



The New Church

BY GEORGE F. DOLE

For there is nothing hidden that will not be manifested, neither has anything been kept secret except that it should come abroad. Mark 4:22

It is safe to say, I believe, that none of us would relish having all our secret thoughts and feelings made public. Strange as it may sound, though, this may be an essentially baseless fear. If only our worst thoughts and feelings were on display that would be one thing, but if *all* were out in the open, it would be clear that we ourselves do not *like* what we are keeping hidden—that, obviously, is why we do not want others to see it. If they could see the hurt that prompts the resentment or the pain that prompts the fear, they would not be quick to condemn.

Let us back up a little and set this in context. The only life we have is the life that flows in from the Lord. That is the source of energy for everything we think and feel and say and do. That life, as it comes into us, wants only what is good. When we think or feel or say or do things of which we are ashamed, then, we are reaching for something good in ways that are not good, like starving people stealing food. If all we see is the theft, all we see is what is wrong, and it would be false to pretend that it is good. If we can see the need, though, we can set that wrong in its proper context and see that there is more to the individual than this single crime.



Once we realize that our faults wound us and that those wounds cannot be healed until they are acknowledged, our text reads less like a threat and more like a promise.

We ourselves have done and said things that were not good. True, there may be people in our lives who would seize on the negatives, but anyone who cared about us would be trying to understand and to help. If the whole truth came out, we would not be met by waves of disapproval but with active sympathy. After all, isn't that what we would offer those who are dear to us? When see a friend acting destructively,

we want to know why and feel helpless if we do not.

Time and again I come back to that searching statement in *Heaven and Hell*: "If we believed the way things really are, that everything good comes from God and everything evil from hell, then we would not take credit for the good within us *or blame for the evil* (emphasis mine)... But since we do not believe in any inflow from heaven or from hell and therefore believe that everything we think and intend is in us and from us, we make the evil our own and defile the good with the feeling that we deserve it" (*Heaven and Hell* §302).

"We make the evil our own." We are the ones who take blame upon ourselves; and the clear implication is that the Lord does not make the evil ours or lay blame upon us. The Gospels are quite clear in this regard. "Is there anyone among you who, if his child asks for bread, will give her a stone, or if the child asks for a fish, will give a serpent? If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him?" (Matthew 7:9–11) If our imperfect hearts reach out to troubled friends, what will the Lord's perfect heart do?

Once we realize that our faults wound us and that those wounds cannot be healed until they are

Continued on page 90

What's Inside:

**Commemorating 20 Years since 9/11 • Reflections of George Dole •
Video Links to Virtual Convention • Correspondences • And More!**

Contents

The New Church	85
Editor's Corner	86
Letters to the Editor	86
Letter from the President	87
Introducing Swedenborg	88
Twenty Years of Peacebuilding After 9/11	92
Reflections on George Dole.....	94
Convention 2021 Video Links	95
Book Review: <i>Solemn Reverence</i>	96
From the Social Justice Committee	98
Thank You from the FNCA	99
Passages.....	100
A New Kind of Unconditional Love.....	101
A/V Consultant Quick Tip.....	101
What's Happening.....	103
Convention's History Mysteries.....	104

the Messenger

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Editor, design, and production: Rebekah Greenwood

Copy editing and proofing: Robert Leith, Ben Phinney, Brittany Price, Herb Ziegler, & Trevor

Standing Committee for Communication and Information: Holly Bauer, Val Brugler, & Tara Conkling

Printing: Classic GraphX, Cambridge, MA

Email: messenger@swedenborg.org

Editorial, Business, and Subscription Address:
The Messenger, Central Office
50 Quincy Street
Cambridge MA 02138

Tel: 617.969.4240

Email: manager@swedenborg.org

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Editor's Corner



What a Summer!

It's hard to believe that the annual convention was two months ago. By holding it virtually, Swedenborgians from all over the world were able to join, regardless of location, physical ability, financial situation, or whatever barrier might have been in the way of attending an in-person convention in the past. It was a full weekend of Zoom and screens, but more than once I heard people saying how excited they were to see each other and couldn't wait to go to a live convention. We had a huge number of participants and a larger delegation of voters than usual. We have been pushed into realizing that church is bigger than just the walls of any building; we are showing just how many of us are out there, and need ways to be together.

Rev. Jane Siebert references an article in her [Letter from the President](#) about coming to understand that the church is not only the parishioners in the pews, but it is also the people on their sofas, at their office desks, or in a location that is hundreds of miles from their closest church. How do we keep them engaged once a global pandemic isn't forcing us to stay home? We are a small denomination, and we must take all these virtual lessons we have learned and continue their reach. At the denomination level, there is an understanding of the importance of keeping this mindset as we continue moving forward. There are several grant opportunities available for technological support to create and maintain hybrid church services and programs—people can still start coming back to the buildings as they are comfortable

and able, but others can join online and still be part of the congregation. This is powerful.

