



A Graduate Returns as Scholar-in-Residence

BY DAVID FEKETE



From March 22–25, 2010, I had the exhilarating and nostalgic experience of visiting my Alma Mater as this year's Swedenborg Scholar-in-Residence.

For approximately the past ten years, Urbana University (UU) has hosted the Swedenborg Scholar-in-Residence program with financial support from the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. A Scholar whose area of study and interest intersects in some way with the life and writings of Emanuel Swedenborg is invited to campus for several days each year. During this residency they may utilize the historic library collection of Swedenborg's writings and collateral works and documents and they agree to attend selected classes, speak with students, and offer a public lecture. The intent of this program is for students and the public to gain a greater knowledge of Swedenborg, whose teachings inspired the founders of this university.

My first official responsibility was to lecture at London Correctional Institute, a prison in which Urbana University offers courses. We went through security; we had our outer clothing searched, showed photo ID, had our

hands stamped with a black-light insignia, signed in, and were given badges to wear. We were buzzed through one steel door. We then showed our picture IDs at a window and put our hands into a box with a black-light shining on it. We were then buzzed through another steel door, and buzzed through a third steel door. We walked down a long, wide corridor and up a stairway to the classroom in which the inmates were sitting, waiting. There were approximately one hundred men in attendance. They were dressed uniformly in blue shirts and pants. I was unnerved somewhat by the institu-

There was a profound interest in the room about poetry, writing, Frost, Swedenborg, and God.

tional nature of the uniform dress and prison security. I didn't know what to expect.

Tony St. Clair, a professional actor, set the tone by reciting some of Robert Frost's poems, mostly those I would comment on in my lecture. I followed with my lecture, "Robert Frost's Critical Appropriation of Swedenborg's Theology." I opened with an introduction about Swedenborg and then launched into my lecture. I talked about Frost's common use of nature to symbolize aspects of the human soul and how that poetic system derives from Swedenborg's correspondences. I had doubts as I began, as my lecture was academic

in nature.

What I found was rapt attention. You could have heard a pin drop in that room of one hundred men. I maintained as much eye contact as I could and spontaneously edited my talk as I spoke, and my eyes were met by those of my listeners—wide-eyed attention. I made a wry joke in my talk and heard a chuckle from the audience. They were with me! My talk was long, and I could tell that I was testing the patience of my audience. But when I finished, sincere applause erupted.

There was time, and many hands went up immediately to ask questions. They asked questions about the afterlife and religious affiliation in relation to Frost. They asked about God and other poets. They asked for titles of Swedenborg's books. When I gave the titles, I also emphasized the Swedenborg Library at Urbana University and the availability of interlibrary loan. They asked about the mechanics of poetry writing, and the process of publication. They were engaged. There was a profound interest in the room about poetry, writing, Frost, Swedenborg, and God.

As the men left the room, many came up to shake hands with Tony and me. In fact, they lined up to thank us. I had a keen feeling of ministry. I felt I was a voice of hope—that we cared enough to come and speak to them; that men could educate themselves; that educated men could have faith

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The Editor's Desk



The Arc of Leadership

We have in the Swedenborgian Church strong patterns of developing our talent and leadership from within while attracting seekers to our faith who have "discovered" us.

The author of this month's lead article, "A Graduate Returns as Scholar-in-Residence" (p. 65) is the Rev. Dr. David Fekete, a minister and scholar who grew up in a Swedenborgian family, became a leader in the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL), attended the Swedenborgian Church affiliated Urbana University and the Swedenborgian School of Religion, and after earning a Ph.D. in literature, returned to become a minister to the Church of the Open Word in Edmonton, Alber-

ta. In addition to being UU's scholar-in-residence, Rev. Fekete has served as SCYL chaplain and denominational representative to the National Council of Churches; he has been nominated to serve on General Council.

While noting Rev. Fekete's early experience in SCYL, read the article about the pre-teen retreat in LaPorte, Indiana, "Lions and Tigers, and Bears, Oh My!" (p. 70). SCYL director Kurt Fekete and the volunteers who assist him have extended youth work (and leadership development) to this group.

Leadership is not confined to the clergy in our church. Chris Laitner's thank-you note on page 67 reminds us that she has provided six years of outstanding leadership, serving as the denomination's first female and first lay president.

The candidate statements beginning on page 68 round out the roster of nominees from the Nominating Committee, presenting us with capable clergy and laypersons, church-born and church-adopted individuals willing to volunteer their time and talents in church leadership.

The last of a year-long series of articles about developing and improving Sunday schools by the Rev. John Maine, president of the Sunday School Association, appears on page 75. Let us not forget that some of our future leaders are being nurtured and educated in those very Sunday schools.

—Herb Ziegler

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Church Calendar

May 14, 2010: Deadline for Annual Convention registration

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

July 8–11: Gathering Leaves
Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Thank you for David Fekete's very fine article "Faith and Works in Paul's Letter to the Galatians" (*The Messenger*, March 2010). As David clearly explains, Paul does not stand for salvation through faith alone and frequently affirms that being justified and "saved" depends on our living well.

This short and clear article is a must for Swedenborgians worldwide who wish to discuss with Christians how people are saved. Too many readers of Swedenborg are easily intimidated by Bible-quoting Protestants. The fact is that in spite of occasional hyperbole about "the law," Paul believed strongly that not doing evil in our own lives and

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the Messenger

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♪ Thank You Very Much! ♪

A good organization will go through changes in leadership and structure with grace and solidity. The General Convention of the New Jerusalem, Inc. has a structure that allows for appointments and elections to take place in orderly fashion and new people can move into positions with ease. The office of president is newly-filled every three years, with the possibility of a president's reelection for a second consecutive three-year term. After that, a new president moves into the position. When a person is elected to the presidency, he or she is elected a year prior to moving into the office so that there is time for familiarization and learning. Thus the transition becomes very smooth.

During this year's annual convention to be held in St. Paul, Minnesota, over June 23–27, we will formally consecrate the new, incoming president, the Rev. Ken Turley. We will celebrate his stepping into the office of president and we will continue on our journey as a Church. It's a time of change that is smooth and keeps the organization vital.

The consecration of a new president into office also means that a president who has held office will become a "former president." As I approach "former" status, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you, each and all, for the help, support and care you've given over the past six years.

While writing this, I'm hearing in my mind a song from the musical, "Scrooge." Here's the verse and chorus that's banging around in my head:

Thank you very much!

Thank you very much!

