Burnham: Visionary Architect and Planner* (Rizzoli), is aimed at rehabilitating Burnham's reputation as an architect.

For many years, Burnham was praised as a city planner but dismissed as a building designer. The perception was that he was Mr. Outside, a business-type who won commissions and kept clients happy but left the design work to others, such as his partner John Wellborn Root.

Yet, McBrien's film gives Burnham full credit for the hundreds of buildings that his firms designed over the decades, such as The Rookery in Chicago and Union Station in Washington, D.C.

In the movie, Russell Lewis, executive vice president and chief historian at the Chicago History Museum, describes the creative team of Burnham and Root as a late nineteenth century version of Beatle songwriters John Lennon and Paul McCartney.

Meanwhile, Schaffer notes that Burnham was deeply involved in his firms' projects, overseeing details "like the conductor of a symphony or the director of a film."

"The People He Inspired"

Make No Little Plans examines the impact that Burnham's plans had on such cities as Cleveland, Manila, and Washington, D.C. But it was his work on the Plan of Chicago that capped his career.

"It's a pioneering document," historian Carl Smith says in the film. "There's nothing in the country as comprehensive as that and as gorgeous as that." The lavishly illustrated book, filled with watercolors by Jules Guerin, was part of an unprecedented public relations effort that helped sell the Plan over the next twenty-plus years.

Burnham, says Smith, was "the indispensable person" in making the Plan reality.

In our interview, McBrien noted that Burnham died just three years after the Plan was published, but his influence continued.

"It wasn't just Burnham [who made the Plan a success]," she said. "It was the people he inspired. It was [Edward] Bennett and [Charles] Wacker and the Commercial Club leaders who fought to enact the ideas of the Plan.

"Burnham was gone, but it's a tribute to Burnham's inspiration that a lot of people bought into these ideas and

continues next page

We All Came Together—Paulhaven 2009

BY DAVID FEKETE

In chapel services at Paulhaven Camp, we don't have an organ or piano, so we sing *a cappella*. On the first verse, we often start in different keys. But by the time the second verse comes around we all come together in unison.

The same thing happened as camp got going. We came from all over Western Canada—Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. We came from different backgrounds and ages—from ten years old to 55. But within a day or two we all came together, bringing our unique talents to the whole, like Swedenborg's vision of the greatest human in heaven. This year we had 27 campers and fifteen staff, and everyone seemed to have a function that was just right for her or him. Some set to work clearing brush, some cut wood for the campfire we have each night, others taught classes, the cooks fed us well, and I led chapel each morning, taught a confirmation class, and visited classes for questions on which the teachers wanted my input. It was touching to see eighteen-year-old campers blending and having fun with the young campers. Mutual love overcame any divides age or background might have caused.

Our theme this year was "The Seven Days of Creation." Chapel services were based on Jesus's parables that fit with the internal sense of each day. Classes then talked about each day. One Twelve-year-old camper asked me, "Who created God?" I don't think I satisfied him by saying, "Creation itself was made up by God." Craft activities reinforced the lessons. For instance, one day campers made bracelets with seven beads on them—one for each day. On the last day of camp we played "Deal or No Deal" with prizes for correct answers to questions about the creation story.

I held a confirmation class, as I do every year. Attendance is voluntary, and we had ten participants this year. Both campers and staff attended. Some of the attendees were already confirmed but wanted to deepen their understanding of their faith. Two campers and one staff member were confirmed this year.

Campers brought their experiences from home to camp, and took blessings home from camp. The friendships made in one week of camp are often deeper than friendships with classmates over years. Campers say that they can open up and share more intimate matters, and also connect spiritually in ways that are not available back home.

We had the campers evaluate their experience this year by asking them questions. When we asked them what they learned from camp, we received answers like, "The parables in the Bible and learning to connect with people you don't know very well." And, "To play 40 Acres." Another response was, "I learned about God, my relationship with him, and how to grow." By far the most common answer to what they learned about this year was, "God." And that, after all, is what Paulhaven Camp is all about.

continued from preceding page

they spent their professional lives to implement parts of the Plan."

Make No Little Plans will be screened at 6:30 PM. on October 7 at the Woodson Regional Library at 9525 S. Halsted Street [in Chicago].

Patrick T. Reardon is a Chicagoan, born and bred. He has been writing about the city, its region and planning issues, mainly in *The Chicago Tribune*, for nearly 40 years.

Reprinted from Patrick Reardon's blog at The Burnham Plan Centennial Web site (http://www.burnhamplan100.com).