At the Fryeburg New Church Assembly, we were lucky to receive two grants (from the [SCCI](#) and the Gray Fund) to help us to integrate our programming to be live-streamed and interactive. There was a learning curve, as there will be for all who make this endeavor, but it's worth the effort. We had people joining us and participating in lectures, discussions, meetings, and evening programs from all over the country—even early risers on the West Coast! People are out there, they want to participate, but can't necessarily make the trip—across the country or down the street.

Continues on page 101

Letters to the Editor

Response to *Things Heard & Seen*

I have a very different response to the movie *Things Heard & Seen* than that of Rev. Thom Muller. I found the movie to be a very so-so production, but also view the use of insights from *Heaven and Hell* to be very refreshing.

Having learned from numerous spiritualists about their respect for Swedenborg and the understanding of his insights as offering "how to" practices, I appreciated it in many ways. My Swedenborgian faith helps me to be in contact with my deceased son and other dear relatives quite often. I thank God that we have been given tools to use to do this!

The movie directs our minds toward a "gate into the city" that our faith confirms. We need not judge it, or close it, or fear it. It is a matter of individual spiritual freedom. We believe in different paths, or so we say. I am grateful that this path is being lifted up.

Ronald Brugler
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

Letter from the President

The Year of Providence: 2021–22



Dear Friends and Members of the Swedenborgian Church of North America,

We had over 250 people attend the events during Virtual Convention 2021, *Navigating the Rapids in the Stream of Providence*. My thanks to all of you who found time in your busy schedules to join us. It was a wonderful convention, but we will be so glad when we can gather in-person again. There is nothing like a convention hall full of Swedenborgians!

Of course, we don't know what to expect when we can finally come back together, just as our churches are now experiencing. Some members are anxious to get back in the building, while others are hesitant, and some are quite content to have another cup of coffee and join the service from home.

As we struggle with the pandemic dragging on, it is hard to plan for our uncertain future. There are many predictions, including the article Rev. Rich Tafel sent and I forwarded to all our church leadership, "[The Rise of the Post-pandemic Church: 8 Disruptive Church Trends That Will Rule 2021](#)," by Carey Nieuwhof.

One of the main things I got out of it, was *don't blame your church leadership* for low attendance in the sanctuary. Mr. Nieuwhof reports re-opening church attendance is around 36% of previous levels. But it isn't about people leaving the church, just the building. *We need a new mission that includes serving those in the pews and those on their couches.*

In my study of our ministries in the spring of 2021, asking how they are managing, over and over again I heard, "We have realized the building is not the church." "We have had people joining our virtual

worship service from all over the country and even the world." "We have had people join our church that live hundreds of miles away." *Our new goal must include how to engage them and connect them with the church community, at the same time as we serve those that choose to come and are able to come into the church building.* This requires a whole new way to understand *community*.

This is why we have implemented a program to help equip the sanctuaries to offer online services along with in-person worship. We hired a consultant to work with our leaders and a grant to help purchase equipment. It is a partnership with someone willing to learn how to use the equipment and fundraising within the local church as well as the grant from the denomination to buy what is needed. So far, five ministries have taken advantage of this grant, working through the Standing Committee for Communication and Information, and three others have done it on their own.

The main thing is to work through the struggles together. It is going to take a while to adapt, to create the new community, to not get discouraged with lower numbers in the pews, and to learn how to reach our new virtual friends for financial support. We must share our ideas that work, as well as those that don't, and keep lines of communication open between our ministries and with the denomination's leaders.

These are challenging times as we continue to navigate the rapids in the stream of providence with God at the helm.

With Care,
—Rev. Jane Siebert

Excerpts from *Introducing Swedenborg: Correspondences*

BY GARY LACHMAN

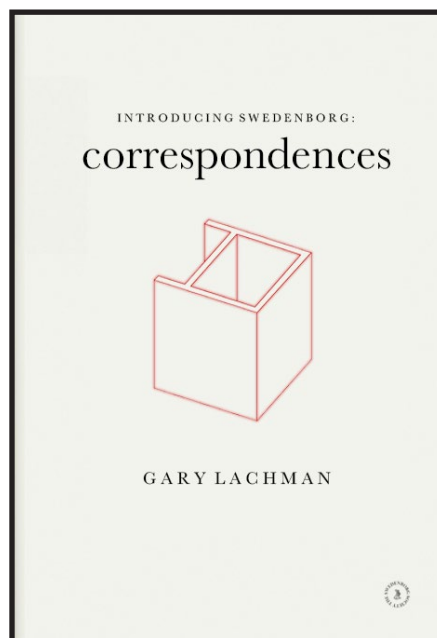
Gary Lachman regaled participants and viewers with a riveting talk on Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondences given from his notes and knowledge. He paced through a most evocative PowerPoint presentation shaping a history tale connecting a remarkable spectrum of significant authors and schools of thought. Lachman connected Swedenborg's teachings on correspondences to a broad history, dating from late antiquity to the present day. He sought to explore both something of Swedenborg's sources and Swedenborg's own immense influence on a wide spectrum of philosophers, novelists, and poets. Lachman's numerous books range across modern cultural trends, alternative spiritualities, and western esoteric traditions in which Swedenborg pops up often. He understands Swedenborg's historical context in quite skillful and complex ways.