That's the nicest thing that anyone's ever done for me
It sounds a bit bizarre

But things the way they are

I feel as if another life's begun for me

And if I had a cannon I would fire it

To add a sort of celebration touch

But since I left my cannon at home

I'll simply have to say

Thank you very, very, very much!

If I were asked to define what has been best about the past six years, I'd have to say that, aside from the honor of serving as your president, it would be the wonderful opportunities to meet you, to share with

you, to worship and pray with you, and to simply be part of the warmth of your lives. My special thanks go to those who have given help and support by providing transportation, hospitality, listening ears and prayerful support.

You all have made these six years a possibility and a great journey! You, through your care and service, have added vitality to the Church itself and—selfishly—to me as I've moved through this process. Thank you!

I'm looking forward to this year's annual convention. Each year we experience so many personal growth moments through renewal of acquaintances and the creation of new relationships, through opportunities to worship together, through the celebration of the service of ordination, through the various activities both organized and spontaneous that take place, and through the welcoming of new people to serve Convention in a variety of ways. This year is one of the special ones where we will consecrate and celebrate a new president. I hope that you will find this as rewarding an annual convention as I will.

The larger Church is a community. We are a kind of family, although the vast majority of us are related through commitment and focus rather than biology and legal ties. (Really!) And so, as I prepare to leave this office, I'd like to leave you with my deep, abiding thanks for all that you've done, and also with this brief statement of absolute truth from the Baha'i scriptures:

*The diversity in the family should be the cause
of love and harmony,
as it is in music where many different notes
blend together
in the making of a perfect chord.*

Thank you, my friends, thank you very much for all of your kindnesses over these past six years.



—With love and gratitude,
Chris

Chris Laitner is completing her second term (six years) as president of the Swedenborgian

2010 Council, Committee, & Board Nominees

As *The Messenger* goes to press, the candidates listed below have been nominated for election at the 2010 Annual Convention. The Nominating Committee of the General Convention nominated all the candidates except for the at-large class SHS Board of Trustees candidates, who were nominated by the Board of Trustees Nominating Committee. The floor of the annual convention will be open for nominations prior to elections.

Position	Term (Years)	Candidate
Vice-president	One	Betsy Coffman
Secretary	One	Susan Wood-Ashton*
Treasurer	One	Susannah Currie *
General Council layperson	Three	Polly Baxter* Matthew Fleming
General Council minister	Three	David Fekete*
Committee on Admission to the Ministry (CAM)	Three	Freeman Schrock
Communication Support Unit (ComSU)	Three	Leah G. Goodwin *
Education Support Unit (EdSU)	Three	Open
Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit (FPRSU)	Three	Lana Sandhal
Information Management Support Unit (IMSU)	Three	David Brown*
Support Unit for Ministries (MinSU)	Three	Doug Moss Susan Hemmerich *
Board of Trustees of SHS, Representative class	Three	Young Min Kim* Sage Currie*
Board of Trustees of SHS, At-large class	Three	Tom Neuenfeldt Ronald Frostestad
Board of Trustees of SHS, At-large class	Two	Lorraine Cuthbertson
Nominating Committee	Five	Matthew Fleming Renée Machiniak

* This candidate's statement appeared in the April Messenger.

The following candidates submitted statements for the May Messenger:

Betsy Coffman: Vice-president

I am a lifelong member of the Swedenborgian Church, having grown

up in Kitchener, Ontario, where my father, the Rev. David P. Johnson, was the minister of the Church of the Good Shepherd for over twenty years. In many ways, the congregation of that church functioned as my extended family, and their caring, guidance, and nurturance contributed greatly to my learning, growth, and present love

for this church.

Since 1970 I have been a member of the Urbana Swedenborgian Church, where I have been the authorized lay



leader since 1998, after completing a formal program of study through the Swedenborg School of Religion. As lay leader I am responsible for planning and

leading worship services, performing memorial services, and generally performing the functions of a local pastor. Professionally, I am a clinical social worker with over thirty-five years of experience.

Over the years I have been involved in the life of the church on many levels. I have served on our local church board in several positions, taught Sunday school, and been on various local church planning committees for hosting General Convention and Ohio Association Meetings.

My involvement in the Ohio Association includes six years as president, planning and leading programs at our weekend annual meetings, and participating in leading worship services on Association Sunday.

On a national level I have served on various boards and support units over the years, including the former Board of Education, MNSU and General Council. I have led convention mini courses and prepared and co-led convention memorial services on several occasions.

Additionally, I have served on the Urbana University board of trustees since 1991, where I am a member of the Church Relations Committee and represent the church class. I am a trust-

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ee of the Johnny Appleseed Foundation, Board and have taught the Swedenborg course at Urbana University as an adjunct instructor. In June of 2009, I was named the Urbana University chaplain.

I have accepted the Nominating Committee's request that I run for the office of vice-president and would be honored, if elected, to serve in that capacity. One of our local members recently commented that in choosing to be a Swedenborgian, one is choosing to "take the road less travelled." I believe that this road is one that, although still unknown to many, has great potential to "make all the difference" for many persons seeking to understand the purpose and meaning of their lives. We do not know what God's Providence holds in store for us as a church, but we do believe that we hold "a pearl of great price" in the theological vision of Emanuel Swedenborg. As stewards of that vision, I believe we must try to discern the Lord's will for us as we go forward and shape our church's future so that we can better share with each other and the greater community, all that we have to offer.

Matthew Fleming: General Council

Wow that was fast. I am pleased and surprised to say that I have served on General Council for almost four years now. It has been an interesting challenge, one that has provided opportunity to grow and learn with the other members of the council. I have now come to an understanding of who we are as an organization and how we are structured. I believe that



we need to re-energize ourselves. To set our course and go.

I am proud to have been part of the group that has begun that process—the creation and continued evolution of our own cyber ministry, swedenborgiancommunity.org, IMSU's initiative to create a new denominational website, hiring of our new central office manager. Things are happening in this church, and I am thankful for the opportunity to lend my hands and mind where useful. I would like to continue this work.

I believe that it is time to take a serious look at our denominational structure. I believe that we are struggling under the weight of our current system of support units. It is time to re-evaluate what we do, how we do it, and why. We will not all agree, but with charity we can all move forward together. This is not the work of one person, but work that I will push for and help toward the weight.

Please consider what I have said. If you disagree, please contest the position.

Freeman Schrock: Committee on Admission to the Ministry

The Rev. Freeman Schrock is the pastor of Laporte New Church in Laporte Indiana, where he has served since 2005. He is a son of the Midwest, with roots which extend to eight generations after his forefathers migrated from the Canton of Brene in Switzerland. He studied German and Clinical Social Work, (B.A. 1971) and (M.S.W. 1975).