Teens: you and your friends (aged 13–18) are invited to the teen

Columbus Day Weekend Retreat

Our theme: Swedenborg, His Famous Fans, and You: Working Together to Change the World

7:00 PM Friday, October 9, 2009 (pizza supper at 8:00 pm) through Monday Breakfast, October 12 (leave by 10:00 am)

Location: Blairhaven Retreat Center Duxbury, Massachusetts

Sponsored by the Cambridge Church of the New Jerusalem, the Massachusetts Association, and the Swedenborgian Church Youth League

Staff: Rev. Kevin Baxter, Rev. Lee Woofenden, Kurt Fekete, Merry Conant

Cost: $50.00 (Financial assistance is available if you can't afford it)

Interested? Contact Kurt Fekete: 802-345-0169 or kfekete@hotmail.com

Fryeburg Minister Search

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in the Mt. Washington Valley. Fryeburg presents a wealth of outstanding outdoor opportunities including skiing, hiking, and biking. The beautiful Saco River runs through our town offering swimming, canoeing, and other water sports. We are an hour's drive from the Atlantic Ocean and Portland, and three hours from Boston. We are home to Fryeburg Academy and the Fryeburg Fair as well as the Fryeburg New Church Assembly, a wonderful Swedenborgian summer camp and retreat center. We offer a large parsonage for the minister to live in.

Interested candidates should submit the following documents in their application.

- A resume and cover letter explaining your interest in the position
- Letters of reference from: a ministerial colleague and a person in the community familiar with your work, and a character reference
- A brief statement of your approach to growing the church
- Two samples of sermons (written acceptable, but tape or DVD preferred)

Please send your application to the attention of the Search Committee, Fryeburg New Church, 12 Oxford Street, Fryeburg, ME 04037 or e-mail Patty Swett at pattyswett@ymail.com. Please let us know if you have any questions. We look forward to hearing from you!

PSR President Announces Retirement

William McKinney, president of Pacific School of Religion (PSR) since 1996, has announced that he will step down from his position at the end of the coming academic year, June 30, 2010. "This has been a hard decision to make, because I love my job and I love Pacific School of Religion," said McKinney. "This feisty little theological school has a special role to play in the renewal and transformation of contemporary Christianity, and I feel very optimistic about PSR's future."

William McKinney

An ordained minister in the United Church of Christ and a sociologist of religion, McKinney was born in Massachusetts and earned his B.A. from Colby College in Maine, his M.Div. and M.A. degrees from Hartford Seminary in Connecticut, and his Ph.D. from Penn State. Before coming west, he served as dean at Hartford Seminary for eleven years.

When he became president in 1996, PSR was going through difficult times, both financially and in terms of the relations among the board of trustees, the faculty, and the students. In McKinney's first years as its leader, the seminary's financial problems were smoothed out, as were frayed nerves on campus. PSR mounted a successful capital campaign at the end of the 1990s, and opened two pioneering centers in 2000: the PANA Institute (Institute for Leadership Development and Study of Pacific and Asian North American Religion), and the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry, the first such center at any theological school. McKinney has been a leader in helping the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley—with its nine theological schools, including PSR—adjust to the changing landscape in theological education in the 21st century.

Once he leaves PSR, McKinney, the author of *American Mainline Religion: Its Changing Shape and Future* (1987), *The Responsibility People* (1994), and *Studying Congregations* (1998), hopes to complete writing projects postponed over the past decade.

The Editor's Desk

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controversy. In the sermon, a statement from the bishop of the General Church is recalled as if it were a direct quote even though Rev. Longstaff allows only that she thought these were his exact words. Because it was presented as a direct quote, I should have verified it or asked Alison to change it from a direct quote to a recollection. I apologize for the oversight.

It is not my intention to use *The Messenger* to create controversy, but the General Convention is a congregational enity that sees value in allowing its members to pursue their religious ideas through argument and debate. Often, the positions, beliefs, and paractices of others with whom we are otherwise in accord shake us to our very core. The result sometimes is controversy. Being editor sometimes feels like traversing a ridge on a mountain trek. The ridge may be the best route, but the potential of falling off either side demands constant vigilance.

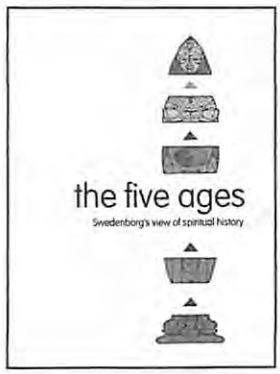
I hope the readership continues reading and continues responding to anything with which they disagree. Stay engaged—and help me stay firmly planted on the ridge.