His recent slender book, *Introducing Swedenborg: Correspondences* (2021), at only fifty-eight pages is brisk but packed unfurling of this history. With permission from the publisher, we are pleased to offer these excerpts. —Jim Lawrence

Pages 4–6

What did Swedenborg mean by correspondences? Simply put, the doctrine of correspondences states that everything in the natural world—minerals, plants, animals, stars, planets—is related in a specific way to the higher, spiritual worlds. As Swedenborg writes, “The whole of the natural world corresponds to (or has a counterpart in) the spiritual world, not only in general, but also in single details” (*Heaven and Hell* §89). Everything we see around us is a reflection of the worlds above. As the German poet Goethe, a great reader of Swedenborg, and like him a scientist, put it in his drama *Faust*, “Alles

Vergängliche/Ist nur ein Gleichnis,” all that is transitory is but a symbol. That is, it is a sign for something else. For Swedenborg, that something else is the spiritual world.



We can write down a word, type it out on our computer screens, or say it, but its meaning is something more than our pixels, script or sound, something more, that is, than its physical carrier.

As Swedenborg sees it, this relationship is rather like that of a word to its meaning, or of the human face to the thoughts and feelings it expresses, with the one “standing for,” or corresponding to, the other. We can write down a word, type it out on our computer screens, or say it, but its meaning is something more than our pixels, script or sound, something more, that is, than its physical carrier. The meaning of a word is an inner experience, something we grasp with our mind in

the same way that Swedenborg grasped the inner meaning of the Bible. And for Swedenborg this is true of the spiritual world as well. For Swedenborg then, what we experience here in the natural world is, we might say, like a kind of alphabet, or perhaps a book, in which the spiritual world communicates to us. As the Nobel Prize-winning writer Czesław Miłosz put it, “Swedenborg’s world is all language.” A tree, a flower, a cloud, are not only physical phenomena, but words, embodied meanings, which we may not know how to decipher, but which remain meaningful nonetheless, rather like difficult mathematical formulae which, abstruse to us, convey pertinent information to those in the know. It may be that for the time being, we can perceive only the physical aspect of phenomena. But it may come to pass that, as Swedenborg did, we will at some point see their inner meaning too. Then we will learn how to perform, as one of Swedenborg’s keenest interpreters, the Iranologist Henry Corbin, describes it, a “spiritual hermeneutics,” not on this or that sacred book, but on the text of the world itself.

Pages 8–9

In Swedenborg’s vision of reality, our earthly, physical, material world—the one we perceive and enjoy through our senses—is on the lowest rung of a kind of ladder of worlds, with higher ones reaching above us, into realms beyond the physical, an arrangement not unfamiliar in the Western esoteric tradition, within which Swedenborg occupies an important place. These higher worlds, with the Divine at the top and successive stages below, participate in ours, and are not entirely unlike our own. Much of what we find

Continues on page 89

Introducing Swedenborg

Continued from page 88

here, we can find there too, albeit in a form rather different from what we are familiar with here on earth. Things we find here correspond, Swedenborg tells us, to things we will find there, and one of his aims in developing his doctrine of correspondences was to educate his readers in how to understand the language in which the higher speaks to the lower. We may not be able to understand this language immediately, but to say it speaks in a foreign tongue is not quite correct, nor is it true to say that the key to it is entirely lost. The language of correspondences, Swedenborg tells us, is not lost, only forgotten. We possessed it once long ago, in what Swedenborg and many others see as a Golden Age. “Correspondence?” he asks. “People today do not really know what that is.” But it “was different with people who lived in the very earliest times.” To them “the knowledge of correspondences was pre-eminent among all the branches of knowledge” (*Heaven and Hell* §89). This may not be the case now—indeed for us, as for Gertrude Stein, a rose is a rose and little else, perhaps even less. But with work, determination, luck—and not a little grace—we may be able to make it so again.