Rev. Schrock has a clinical practice that spreads over thirty years, working



as a psychotherapist in a private psychiatric clinic and maintaining a private practice for many of those years. In the mid 1990s, he entered Sacred Heart Theological Seminary in pursuit of a lifelong longing for ministry and the spiritual care of people. He was ordained into the apostolic priesthood in 2000 and served as a supply priest while continuing his private practice. His interest in reading Swedenborg, led him to contact the Laporte Society of the New Church, where through a series synchronistic events, he was lead to SHS for study and was received into Swedenborgian ministry by induction at the convention held in Urbana, Ohio, in 2006.

Rev. Schrock's desire to serve on CAM is also his desire to "give back," to CAM and to the New Church out of gratitude for the opportunity to serve in this, the Lord's New Church!

Lorraine Cuthbertson: SHS Board of Trustees

I am honoured to be nominated again for a position on the SHS Board of Trustees. After taking a one-year break from serving on the Board, I am again ready to serve this wonderful organization. I previously served as a board member and recording secretary.

I am a life-long member of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario, and serve as a board member and treasurer. I assist with the youth when time permits and am affectionately referred to as "the kitchen lady," as the kitchen is usually where you can find me when I'm in the Church.

Professionally I am a corporate law clerk with a boutique law firm in

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Lions and Tigers and Bears, Oh My!

BY LORI STEINHISER

Lions, tigers, bears. . . and sixteen tweens. . . oh my! Man-na House at the LaPorte New Church in Indiana was bursting at the seams with this energetic and enthusiastic group of kids between the ages of nine and thirteen. Kurt Fekete, director of the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL), flew in from Maine to lead an exploration of the deeper meaning of animals in the Bible with kids from Indiana and Michigan. It was such a pleasure to be a part of this community while they worked hard (and played hard—and ate . . . and ate . . . and ate. . .) together, learning about God, themselves, and each other.

We discovered that animals in the Bible symbolize feelings that we have inside. In our sessions we learned how the snake reminds us of the consequences that we face when we fail to resist the temptations of the material world. The many stories from the Bible involving fish and birds teach us to pay careful attention to our thoughts and actions. Stories of the lion symbolize a powerful love of God, or in a negative sense, the temptations of a love of self. The retreat sessions closed with the lamb, an image of the Lord representing gentle, kind, and innocent love of angels in the highest heaven.

Rousing games of freeze tag, rabbit and the fox, red rover (short-lived, since Leo fell like a board in round one . . . “whoa.”), triangle tag, sardines, and Catch Phrase, as well as creative Mod Podge mosaic madness, snake braiding, and a whacky, out-of-order viewing of Prince Caspian filled in the time between sessions.

Kids and youth leaders alike left excitedly talking about our fabulous experience and when we can get to-



The tweens and their snake/bird/fish mosaic in LPNC's lovely garden that was dedicated to Daisy Halle on New Church Day 2009, during one of the church's 150th-year anniversary celebrations. (l to r): Bekka, Joey, Tony, Brian, Makayla, Aaron, Scout, Emily, Desiree, Skylor, Luke, Leo, Jimmy, and Alex (not pictured: Lizzy and Riley).



Kurt and the Tweens during the final session Sunday morning.

gether to do it again at camps, the annual convention, and retreats. Wow!

Many thanks to LaPorte New Church for providing the nurturing space for these seeds to be planted, and to local youth leaders Dawn Fox and Lansing's Rev. Jenn Tafel (joined by yours truly) for all of the time and love you pour into the hearts of our youth. And, of course, a *huge* thank



Tweens working on the mosaic.

you to Kurt—we all are so blessed by your passion and service through the SCYL. ☩

Lori Steinhiser is a youth leader and member of the LaPorte New Church.

Books

Sharing Spiritual Experiences

Fingerprints of God and The Journey Home

REVIEWED BY GEORGE DOLE

*Fingerprints of God: The Search for the Science of Spirituality*Barbara Bradley Hagerty
Riverhead Books: 2009

The author is a professional journalist. She was raised as a Christian Scientist, went through a period of alienation, and eventually had an experience in which she was “engulfed by a presence” she could feel but not touch. “Ever since then,” she writes, “I have wanted to write a book that answers the questions that I never voice in the two worlds I inhabit.” These are the worlds of journalistic skepticism and religious unquestioning faith; and she set out on the quest that resulted in this book. Starting with her own spiritual experiences, she looks at the spiritual experiences of others, at various efforts to demonstrate the power of prayer, at chemically induced experiences, and questions of individual susceptibility, at abnormal brain functions, and at medical materialism.

It is then in the “autoscopy” features of near-death experiences that she finds an area where the two worlds overlap. There is no way science can test the validity of the experiences of the tunnel or the being of light, but when indi-

viduals come back to life and give accurate reports of what happened while they were physically non-functional, these reports are open to empirical verification.

The most convincing of these was the case of Pamela Reynolds. Life-saving surgery on a brain aneurism requires that all the blood be drained from her brain. This involved lowering her body temperature to eighty degrees and stopping her heart. At the time of the surgery, her EEG was flat. On recovery, she asked why the surgery had required twenty people, described the drill, and reported some of the conversation. The surgeon was asked whether Pamela could have seen or heard anything during the surgery, and replied, “Absolutely not.” He also said, “From

There is no tendency to dismiss the unusual out of hand or to swallow it whole.

a scientific perspective, I have absolutely no explanation of how it could have happened.” Yet one anesthesiologist

(who was not present at the operation) dismisses the whole thing as “hogwash.” Galileo ran into the same kind of attitude in the seventeenth century—“Damn the evidence! Full dogma ahead.”

The book then looks at the testimony of some “scientists who have arrived at God’s doorstep,” including Einstein and Hawking, and concludes with her own personal reflections.

This, to me, is journalism at its best—critical, fair-minded, and engaging. There is no tendency to dismiss the unusual out of hand or to swallow it whole. There is an honest effort to collect first-hand reports and not to draw conclusions prematurely. It is also an

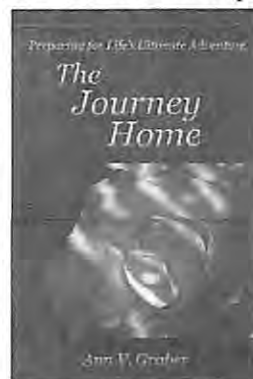
assurance that we do not need dogmatism ourselves. We have nothing to fear from fairmindedness.