—*Herb Ziegler*

Book Review

Swedenborg's *Coronis* Explored

The Five Ages
P. L. Johnson
The Swedenborg Society, London, UK: 2008



Emanuel Swedenborg died in 1772, aged 84, not long after having completed his extensive *True Christian Religion*, but, had he lived on, what might he have published next?

Actually the last unpublished manuscript of any length he left behind was his *Coronis*, which sadly is no longer extant, except for an imperfect and incomplete copy. It describes five ages or "churches" as he calls them. It is a world history, but a spiritual or psychological history, not a political or social history, although it does touch on social matters.

In the *Coronis*, and also in earlier works, Swedenborg explores a theme that can be found in most mythologies, the idea of the "world ages." The Greeks and Romans called them the Golden Age, the Silver Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age. In the structure of the Bible one can discern similar periods initiated by Adam, Noah, Moses, Christ, and a new age foretold in the Book of Revelation. You will find more versions in Norse, Persian, Aztec, and other myths.

Nowhere, however, will you find a treatment of the theme as extensive and detailed as Swedenborg's. It was scattered through several of his books but is here brought together in one volume. We are told of mankind's psychological development through the ages and how God accommodated His revelation to suit us.

The passages from Swedenborg have been compiled by Patrick Johnson who has added a commentary to help continuity. Patrick Johnson has been interested in history and Swedenborg all his life and has been the editor of two Swedenborgian magazines.

The Five Ages is available at the Swedenborg Society Bookshop at http://www.swedenborg.org.uk/bookshop/miscellaneous/five-ages ✠

Most Ancient Ch.	Ancient Church		Jewish Church	Christian Ch.	New Ch.
Most Ancient Ch.	1st Ancient Ch.	2nd Ancient Ch.	3rd Ancient Ch.	Christian Ch.	New Ch.
Adamic Church	Noachian Ch.		Israelite Ch.	Christian Ch.	New Ch.
Adam	Noah	Heber	Abraham/ Israel	New Testament	Book of Revelation
Golden Age	Silver Age	Bronze Age	Iron Age	Age of Religions	New Age
Childhood	Adolescence		Adulthood	Maturity	Resurrection
Relative historical periods and approximate dates:					
Palaeolithic	Neolithic	Bronze Age	Iron Age	Age of Religions	Industrial Age
Pre-8000 BC	8000-3000 BC	3000-1500 BC	1500 BC-AD 1	AD 1-1750	1750-

Fig. 1. Chart showing comparisons of five age concepts

Foundation Library Opens for Research

Over 2,000 books and documents are available at the Swedenborg Foundation Library for research needs—from recently published scholarly books to transcriptions of New Church radio broadcasts, to DVDs and novels featuring Swedenborgian themes, to works on science, history, and religion, to biographies and bibliographies.

Some of the Library's unique documents include historical New Church periodicals such as the *New Church Children's Magazine* and meeting minutes from the 1800s. These and many other resources in the Library offer great primary source material for inquiry into the history of the New Church.

An on-site catalog of the Library's contents has been categorized by topic as well as by author and by title. An electronic catalog is available on the Foundation's Web site, www.swedenborg.com/library.asp?orderby=subject1. Although most of the Library's contents can only be used on-site, a number of titles are available for lending.

Library hours are Monday through Friday, 10:00 A.M.–4:30 P.M. Wireless internet is available for patrons.

The Swedenborg Foundation resides at 320 N. Church Street, West Chester, Pennsylvania. Contact at: 610.430.3222, 800.355.3222, or www.swedenborg.com. ✠

Swedenborgian Community Chats

At the Swedenborgian Community Web site (www.swedenborgiancommunity.org), you can join live chats with *Messenger* authors scheduled for some Tuesday and Thursday evenings. ✠

Swedenborg Foundation Welcomes New Executive Editor

The Swedenborg Foundation Publishers announced the recent appointment of Joanna Hill as its new executive editor. Hill brings to this position a background in university press publishing as well as experience with nonprofit and religious publishing. She plans to expand the Swedenborg Foundation's publication program by doubling the number of books the Foundation publishes each year, improving trade and library sales, expanding the subsidiary rights program, and making the books accessible in other formats, such as e-books and audio books.