Pages 14–18

Swedenborg tells us that he developed his doctrine of correspondences in order to perceive and proclaim the inner meaning of the Bible, what we can call its esoteric reading. He believed that the Bible should not be read as a literal, factual account of creation and all that followed, which is how many fundamentalist Christians do read it—and how fundamentalists of other religions read their own holy scriptures. The Bible should be read instead as a kind of code, using the language of mundane things to



Gary Lachman (left), keynote speaker at Virtual Convention, answers questions fielded by Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence (right) Saturday, June 26, 2021.

symbolize or stand for spiritual things. Just as there are different levels of reality, which Swedenborg refers to as the celestial, spiritual, and natural worlds, each one a bit further away from the Divine, so too are there different levels of meaning in Scripture.

The Bible should be read instead as a kind of code, using the language of mundane things to symbolize or stand for spiritual things.

The idea of reading the Bible symbolically or anagogically—meaning related to spiritual rather than natural reality—was not radically new. One of the early Church Fathers, Clement of Alexandria, adopted the practice of reading Scripture symbolically, rather than as a text to be taken literally. We can grasp the difference between these two ways of understanding through a look at the role metaphor plays in our everyday speech. If someone says “water under the bridge,” we know that this means some event in the past that no longer affects the present; it or we have moved on. Yet at some point, someone first made the connection just as someone at some point first characterized a thorough search as “leaving no stone unturned.” We use these phrases unthinkingly, which means

that they have passed from being live fresh metaphors to being clichés. But as the historian and philosopher of language Owen Barfield tells us, paying attention to the metaphors we take for granted can have a peculiar effect; it can trigger a flash of insight into how pictorial and figurative our language is.

This is another way of seeing language as symbolic, that is as a means of establishing a correspondence between things. Someone of a literal turn of mind—itself a metaphor (in what direction does a mind “turn?”)—would ask what bridge you were talking about and which stones. This suggests that in an intuitive, practical way, we are already familiar with correspondences, with the idea or practice, that is, of having something stand for something else.

What Clement of Alexandria did—and Origen, another early Church Father who followed him—was to apply this insight to reading Scripture. It was necessary to understand the different levels of meaning to Scripture because not everyone could read it in the same way. This was because different people are at different stages of spiritual development and understanding. And the three-tiered understanding of Scripture that Clement and Origen developed originated in an idea of reality

Continues on page 91

The New Church

Continued from page 85

acknowledged, our text reads less like a threat and more like a promise. “For there is nothing hidden that will not be manifested, neither has anything been kept secret except that it should come abroad.” The time will come when everything that troubles us will be brought to light. The time will come when we no longer have anything to hide and therefore no longer have anything to fear. The time will come when, as the apostle Paul said, we will no longer see “in a mirror, darkly,” but will see each other face to face, when we will know even as we are known (1 Corinthians 13:12).

This and only this, our theology tells us, is the judgment we face after death. Legal and social restraints are relaxed, so if our behavior has been kept under control solely by societal pressures, it would not be an exaggeration to say that “all hell breaks loose.” The acid test, then, is simply freedom.

There is a particularly vivid description of the situation early in *Secrets of Heaven* §81.

If we are [spiritually] dead, we are almost always defeated in our battles.... Our restraints are external ones such as fear of the law, of loss of life, property, profit, and respect. When we are spiritual, we are embattled but we always win. The restraints that are in effect are internal ones and are called “the bonds of conscience.” When we are heavenly, we are not embattled at all.... There are no visible restraints at all. Instead, we are free, and our invisible restraints are our sensitivities to what is good and true.

In this general context, it seems quite clear that what we have been seeing ever since the eighteenth century is not so much an actual decay of moral values as a relaxation of external restraints; and it is a very short step

indeed to the strong suspicion that this is a judgment. More and more, people are “acting out.” What has long been hidden is coming to the surface.

In a way, it has to happen. As long as sexual license is cloaked in romanticism and glamour, we do not see how tawdry it is. As long as violence is cloaked in glory, we do not see how brutal it is. Terrorism is far more likely to be brought down by its own appalling ugliness than by the death of terrorists, and the poverty of the literalism and materialism of what our theology refers to as “the old church” is more likely to be exposed by its fruits than by theological arguments.

If the pressure for relaxation of restraints is the agency of divine judgment, then governments have a fine line to walk. Too much restraint and the subsurface pressures build until there is an explosion. Tyrants can maintain law and order for only so long. Too little restraint and the powerless are at the mercy of the predators. Political rhetoric all too often speaks glowingly of “freedom” on the one hand and “law and order” on the other without recognizing the intricacy of their interaction.

“In the new church,” we are told, “there will be no external that is separated from its internal” (*Revelation Unveiled* §918). That is, there will be no pretense. There will be no social masks. Jeremiah’s prophecy will finally have come true:

I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach one another or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more (Jeremiah 31:33–34).