The Journey Home: Preparing for Life’s Ultimate Adventure

Ann V. Graber

LogoLife Press: 2009

This is above all a wise and helpful little book. Dr. Graber is one of the few people who can read Swedenborg’s descriptions of the other world with a true sense of recognition—as one who has been there herself, and I will not even try to convey the impact of her description of that experience. It is the beating heart of the book. I will say only that what she recognized in her experience was



The main body of the book is very much down to earth, wise, and caring guidance for dealing with the various ways in which deaths affect us.

not heavenly landscapes but heavenly qualities.

“My impression,” she writes, “was of swirling currents of pure compassion of radiant love, of infinite wisdom, of aliveness and vitality that sustained worlds without end. These qualities were as palpable as tangible objects are in our world, not abstract or elusive. I felt wondrously safe there. I was home!”

That is where the book begins, and that spirit permeates the rest of the book. Whether it is a matter of facing our own death, our own bereave-

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Scholar-in-Residence

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in God—that they weren’t abandoned and lost.

That evening I lectured on the Urbana University campus. My lecture was slightly different and my audience was different. A surprising number of UU students attended, as well as faculty and Swedenborgians from Ohio. We had about sixty listeners. As I was in a more formally academic setting, I included more citations, more poetic analysis, and more discussion of Emerson as an indirect Swedenborgian influence. Although there was polite attention and people stayed throughout the lecture, I didn’t feel the level of engagement from the students that I had experienced in the prison.

After my lecture, there were only two questions—one from UU President Stephen Jones, and one from a professor. The faculty were accustomed to academic lectures, so they remained attentive and shared their appreciation afterward. This is not to say that there wasn’t keen attention from some of the students—there was. I suspect that what I confronted was in the nature of poetry. The visceral struggles and pain that Frost so often writes about may not be in the experience of younger people. As Frost says in “To Earthward,” in his youth he “craved sweet things,” such as “Love at the lips,” “. . . musk / From hidden grapevines,” “The pedal of the rose.” It isn’t until a more mature age that “pain, / And weariness and fault” command his attention. At a more mature age he craves “the stain / Of tears, the aftermark / Of almost too much love.” But everyone came away with a greater understanding of Swedenborg and the idea that Swedenborg is a force to contend with in literature, be it in Emerson or Frost. And the Swedenborgians in attendance came away with a detailed exposition of yet one more great figure who found inspira-

tion from the Swedish Mystic.

The next day was intense and intensely rewarding. It began with a brown bag lunch to which staff, faculty, and students were invited. This occasion allowed for more interaction. The organizers told me it would be a discussion, and they also told me that since no one knew much about Swedenborg, there wouldn’t be a lot of meaningful questions. I found that this was hardly the case. The conference room was set up with tables forming a large square. My discussion topic was “Swedenborg’s Take on Angels and Demons,” which meant heaven and hell. For the greater part of an hour I held an engaged, in fact spellbound audience’s attention on heaven and hell.

I was able to speak in great detail, including the levels and principal loves in heaven and hell, freedom of choice and a person’s place in the afterlife, and, from my Frost lecture, correspondences in one’s spiritual environment, and even marital love and sexuality in heaven.

I was able to speak in great detail, including the levels and principal loves in heaven and hell, freedom of choice and a person’s place in the afterlife, and, from my Frost lecture, correspondences in one’s spiritual environment, and even marital love and sexuality in heaven. One teacher brought her class, and she had them take notes, relating my talk to their lives. Teachers asked questions clarifying Swedenborg in relation to other theologians such as Calvin and Augustine. There were questions on Dante and how Bible citations relate to Swedenborg’s ideas on heaven and hell. Swedenborg’s ideas were

well received by many, who came up to me afterward asking for more information. Another came up to share how similar Swedenborg’s teachings were to Sylvia Browne, a contemporary psychic. One woman wanted me to talk with her mother.

I then proceeded to a world religions class. Since this class had systematically studied Eastern religions, I could talk about Swedenborg in formal theological terms. I discussed the Trinity, faith and works, salvation, and Bible interpretation. I began by explaining why the Urbana library displays the phrase *Nunc licet intellectualiter intrare in arcana fidei*. (Now it is permitted to enter with understanding into the mysteries of faith.) I had a little trouble remembering the Latin, so one student looked out the window, unsuccessfully trying to see the library. I observed that, as a man of the period of the Enlightenment, Swedenborg wanted his theology to be reasonable. I compared Swedenborg’s theology with traditional Christianity, noting where the differences were. One student seemed perplexed about how salvation by faith in the atonement relates to the continual need for forgiveness. Another aptly commented that Swedenborg’s description of the incarnation was like an avatar. Professor Griswald asked clarifying questions and helped guide my discussion. He seemed quite impressed with Swedenborg and with my discussion. He told me I set up his upcoming discussion of Christianity well.

At dinner I met with the honor students and faculty for pizza and another discussion. I was a little selfish at this event, asking the students questions of my own. After a brief introduction about Swedenborg, I asked the students where they saw the place of spirituality in an increasingly secular society. They rose to my challenge with well-thought-out responses. One

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General Council Spring Meeting

The General Council of the Swedenborgian Church met for its spring meeting by teleconference on April 10, 2010.

President Chris Laitner reported on several issues. The San Francisco Church has initiated a pastoral search as it plans for the conclusion of the Rev. Jeff Chiefert's interim ministry. The new operations manager Renée Helenbrecht and bookkeeper Gina Peracchi are functioning well in their jobs at Central Office. President Lait-

ner and Ms. Helenbrecht just returned from a convention site visit in St. Paul, reporting that the facilities are very nice and everything is in place for the annual convention. The New Church of Montgomery (near Cincinnati) has decided to sell their church to a developer and find a more appropriate site for worship. The Council approved a request from the Wayfarers Chapel Board of Managers to change its name to Board of Directors to better reflect their function.

The Council voted to extend the contract of the on-line community minister through December 31, 2020, to coincide with the end of the Council's commitment to fund the community for five years. An interim committee will recommend a permanent steering committee at the annual convention with a request for mission funding.