She states, "We are beginning to translate some of the titles (such as the ever-popular *Heaven and Hell and Afterlife*) into Spanish and hope to arrange co-publications with other publishers; develop foreign distribution and translation agreements, and explore other subsidiary rights opportunities. We also want to publish books that make Swedenborg's insights understandable to the spiritual seeker. Toward this end, we are developing engaging trade books that bring life to his amazing insights and are continuing with the ongoing Latin-to-English translation of his writings that makes his words more accessible to the modern reader."

In the 1990s, Hill spent three years as the Foundation's marketing manager, developing the Foundation's marketing program and setting up national distribution for its books. Fascinated by what she had learned, she attended the Academy of the New Church Theological School in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, where she received a master's degree in religious studies. After leaving the Swedenborg Foundation to establish the publishing program at Templeton Foundation Press—a non-profit publisher that explores the connections between science and religion—she remained active in the Swedenborgian community, serving on the boards of Cairnwood Mansion and the Swedenborg Scientific Association. ✠

News from Japan

The following letter was received in June by the Women's Alliance in response to receipt of the Mite Box.

Dear Nancy, Jeannette, and Women's Alliance people,

Thank you very much for your letter and gift. This year your gift came early, and thank you for that too.

Jeannette, in your letter of March, I read that you and the Alliance people prayed for my friends who had experienced the earthquake in the Northern part of Japan last year. Thanks to your prayers, they were all right.

I used to write letters pretty often to a woman who lived in the southern part of Japan. She felt insecure and needed my support very much. She is now getting well and is married to a blind man about whom I wrote to you last time. I have been tape recording New Church books for him. Now I am recording *Swedenborg's Thought* by a Japanese author. This book will take a long time, but I am glad that he is enjoying listening to those tapes. He sends me back his comments by tape. He is a good acupuncturist. I am translating Helen Keller's *Introduction to the True Christian Religion,* and the first half of it was published in the small periodical *JSA* (*Japan Swedenborg Association*) in April. The latter half will be published in the fall.

I am visiting an elderly lady at a nursing home in the hills this week who I visit every once in a while.

I was asked to conduct a ceremony before building a house, and I did it for a New Church lady just a few days ago. In Japan, usually a Shinto priest does that according to that religion, and he prays for safety of the whole building procedure. This was my first experience of doing this kind of ceremony, but I was glad that the lady was pleased. Also, it was a good opportunity for ministry to those attending the ceremony.

Thank you again for your letter and gift. I am encouraged and helped by both. I hope you have a good convention and Women's Alliance meeting in Seattle, Washington. God bless you all.

Sincerely, Kei Torita

Le Clézio on Swedenborg

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with the angels. How marvelous! That communication with the spirits of the earth reminded me of another great French poet, Senegalese, [named] Senghor, who also spoke with the spirits, angels, and demons of his African soil.

Interviewer: In Spanish, [Jorge Luis] Borges felt a great passion for Swedenborg.

Le Clézio: Yes. The Spanish cultures have spent centuries in dialogue between Spain and the Americas. Tragic dialog, at times.

Le Clézio revealed in a press conference that he is working on a play about Swedenborg and Immanuel Kant, although no other details are known at this time. ✠

* The text excerpted from the interview has been translated from the original Spanish.

Reprinted from the Swedenborg Foundation Web site, www.swedenborg.com.

Gray Fund Settlement Approved by Court

After three years of assault by litigation on the Wesley N. Gray Fund, a settlement among the affected parties has been approved by the court in Massachusetts. The settlement frees the trustees of the fund to resume expending funds to support the growth of the Church of the New Jerusalem.

In the settlement, The Boston Society of the New Jerusalem (BSNJ) received one third of the fund's assets to be expended in ways commensurate with the directives of the trust, and the trust retained two thirds of the assets. The wording of the bequest was changed so that the three trustees, who are appointed by the attorney-general of Massachusetts, are jointly recommended by the Massachusetts New Church Union (MNCU) and the General Convention of the New Jerusalem. The original wording included the BSNJ as a third recommending party.

The result of the settlement is that, although the fund has lost one third of its assets, it is no longer under threat of attack from the BSNJ, and the trustees are free to grant funds. The BSNJ, agreed to forswear claims on the Gray Fund. A court-imposed injunction on distribution of funds during litigation has been lifted.

The Boston Society had been an organized society since 1816 and a founding society of the General Convention in 1817 when, in 2003 it seceded from the Massachusetts Association of the New Jerusalem and the General Convention. At that time, leadership was assumed by a group of newcomers including a confessed "street enforcer" for the "Boston Irish mob." George Chapin, a member of the BSNJ and The General Convention sued for control of the society's assets to hold in trust for reformation of the BSNJ. The BSNJ eventually won that suit, but in the meantime had petitioned the court to make it the sole beneficiary of the Gray Trust. It proposed replacing the trustees with appointment of three of its members, including the confessed street enforcer.