In theological terms, this is saying, “There are no visible restraints at all. Instead, we are free, and our invisible

Heaven and Hell §§502 & 505

Once the first state [after death] has been completed...we as spirits are brought into the state of our deeper concerns, or into the state of those deeper intentions and consequent thoughts we engaged in when we were left to ourselves in this world and our thinking was free and unfettered.

When spirits are in this state of their deeper concerns, then it is obvious what kind of people they really were in the world. They behave, that is, in accord with their own nature. People who were inwardly devoted to what is good in the world then behave sanely and wisely, more wisely than when they were living in the world, in fact, because they have been freed from any connection with the body and therefore with the earthly things that darken and cover with a kind of cloud.

In contrast, people who were focused on evil in the world then behave foolishly and insanely, more insanely than when they were in the world, in fact, because they are in freedom and are no longer constrained. As long as they were in the world, they were outwardly sensible because this was how they imitated rational people. So, when the outer layers are stripped off, their inner insanity is unveiled.

restraints are our sensitivities to what is good and true.” That statement in a quite extraordinary way fertilizes itself. That is, as we glimpse the beauty of a human community in which there are no hidden agendas, in which we care about each other, in which we want to be understood and to understand, then that vision itself acts as an “invisible restraint.” Anything less looks sorry by comparison.

Continues on page 91

The New Church

Continued from page 90

The restraint is “invisible” because its guidance is not just over our words and deeds. We notice the quality of our thoughts and feelings, and when they are hellish, we just let them flow through. We do not dwell on them and condemn ourselves for them, we do not waste time thinking what bad people we must be to have such notions, we do not pretend that they have not occurred to us or find excuses for them, we simply look at them, stamp them “Return to Sender,” and put them in the outgoing mailbox. In the light of the vision of true heavenly community, they have no appeal whatever. We do not get entangled in fruitless worries about credit and blame.


That is how it works on our good days, on what we might think of as our “new church” days. As long as we are in this world, though, there will be those other days—days when we are feeling sorry for ourselves, days when things seem to pile up against us, days when life seems perverse and unfair. We may at such times be able to remember the ideal, but we cannot bring it to life within ourselves. These are the times when all we can do is hang in there and do our best to follow the rules, times for that “self-compulsion” that is actually an invaluable form of freedom.

We would do well to learn from such times, though, because they can help us understand people who behave in ways of which we disapprove. If we are honest with ourselves, that is, then we can detect within ourselves impulses toward that same kind of behavior. We can look at someone behaving irresponsibly or even destructively and say, “I’ve felt like that myself. I’ve wished that someone else would just get out of my world. I’ve wished that I could remake the world to my own liking. I’ve wished that I could just let go and enjoy myself no concern for what this

might do to others. I’ve wished that I could get out from under all my responsibilities and be free.”

Such times do come, and it is a shame to waste them. They also pass, so it is a shame to dwell on them. They tell us something about ourselves, something we need to know, but by no means the whole story. One of the major lessons to be learned is that what looks bad to us in one state looks good in the other, and that by experiencing the appeal of both we are faced with the choice of which we prefer.

As long as we are in this world, though, there will be those other days—days when we are feeling sorry for ourselves, days when things seem to pile up against us, days when life seems perverse and unfair.

Our greatest weapon in the struggle between these two ways of life would seem to be honesty, specifically honesty with ourselves. This is terribly difficult if we believe that God is simply the relentless judge waiting for us to die so that we can be called to account. It begins to be possible as it dawns on us that the Lord sees right through all our pretenses, sees the reasons we cling to them, sees the wounds we are inflicting on ourselves, and longs to bring our hurts to light so that they can be healed. That is the reason there can be no pretense in the new church, no external that is at odds with its internal, that is the reason—the only reason—that “there is nothing hidden that will not be manifested, neither has anything been kept secret except that it should come abroad.” Yes, there is a judgment going on, and it is going on for our own sakes. Amen. 


Editor’s Note: Rev. Dr. George F. Dole sent this to *the Messenger* on June 23, 2021—six days before passing fully into the spiritual world. His regular contributions will be greatly missed.

Introducing Swedenborg

Continued from page 89

that we can call “emanationist.” This is a view, shared by many different traditions, that reality is structured hierarchically, with God or the One or some other non-manifest source at the start, out of which “emanates” the different levels of being in descending order, rather as light from a lamp lessens in brightness the further it moves from the bulb. The idea is generally associated with Neoplatonism—a product, with Clement and Origen, of ancient Alexandria—but it can be found in other traditions, such as cabbala. Swedenborg was familiar with and studied both of them.