Treasurer Susanah Currie presented new accounting requirements and recommendations. The most important of these is a requirement that the recorded principle amount of bequests

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admitted that their generation was distracted by technology. Another said that children know intuitively what is right and what is wrong. They felt that they didn't need church or God's laws to teach them what is right. A professor stated that churches are derived from spiritual texts, and that people could go directly to the texts to form their own spirituality without a church. To which I responded, "But are they going to the texts?" To which a student responded that she didn't feel she could understand the Bible without a priest's help in interpreting it. A student then asked why she needed to know the Bible stories. I made the point that in church I find answers for questions about who and what God is, how to form a relationship with God, what values I should hold, and other like issues. To this, a student replied that, indeed, she hadn't been aware of these questions at all. The give-and-take of this meeting was lively and the moderator thanked me for a good discussion. She said some students continued the discussion as they left, and may well continue into the evening. I felt that we all came away with a greater understanding of the problem.

On my final day, I enjoyed fellowship with members of the Urbana Swedenborgian Church over lunch. Some were new to the church, and it was interesting to hear how they felt plagued by old belief systems from their upbringings that they were trying to replace with welcome Swedenborgian beliefs. One new member talked about her mother's strict beliefs. Her mother believed that her daughter's sickness was punishment for sins committed by the mother. Lay Leader Betsy Coffman and I were quick to point out that God isn't a punishing God and that each individual is responsible for their own spirituality. In discussing the legal problems one member's husband had, we elaborated on the differences between unconscious evil and freely chosen sin. Another member talked about how hard it was to shed the feelings of guilt and sin she inherited from her parental and early childhood Baptist upbringing. She found Swedenborg so down to earth, reasonable, and refreshing that she couldn't understand why more people didn't flock to this church.

At lunch Bill Coffman affirmed how important and effective my visit had been. This visit and others like it

are now a primary way of maintaining a Swedenborgian presence at Urbana University. Urbana University was founded by Swedenborgians and has a strong historical connection with the Swedenborgian Church. There is a provision in Urbana's charter that a minimum of seven Swedenborgians be on the UU board. Officially, Urbana University is no longer a Swedenborgian college. The continued relationship of Urbana to our church is an issue close to my heart, as an alumnus and as a Swedenborgian.

The dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Cheryl Fenno, thanked me for an informative visit and for lectures and discussions that were accessible to the general public. The Swedenborg Scholar-in-Residence program is one of the few surviving links between the Swedenborgian Church and Urbana University. It keeps the legacy of Swedenborg visible and alive in the life of the university. I was happy to see my Alma Mater again, now as an accomplished scholar and minister, and to bring the message of Swedenborg's theology to the school that made such a difference in my life. ☼

The Rev. Dr. David Fekete is pastor of the Edmonton (Alberta) Church of the Holy City.

Letters to the Editor

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acting well are necessary for justification and salvation. Living a good life and not doing evil—these are not just a by-product of faith; they enable the Lord to bring us to heaven.

I offer one minor criticism with the article, about the translation of Galatians 5.16-17. Actually Paul said, "So I say, Walk in the spirit, and do not gratify the lust of the flesh. . . . You must not do the [evil] things that you wish." He did not say, "Walk in the spirit, and you will not gratify the lust of the flesh." Note the subtle but key difference. Paul wasn't teaching the Protestant doctrine that once we're saved by faith alone, we *will* live well. Paul actually was speaking commands from God: walk in the spirit, and do not gratify the lust of the flesh, and you

must not do evil things that you want to do. Paul doesn't say that if faith saves us, this will just happen; he says we must not live in a bad way.

Although the Revised Standard Version (RSV) gets this translation correct, the old King James Version (KJV), the New King James Version (NKJV), and most modern translations get it wrong. (The *Interpreter's Bible* acknowledges that the verb is imperative, not future. The Greek word for "not"—*mé*, not the usual *ouk*—shows that the verb "gratify" is an imperative, a command, not the indicative future tense. And the Greek *hina mé* shows that the clause "so that you must not do the [evil] things that you wish" is a purpose clause, a command, not a simple result clause.)

This widely accepted mistranslation was clearly produced by Protestant theology—by the belief that sal-

vation comes from our having "faith," not from living as the Lord teaches. (A similar mistranslation is John 7.39, where the KJV and NKJV add the word "given" in order to agree with traditional Christian doctrine about "who" the Holy Spirit is.)

Correctly translated, Galatians 5.16-21 is a key passage that strongly supports David's point. Faith by itself doesn't save anyone. As Swedenborg so often wrote, religion is of life, and we need to make real effort, as if of ourselves, to act as God teaches.

Thank you again for including this important article in *The Messenger*.

—Dan Goodenough,
Big Horn, Wyoming

Dan Goodenough is a semi-retired General Church minister, serving in the western US, after a career in teaching and administration at the Academy of the New Church in Pennsylvania.

New Swedenborg Foundation Titles

Swedenborg, Mesmer, and the Mind/Body Connection: The Roots of Complementary Medicine by John S. Haller Jr.

Healing practices as diverse as homeopathy, chiropractic, and therapeutic touch draw their inspiration and effectiveness from an unseen world beyond the physical senses. Our view of that world is the legacy of two key thinkers: Emanuel Swedenborg and Franz Anton Mesmer.

The starting point is the competing worldviews of Swedenborg, a mystic whose deep faith in God and visions of the afterlife have moved generations, and Mesmer, whose magnetic healing system required nothing but the forces of nature. Both were convinced that good health depended on properly managing one's internal ener-

gies, whether that meant a life of biblical virtue or simply achieving balance with the universe. This book traces the influence of these two men through the nineteenth century as their ideas were embraced by utopians, psychic healers, spiritualists, mind-cure advocates, homeopaths, and ultimately by the inheritors of those traditions—modern practitioners of alternative and complementary healing.

Swedenborg, Mesmer, and the Mind/Body Connection illuminates a pivotal time in American history, when pioneers explored not only the boundaries of their growing nation, but the limits—and the intersection—of mind and spirit.

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

Dictionary of Correspondences by George Nicholson

Interwoven with Emanuel Swedenborg's commentary on the Bible is his system of correspondences, which describes the relationship between the spiritual and the physical worlds in symbolic terms. For Swedenborg, specific people, places, animals, and objects represented spiritual principles or ideas—for example, light corresponds to truth, and darkness to ignorance. Using this system, he interpreted the Bible in a radically new way, using it to illuminate the path to spiritual growth.

First compiled in the decades following Swedenborg's death, the *Dictionary of Correspondences* has been continually revised and reprinted for over two hundred years. It provides an essential reference to Swedenborg's complex thought that can be used by students, scholars, and the curious alike. ☙

GATE*way (*Growing Angels Through Education)

BY JOHN MAINE



Do children matter in our church? How well are we serving them and their families?