Background of the Gray Fund

Wesley Gray was a roofer who lived in Stoneham, Massachusetts, a few miles north of Boston, and was a member of the Boston Society of the New Jerusalem. He left a bequest to establish the Gray fund when he died in the early 1900s.

He charged three trustees "To keep safely invested and to pay over the net income after all expenses and the usual allowance for their services are paid, to such Church and missionary uses, preferably in Massachusetts first, then in the United States of America, and then in the whole world, as shall seem to them most deserving, and most useful toward the growth of the New Jerusalem Church."

The trustees of the Gray Fund. George Chapin, Bobby Buchanan, and Rafael Guiu, responded by defending the fund in court filings. The MNCU counter sued to eliminate the BSNJ as a beneficiary of the trust and to end its right to participate in recommending trustees.

Under a strong recommendation from the judge in the case that the parties reach a settlement, in June, 2009, the parties finally agreed on the separation of the fund into two parts divided as stated above.

During the course of litigation, George Chapin died. Bobby Buchanan and Raphael Guiu continue as trustees. The MNCU and the General Convention are preparing to recommend a new trustee to the attorney general. ✠

Passages

Baptism

Seamus Kenneth Woofenden, son of Michael and Beth Woofenden, and great-grandson of the Rev. Dr. William and Louise Woofenden, was baptized into the Christian faith on August 13, 2009, at Fryeburg New Church Assembly in Fryeburg, Maine. The Rev. Lee Woofenden officiated.

Confirmations

Cameron David Pendree Epp, Kristina Michalle Cheney, and **Lonny Philip Schellenberg** were confirmed with joy into the Swedenborgian Church at Paulhaven Church Camp in Alberta, Canada, in July, 2009. The Rev Dr. David Fekete officiated. ✠

Burnham Play

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capsule. We were told we could contact the LaPorte New Church, and that is when we revealed our identity! (They surely knew by our Cheshire Cat grins that we were proud to be.)

All who attended thought this project should continue. The cast got a great ovation, and many people stood and spoke to the actors afterwards. Our LaPorte entourage was indeed fortunate to be a part of a promising play which includes Emanuel Swedenborg's beliefs. We are all so glad we went and hope that we will get to see the final product. We were happy to be there to represent our church. ✠

Connie Reynold and Tina Young-Scherb are members of the LaPorte New Church in Indiana.

This article is reprinted from the August 2009 *LaPorte Report*.

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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.

Online Courses from SHS— Open to All!

Death, Rebirth, and the Afterlife

The Rev. Lee Woofenden

October 12th–November 30th, 2009

What happens when we die?

And what difference does it make here and now?

Our journey into the afterlife is no longer a mystery. Thousands of people who nearly died have experienced its early stages and come back to tell us about it. And in his spiritual classic *Heaven and Hell*, Emanuel Swedenborg provided a detailed account of what happens to us after death.

In "Death, Rebirth, and the Afterlife," we will draw on both of these sources to gain a clear picture of what it is like to die, and of the path we travel afterward to reach our eternal home. We will also explore how the various stages of our after-death journey provide a map and compass for our journey of spiritual rebirth right here in the material world.

Lee Woofenden is a Swedenborgian minister, teacher, writer, and editor. He enjoys taking the deep insights of the Bible and the spiritual works of Emanuel Swedenborg and putting them into lively, everyday language so that they can be helpful in our daily lives.

A Survey of the Theology and History of the Old Testament

The Rev. Dr. David Fekete

Starting January 11, 2010

In Exodus 34:6-7, God says to Moses, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin." This is not the God many expect to find in the Old Testament. Many think that the Old Testament God is angry, violent, and jealous. But there is much beauty and power in the Old Testament that many readers miss because finding its beauty sometimes requires guidance. The Old Testament is a compilation of texts representing 2,000 years of additions. As the people of Israel developed over time, their interpretation of holiness and of God evolved. This course is a guide for progressive readers to the history of the Old Testament and the development of its theology.

Rev. Dr. David Fekete is pastor of the Edmonton New Church Society in Alberta, Canada. He holds an M.T.S. from Harvard University in Religion and Culture and a Ph.D from the University of Virginia in Religion and Literature. His research interests are in spirituality and love, in all its varied forms.

Tuition for each seven-week class is only $150. 50% discount to the first five students who register!

For more information, please go to www.shs.psr.edu!