Pages 31–32

There is a remarkable economy in Swedenborg’s doctrine of correspondences, with the same work being carried out in the same way at all levels of reality, from the air we breathe and the blood in our veins to the divine wisdom and love pervading creation. This reiterative structure, with repetitions of the same design occurring at different levels, is reminiscent in many ways of the physicist David Bohm’s notion of an “implicate order,” a hidden unity underlying the apparent multiplicity of the world. It is also reminiscent of the way holograms work, three-dimensional laser images, each part of which contains the whole. And it is also similar to the reiterative pattern of fractals, complex mathematical models associated with chaos theory, that are made of smaller and smaller repetitions of the same basic design, stretching into a microcosmic infinity. 

To obtain a copy of *Introducing Swedenborg: Correspondences* by Gary Lachman, please visit <https://swedenborg.com/product/introducing-swedenborg-correspondences/>

The Keynote Presentation by Gary Lachman can be viewed in its entirety at: <https://tinyurl.com/GaryLachmanKeynote>

Commemorating Twenty Years of Peacebuilding After 9/11

BY JOHN TITUS

Yesterday, Bev and I sat through a four-hour interview with a local TV news journalist. He was doing a story on local people who had been directly impacted by the tragedy of 9/11. He found my book online and wanted to talk with us about our grief journey and the peace work we have done in Alicia's name through The Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Fund and with the September Families for Peaceful Tomorrows. He asked many questions as we relived that horrible day, and we talked about who Alicia was and why we chose to dedicate our lives to issues of peace and justice; he shared with us that he had three young daughters. During the interview, as we were reminiscing about that day, both of us had tears in our eyes, and I looked at our interviewer and he did as well. His compassion was evident as he gently led us through our journey of Alicia's life and our grief.

At the end, he asked if there was anything we wanted to add. Although we had covered most everything, after contemplating a minute, I relayed the following. "Our country is deeply divided in so many ways. Alicia would always ask, 'Why can't we all just learn to get along?' She had a love for the beautiful tapestry created by our diverse differences. One of the reasons she chose to become a flight attendant was so she could travel, meet new people, learn about different cultures, and experience the beauty of those countries and cultures. She

had a love and compassion for all people, and she complemented that with a profound wisdom that earned her the designation as an old soul by those who knew her. Alicia's truth was our truth, and her legacy was one of love, compassion, peace, and justice for all."



"A smile by which to measure all other smiles," according to her friends. Alicia was killed in the terrorist attack on the New York City World Trade Center as she fulfilled her responsibilities as a flight attendant on United Airlines Flight 175, which crashed into the South Tower.

During our early grieving, the pain was intense, but revenge was never our response. Many were calling for vengeance and war, but we just wanted justice and peace for our country and our world. The burning need for revenge would not help us heal. It would only harden our hearts, cause turmoil in our souls, and it was not what Alicia would have wanted. Our path forward had to be dedicated to overcoming our fears and differences, finding ways to create a more just and equitable

world, and growing our understanding and compassion for those who are different from us. Forgiveness has helped me to let go of the need for revenge, the hatred, bitterness, and fear, as I was able to "give forth" those feelings to God, and it helped me heal and grow my soul.

During my early grieving I would awaken from a fitful night's sleep, go into the sunroom on the east side of the house, or out along the river to pray, meditate, often cry, and write in my journal. Once in a while, insights would come to me that were not from me. One morning as I was meditating, in a moment of clarity, I felt the deep interconnectedness that binds us all and all of life together. Our dear departed mentor and friend, George Dole, helped me to more deeply understand its meaning. The heartfelt realization and significance of this insight helped me see and know that we are all from one source, we are all children of God! And what we do for, or against,

one another, we do also unto ourselves. If we grow our love for one another, our understanding also grows. If we seek out others with love and peace in our hearts, it will be returned. And the converse is true as well. I know that evil exists, and many have chosen its path, but I also know that God's salvation is for everyone.

Twenty years ago, during our most intense grief, we began a journey of peacebuilding, initially by ourselves,

Continues on page 93

Commemorating 9/11

Continued from page 92

our church, family and friends, then with other 9/11 families. Along with Rev. Betsy Coffman, and other church members, we established the Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Fund at Urbana University. We have travelled across the United States, Canada, and some in Europe, to share our message of peace. And we have focused more specifically with the University, local schools, other organizations, and our Urbana Community. We have introduced the Great Kindness Challenge to over 5,000 kids in our county, offered classes and workshops on non-violent communication for the community and first responders, helped

designate Urbana as the 140th International City of Peace, provided speakers from as far away as Iraq, held panel discussions, hosted *Quilting the Golden Rule*¹ with all the major world religions, provided books for local school and community libraries on kindness, peace-building through friendships, meditation, communication skills, learning about different cultures, and creating a culture of peace.