Well, the results of your Sunday School Association's Annual Survey of Sunday Schools (2009) are in, and they reveal some interesting trends. So, without further ado, here is the big picture of what we have been doing and where we might be going in our ministries to children.

First it should be noted that we received a total of twenty-four responses to the survey, which was sent out to all our churches in the United States and Canada. That's a very representative sampling of the whole, although it's disappointing that a minority still do not respond at all, despite repeated urgings. That's a troubling issue and may have to do with the fact that many of our churches simply do not operate Sunday Schools. Of the twenty-four respondents, just over half (fourteen in all) have programs for children while the remainder do not.

Total reported enrolment in Sunday schools (children aged one to thirteen), is 109. Adding in the Sunday school enrolment of a few other (non-responding) churches, it is reasonable to assume that the total number of children in Swedenborgian Sunday schools in North America is about 130. That, of course, is a drastic decline from the "golden age" of fifty years ago, when some of our churches had close to that number of children on their rolls. This trend should challenge us to do some serious thinking about how we do church, including young people's church, in our present context.

Of the fourteen churches respond-

ing, four host our largest Sunday schools with enrollments of eleven to twenty-eight children each. The remainder have from two to ten children each. Not surprisingly, given the mostly small numbers, nearly all of our churches operate their programs as "one room schoolhouses," with kindergartners to tweens mixed together. This makes for some real challenges in meeting widely differing needs and learning styles.

Most churches' programs operate throughout the year except for the summer months, and are directed by a volunteer Sunday school superintendent or coordinator. The total number of Sunday school teachers (all volunteers of course) is forty-one, for an average of about three teachers per church. It's worth noting that these individuals, who have the charge of fulfilling Jesus' call to let the little ones come to him, are frequently described in terms of the greatest admiration, respect, and love.

Thanks in large part to their efforts, the majority of our churches with Sunday schools report that their enrolment figures are either stable or growing. Interestingly, in reporting reasons for growth, only one or two churches appeared to have proactive, community outreach strategies listed as key factors in increasing numbers. Most others seemed to have a more passive approach, giving reasons that varied from "the minister's family had a baby" to "our increase was totally by luck!"

Nearly all reported the strength of their programs was in the commitment and care of the teachers and the enthusiasm and interest of the children. Only a few, however, mentioned, or reflected upon, the relatively "kid friendly" nature of their churches. The church with the largest Sunday school reported they had "a long tradition of valuing Sunday

school for children"—the only such a statement in any of the surveys received. Conversely, when talking about the challenges to their programs, nearly all simply stated the obvious, that they had too few children. Where reasons for this were given, most blamed the small size of the congregation, an aging membership, and the difficulties in teaching the wide age-range of children. Only one church, however, mentioned a problem with finding adult volunteers to be teachers.

As for what the children are actually taught, some interesting trends emerged. Only two of the churches reporting rely exclusively on the traditional *Dole Notes*, while only one church noted using other materials developed by or within our denomination (e.g. the *Sower Notes*, etc.). Of the rest, a majority (including all of those with the largest Sunday schools) are now using curriculum packages. Most used is *Seasons of the Spirit*, liberal Protestant in orientation, followed by *New Church Vineyard*, put out by the General Church.

As for your Sunday School Association's website and its resources, this continues to be little used. Interesting suggestions were made to the effect that the website might be most useful as a source of active networking and support amongst teachers. Some, however, also asked for more Swedenborgian lesson plans to be available. In terms of actually producing the latter, a few churches are signing on to the "Share the Story" campaign, but most still have not.

Where does all this leave us? What do we learn from the Annual Survey of 2009? That children are loved and precious and seen as blessings to the churches that have them; that a valiant and faithful few who strive to teach

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Spiritual Experiences

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ment, or the bereavement of others, the thought that death itself is beautiful can free us from the constricting tentacles of fear and open the way to thoughtful, caring responses.

In a way, it seems that the easiest situation to deal with is facing our own death or our own bereavement, because in these cases nothing is hidden unless we choose to hide it from ourselves. As Ann observes, though, "Perceiving or assessing another's readiness to explore the subject of death with its attendant fears and anxieties is a delicate matter." We may very well feel that we are walking on eggshells, and we may very well be right. But when it comes to our own attitudes, it is simply a matter of moving beyond the irrationality of denial; and if the image of "coming home" touches our hearts as well as our minds, that motion is well under way. If as you read you find yourself losing touch with that feeling, by all means go back and reread the opening account.

The main body of the book is very much down to earth, wise and caring guidance for dealing with the various ways in which deaths affect us. It asks nothing epic, nothing "transcendental," only (!) urging that we operate from a sense of inner safety, and illustrating many of the ways in which this can express itself. The instinctive response is, "Yes, I could do that."

Her references to Swedenborg fit beautifully with the whole tenor of the book. There is nothing whatever preachy about them because they come simply as descriptions of the "home" she herself has found. I was reminded of how often Swedenborg says, though not in so many words, "Just wait—you'll see."

The book is full of little gems. One is Teilhard de Chardin's "We are not human beings having a spiritual experience,

2010 Women's Gathering Leaves Weekend—

A Feast Of Friends

When? July 8 -11, 2010

Where? The Lord's New Church,
Huntingdon Valley/Bryn Athyn, PA

For Whom? All New Church/
Swedenborgian women

Purpose? To get together, learn and connect with others in our own and our sister denominations.

What do we still need? Women willing to house people during the retreat.

Who do I ask/talk to? Any of the Steering Committee members, e.g. Julie Conaron julieconaron@hotmail.com, Ros Taylor hrtaylor@temple.edu, Caroline Glenn caromglenn@gmail.com, Linda Odhner lsiodhner@verizon.net, Dawn Potts DawnEPotts@yahoo.com

Where can I see more information and pictures?
www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=205898382754&ref=ts

Gathering



rience, we are spiritual beings having a human experience." Perhaps my favorite, though, is the author's own description of the effect of her experience, that it "led to an acceptance of who I had become as a result of having lived." In our usual serious efforts at self-evaluation, we are dependent on our very fragmentary recollections of things we have felt and thought, said and done—a little like trying to measure an ocean with a teaspoon, or more precisely, trying to assess its quality. If only we could see the whole ocean, see our lives whole, and in the Lord's clear and loving light and simply accept ourselves as the individuals we have become as the result of having lived. It is worth imagining at least, and even worth believing. ☞



The Rev. George Dole is minister of the Bath (Maine) New Church and a professor at the Swedenborgian House of Studies. He is the author of many

GATEways

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them and show them the way need more support and the tools to do the job? Yes, definitely.