We also have written articles for magazines and newspapers, sponsored events and activities, joined with other peacemakers on relevant issues, and have spoken at universities, churches, public forums and other events. One event that provided us all with much healing was when we were invited to speak at the American Muslim Voice Conference in California and met with many of the 400 participants and shared stories over a meal afterwards. We also hold an annual Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Run around 9/11 to honor those who died on that day, the first responders and all victims of violence and war. This year's Run will be at Freedom Grove, beginning at 9:03 AM after a moment of silence. For more information, visit: <https://runsignup.com/>

On the fourth anniversary of 9/11, we were invited to do the Sunday morning service with Marianne Williamson



Bev and John with a poster of Urbana's designation as the 140th International City of Peace. Alicia's Memorial Peace Fund and our efforts made this possible.

in Washington, D.C. for the Department of Peace Conference. The next day, I joined a panel to speak about the Department of Peace to Congress. From that event, Marianne has continued to bless us with her presence at our 5th, 15th, and now the 20th Alicia Titus Memorial Peace events. Marianne Williamson is a New York Times Best Selling Author, international speaker, spiritual leader, 2020 candidate for the presidency, and a dear friend. She will join us on September 12 this year for Commemorating Twenty Years of Peacebuilding After 9/11 as our keynote speaker. Bev and I, along with the World House Choir, will join her. I have had the joyous privilege of singing with the Choir for seven years. The Choir's mission is, "To perform music that motivates and inspires our communities toward justice, diversity, inclusion, and equality as we strive for peace and build our web of mutuality." More information and sign-up for the event is at: www.eventbrite.com

After Alicia was killed, we were totally distraught. The pain and grief

Continues on page 102

Donate to The Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Fund

Let us join together to continue Alicia's legacy with a contribution to The Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Fund. Your gift helps support programs and events that create a culture of peace for our community and future of our children.

Donor's Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____

Email _____

Phone (Home or Mobile) _____

Gift Amount \$ _____

Check or Cash

*Please make checks payable to
The Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Fund*

Please mail this form and your gift to:

**Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Fund
P.O. Box 107
Urbana, Ohio 43078**

*For more information, please contact
Bev Titus: bjtitus11@gmail.com*

¹ A series of sixteen quilts representing various traditions and religions around the world. This display was created over a span of five years by Janet Bear McTavish who was inspired to create the quilts in a vivid dream. She was seeking a way to bring people together in response to the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

Reflections on George Dole's Professional Career

Eulogy read at Rev. Dr. George F. Dole's Memorial Service

BY JIM LAWRENCE

Given the number of speakers today, I will confine my comments to two dimensions of George Dole's life: one that takes in his nearly a half-century career as teacher and spiritual mentor to a substantial roster of students, and the other that takes in his work as a scholar and author speaking to the world. First as his student, then in numerous scholarly projects as a teammate at the Swedenborg Foundation, and also as faculty colleague at the seminary, I richly experienced George across four decades in both of these capacious sites of his professional lifework.

For the first, George's teaching and mentoring skills in classroom settings are the stuff of myth. From my own experience and from seeing him in action with so many others, students felt on holy ground when working with him. And of course, George's teaching also reached far beyond the seminary because his remarkable educating skills shone through everywhere he lived among us—as a Fryeburg lecturer, as a Convention workshop leader, as a preacher, and even as a conversationalist: his capacity for facilitating discovery and insight is celebrated across the many communities of Swedenborgianism in which he lived and moved. As much as he would not want this said, George is a legend. It needs to be said because I got him to admit fairly recently that it is important for communities to have legends. It facilitates motivation and hope, and yet another plane of teaching and learning occurs through the human modeling of exemplars.

Three qualities cohered in his exemplary teaching presence: his impressive genius, his surprising humility, and his lively lovingness. Put another way,

George was a brilliant and profound thinker who didn't see himself that way and who in fact thought the student was a kind of teacher. Routinely, he conveyed authentically to students that he wanted more than anything to go adventuring *with them* in a quest for meaning and purpose. This fertile fusion of genius, humility, and lovingness would generate levels of personal engagement with various subjects and topics that quite consistently led students into breakthroughs of game-changing perspectives.

George was after “of-ness” primarily and not so much “about-ness.” He wanted the lived experience of meaning and purpose, not merely words about it. He strove for a participatory event of learning so that whatever the subject the student was subtly the real focus. His genius shone through often with his renowned mastery over so many subjects, and that is always a treat for students to have complex higher thought shaped with clarity and insight. Yet intellectual mastery of material was never the goal but rather a means for the student to engage themselves and their personal growth. The most important text to know was oneself. “I have to look that up in George,” he would say, and he asked students to look up the subject in themselves.