But more than that, how we do Sunday school is a reflection of the larger issue of how we're doing church, how we're being God's people in the world. In that regard, I think we need to reflect deeply about the place we make for children and families. Are they really at the heart of what we're about (what a radical idea!) in helping to raise up that new community we call the New Jerusalem? Are we as a church doing all we can to make that happen? Are we passionate in welcoming and reaching out to young families? These are the questions we must face if we are to have—and deserve—a future. ☞

The Rev. John Maine is president of the Sunday School Association.

books about and inspired by Emanuel Swedenborg's writings.

Nominees

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Kitchener, where I manage the corporate/commercial work. I have almost twenty-five years experience in this field of law, and I believe this experience is a huge asset to any board on which I serve.

I have had a special affinity for SHS since its beginnings in California, and would enjoy serving it again as a member of the board.

Ronald Frostestad: SHS Board of Trustees

I am honored to be nominated to the Swedenborgian House of Studies Board of Trustees. I have a strong interest in higher education and in the vision not only to train the church's future vocational leaders, but also to further the reach of Swedenborgian scholarship. I believe I have valuable skills, especially in financial and organiza-

tional planning, to add to the current team of trustees.

I have been a member of the San Francisco church for fifteen years, though my participation goes back as far as twenty-eight years. I served as president of the congregation in the late nineties and have been involved actively in all phases of the church's life, especially since becoming a member. I was trained as a mathematician and an economist, and today I am a management consultant to the health care industry, specializing in accounting, finance, actuarial science, decision support information systems, and strategic planning. My client base extends to hospitals, medical groups, insurance carriers, and governments. Most are non-profit organizations with issues very similar to that of SHS.



My wife, Lanette, is also a member in the San Francisco church and served as treasurer in the early nineties. Our daughter, Lena, now in college, was baptized in the San Francisco church, grew up attending Sunday school from early childhood through high school, and received confirmation there.

Tom Neuenfeldt: SHS Board of Trustees

It is with a mixture of pleasure and humility that I accept the nomination to renew my involvement with SHS. It has been a great joy to be involved in this important arm of our denomination. I have had a great deal to learn over the past two years with respect to the development of clergy and the mission of developing Swedenborgian scholar-



ship within and outside of the church.

I have served as chair of the Academic Committee and have been involved in the development of the new Certificate of Swedenborgian Studies. We have designed the requirements to meet the changing needs of the Swedenborgian Church and the diversity and distance of our students. It is now an accredited certificate through the Pacific School of Religion.

BJ and I continue to live in Ithaca, Michigan. We are both very involved in the Almont New Church Assembly, continuing the family heritage from BJ's great-great-grandparents to our grandchildren. I officially joined the church last summer when I became confirmed at Almont. We are blessed to be enveloped by such a loving church family and are committed to its service. ☛

Academic Conference in Stockholm

The Royal Academy of Sciences is celebrating the completion of a new catalog of its Swedenborg archive by hosting an academic conference in Stockholm, Sweden, June 7-9, 2010.

Titled Emanuel Swedenborg—Exploring a "World Memory": Context, Content, Contribution, the conference will feature presentations on topics such as Swedenborg's science and theology, the times in which he lived, and his continuing influence on art and literature.

Swedenborg Foundation board member Jane Williams-Hogan is on the conference's organizational committee and will also present a paper on "The Swedish Lutheran Contribution to the Work Marriage Love." Board members Stuart Shotwell and Sylvia Montgomery Shaw and New Century Edition Series Editor Jonathan S. Rose will present papers as well. ☛

Convention Chorus

I've been asked to serve as annual convention choir director for yet another year. It is my honor to serve convention in the worship services. Anyone attending who would like to sing may participate.

Last year, I sent mp3 audio files of the music to choir members who wanted to get a head start, thereby reducing the time needed for practice at convention.

I'm offering that option again this year. If you would like to learn your parts before convention, please send me your email address (lstwirley@yahoo.com), and I'll send you an mp3 audio file of the music. If you'd prefer to receive the music via postal mail, you'll need to contact me before the end of May so I can get it to you in plenty of time.

—Laurie Turley

186th Session of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem, June 23–27, 2010

Council of Ministers: June 20–22

Registration Form

Convention 2010 will be held in St. Paul, Minnesota, on the campus of the University of St. Thomas. To learn more about St. Thomas, visit www.stthomas.edu. To learn more about the 2010 Convention and view a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), please visit www.swedenborg.org or call the Central Office at 617.969.4240.

Lodging: We will be staying in Flynn Hall. This hall is air-conditioned and has both double and single rooms, including a limited number of suites.

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

Teen Program: The youth program runs from Wednesday, June 23 through Sunday, June 27, and is supervised by Kurt Fekete. If you want your teen (age 13–17) to attend without a parent, please see the FAQ or contact the Central Office for details.

Local Activities: There will be an optional trip to see the Dead Sea Scrolls at the Science Museum of Minnesota (www.smm.org/scrolls). Additional details and costs will be forthcoming.

All guests staying off campus who wish to eat meals in the Dining Hall will have to prepay; the Dining Hall cannot accept cash or credit cards. Please read the FAQ or contact the Central Office for details.

Parking is available. Please indicate on the form below that you will be bringing a car.

Registration Deadline: Friday, May 14 by 5 PM EST.

Cancellations: If you do not cancel on or before Monday, May 17, you will forfeit your entire prepayment. Cancellations must be done by calling the Central Office directly during normal business hours (8:30 AM–5 PM EST, M–F).

You must choose from the following room packages:

- Package A (June 20–27, seven nights), Council of Ministers:**
\$448 per person, double occupancy; \$560 single occupancy
Includes seven nights of lodging, seven breakfasts, six lunches, and seven dinners.
- Package B (June 22–27, five nights), General Council:**
\$320 per person, double occupancy; \$400 single occupancy
Includes five nights of lodging, five breakfasts, four lunches, and five dinners.
- Package C (June 23–27, four nights):**
\$256 per person, double occupancy; \$320 single occupancy
Includes four nights of lodging, four breakfasts, three lunches, and four dinners.
- Package D (June 23–27, meals only):**
\$90, includes four breakfasts, three lunches, and four dinners.

Name		Attending Women's Alliance luncheon?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Name			Yes ☐ No ☐
Will you be parking on campus?			Yes ☐ No ☐
Street		Apt. #	
City	State (Province)	Zip	
Home Church	Email	Day Phone	
Names, ages, and genders of children accompanying you			
Requests (dietary, mobility, roommate)			

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

Registration	Amt	# People	Total
Adult	\$100		
Teen (13–17)	\$90		
Child (3–12)	\$50		
Under 3 years old	Free		
*Family maximum	\$300		
One Day Registration	\$40		
Local Volunteer	\$55		
WA Luncheon (with meal plan)	\$10		
WA Luncheon (without meal plan)	\$18		

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

Payment Information

All prices are in US currency. If you pay with Canadian funds, please add US\$5 (roughly CAD\$5.35) for handling of each Canadian check. Please be advised that all prices are listed in US funds, and must be converted for other currencies. All bills must be paid in full before May 17. No refunds after May 17. Bills may be paid by check, Visa or by MasterCard. You may call the Central Office to make a secure credit card payment at 617.969.4240.

Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Expiration Date: _____

Card Number: _____

Cardholder's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Send checks payable to The Swedenborgian Church to:

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

*Family maximum price applies to immediate family members (i.e., parents/guardians and children) only.

Passages

Births



Genevieve Lois Dole was born April 7, 2010. Mother and baby are fine. Parents Sarah Buteux and Andrew Dole are

members of the Cambridge Society and live in Amherst, Massachusetts.

Baptisms

Paulina Nikolaevna was baptized into the Christian faith at Swedenborg Chapel in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on Easter Sunday, April 4, 2010, the Rev. Kevin Baxter officiating.



Deaths

Alberta Theriault, life-long member of the New Church, passed away March 16, 2010. Alberta was the mother of Barbara (Casper) Dietz and sister of Col. John Keller. Her memorial service was held March 20 at Swedenborg Chapel in Cleveland, Ohio, the Rev. Ron Brugler officiating. ☿

General Council

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be updated every year to reflect inflation. The Council will take action at the June meeting.

Renée Helenbrecht reported that she and David Brown (Information Management support Unit [IMSU]) have been exploring new Web-hosting options. The new Web site being developed by IMSU will require more capabilities than the (free) site the Bayside Church has been providing. The final cost is to be determined. The annual audit by our consulting firm, Accountability, is about to begin.

The Central Office suffered a two-week period without heat in February, necessitating a temporary move to Martha Bauer's house nearby. (Thank you, Martha.) The Central Office Review Committee was appointed (Chris Laitner, Lori Steinhiser, Susan Wood-Ashton, and Deane Currie) and is working with Renée to explore plans to address that problem.

In response to a Massachusetts law and as a matter of good practice, Renée has drafted an information security plan to provide standards for the protection of personal information held by Central Office, which the Council vot-

ed to approve. These standards assure proper use of passwords, locking file cabinets, off-site record storage, and key management in the storage of and access to personal information.

The president of the Council of Minsters (COM) reported on the activities of the Executive Committee. Peer supervision retreats are completed. These have gathered more attendance and become more important as new professional accountability rules voted by COM come into effect. The Executive Committee is contacting members to offer assistance in meeting the new requirements.

The next meeting of the General Council was set for June 23 in St. Paul. The newly-elected Council will meet on June 27 in St. Paul.

At the conclusion of the GC meeting, Susannah Currie convened a meeting of the Iungerich Publication Fund. For several years, the trustees of the fund have been the members of General Council. At this meeting those trustees voted to replace themselves with a new, smaller board, consisting of Chris Laitner, Matthew Fleming, Barbara Cullen, and Herb Ziegler. These trustees will examine the wording of the bequest and publicize guidelines for application and awards. ☿

Dead Sea Scrolls

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objects of such personal- and civilization-shaking importance?

The large number of ancient artifacts and accompanying text in the show help to set the stage and tell the story of the scrolls; it unfolds like both a novel and a scholarly tract. Visitors will learn of the mysteries surrounding their origin and discovery, and how the bits and pieces were preserved, organized, and translated amid jealousy, exciting detective work, scholarly debate, and the romance of great

Dead Sea Scroll Reservations

To reserve a place for the tour of the Dead Sea Scroll and St. John's Bible exhibits at the Minnesota Museum of Science (and the shuttle bus), send \$28 (check only) to Virginia Street Church, 170 Virginia Street, St. Paul, MN 55102, no later than May 31, 2010. Call 651.224.4553 or 651.646.6815 for more information.

discovery.

The St. John's Bible is a work in progress. Created in Minnesota, it is the first illuminated Bible created since

the end of the Middle Ages. The exhibit displays large folio pages with hand drawn decoration using techniques of the ancient scribes, employing vellum, goose quills, and ink. The project was designed and is directed by Donald Jackson, master calligrapher to Queen Elizabeth II.

Each of these exhibits provides a rare and inspiring experience. Don't miss this once in a lifetime opportunity. ☿

Jim Erickson is a member of the Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church in St. Paul.

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.

Twin Cities Beckon Swedenborgian Conventioneers

BY JIM ERICKSON

Ethnic Diversity

Greater Minneapolis and St. Paul have a population of about two and a half to three million people. This population is diverse, with over one hundred languages spoken. Ethnic groups include the largest urban population of Native Americans, the largest Somali and Hmong communities in the USA, a large Hispanic community, S.E. Asians, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Indians. St. Paul is home to more Tibetans than any city in the USA except New York. There are many Arabs as well as Turks and Afghanis. Naturally, there are restaurants that cater to these and many other tastes.

Cultural Venues

The two cities also have two major professional full time orchestras, several opera companies, scores of professional dance and theater companies, and the first national repertory theater in the country, the Guthrie. There are upwards of a dozen Broadway and Off Broadway productions playing at any time and dinner theaters. The Children's Theater Company is an international prize winner along with the Rose Ensemble, a semi-professional ensemble of mostly ac-

capella Renaissance singers.

There are several major museums in the twin towns, two nationally celebrated zoos, a thriving movie industry, and of course, the largest shopping mall in the country.

Dead Sea Scrolls & St. John's Bible Exhibits

In an optional outing at Annual Convention 2010 in St. Paul, shuttle buses will take you to the Science Museum of Minnesota, where you will get a rare look at two of the most extraordinary examples of the Bible ever produced. Fragments from The Dead Sea Scrolls, the most famous ancient Biblical artifact ever found, are displayed at the museum in an exhibit that intrigues and informs. A companion exhibit features the St. John's Bible, the first illuminated Bible produced in five centuries.

As would be expected, this is not the presentation of all nine hundred parchment shards of the scrolls found thus far. Even though this exhibit does not contain the complete collection, who doesn't thrill at seeing a representation of some of the most important ancient

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