With genius, humility, and lovingness George nurtured immersive and experiential learning spaces that led to innumerable “ah ha!” moments about the divine, the world, spiritual community, and about the students themselves. His long teaching and mentoring work enriched us and is nothing shy of legendary.

As for George Dole the scholar, I'm afraid I'm going to need to revert to superlatives again. A decade

ago, I shaped an anthology by many of his students and colleagues in a volume called *Principles in Play: Essays in Honor of George Dole's Contributions to Swedenborgian Thought*, because I wanted to capture the many angles of what I felt then, and still believe now, was the most creative Swedenborgian thinker in history. What's in that claim are two important elements: knowledge of Swedenborg and engagement with world thought. There might be a small group of Swedenborg scholars over the past quarter-millennium who would stand with George in terms of knowing Swedenborg inside and out, but I don't think there is anyone in that group who also engaged or engages Swedenborgian thought in published interdisciplinary dialog with world thought.

George Dole pioneered numerous original arcs of theory that have borne fruit in new ways of understanding theology, history, psychology, natural science, and biblical studies in worlds of discourse outside of Swedenborgiana. George's scholarly work is characterized by taking core Swedenborgian principles and interpreting them outward into dialog with the ever-evolving fields of theology, history, psychology, and biblical studies to see where they might go. Often, they went far.

Let me name a few in brief. Let's start with a formidable long-term project in George's career integrating developmental theory in psychology with the overarching inner sense storyline of the Bible. He shaped and taught this impressive integration to two generations of seminary students, and it was taken to the larger public in *A Book About Us: The Bible and Stages of Our Lives*. Secondly, due to the way it gets

Continues on page 97

197TH ANNUAL
Convention
 OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH



Navigating the Rapids in the Stream of Providence

If you missed any part of Virtual Convention: *Navigating the Rapids in the Stream of Providence* held on June 25–27, 2021, the recordings are now all available to view on YouTube.

<https://tinyurl.com/YouTubeSwedenborgianChurch>

Friday, June 25

Opening of Convention and -----

Business Meeting One (Part 1 of 3)

Business Meeting One (Part 2 of 3)----

Business Meeting One (Part 3 of 3)----

Welcome from President,

Rev. Jane Siebert -----

Opening Worship Service of

Convention, Bridgewater Church -----

Saturday, June 26

Memorial Service and Virtual -----

Communion, Elmwood New Church

Keynote Speaker, Gary Lachman -----

Business Meeting Two -----

Mini Course #1: A Swedenborgian-----

Theology of Social Justice—Rev. Shada Sullivan

Mini Course #2: Glimpses of -----

Goodness: Fostering a Perspective of Love—Rev. Jenny Martin Caughman

Mini Course #3: John's Gospel in its

Own Words—Rev. Dr. David Fekete----

Mini Course #4: The Relevance of the

Swedenborgian Perspective for Two ---
 Troubling Modern Issues—Rev. Renée Machiniak

Surprises and Special Recognitions—

Rev. Jane Siebert-----

Evening Meditation—

Rev. Jenny Martin Caughman-----

Meeting 1.1

Meeting 1.2

Meeting 1.3

Welcome

Bridgewater

Elmwood

Keynote

Meeting 2

Mini Course 1

Mini Course 2

Mini Course 3

Mini Course 4

Recognition

Meditation

Sunday, June 27

Convention Worship Service-----

Rev. Sage Cole

Swedenborgians in Action Against ----

Racism present *Swedenborgian Spirituality: Our Journey Toward Social Justice*

Business Meeting Three -----

Mini Course #5: A Most Peculiar

Paragraph: Unpacking the *Secrets of* ---
Heaven §634—Rev. Robert McCluskey

Mini Course #6: Beyond all

Knowledge: Mystical Spirituality for ---
 the 21st Century—Rev. Thom Muller

Mini Course #7: The Lost History of

the New Church in India: D. -----
 Gopaul Chetty and the Marriage of
 Swedenborg and Śaiva Siddhānta—
 Eleanor Schnarr

Mini Course #8: The Buddha of the

North: Swedenborg's Deep -----
 Parallels to Buddhist Thought—Rev.
 Cory Bradford-Watts

New things happening at

Our Daily Bread—Rev. Thom Muller ---

Closing of Convention and -----

Invitation for 2022

Cambridge

SAAR

Meeting 3

Mini Course 5

Mini Course 6

Mini Course 7

Mini Course 8

Daily Bread

Invitation

**See you at the 2022 Convention in sunny
 Southern California with our hosts;
 Wayfarers Chapel, Agapao, and
 the Garden Church!**

Books

Solemn Reverence: The Separation of Church and State in American Life

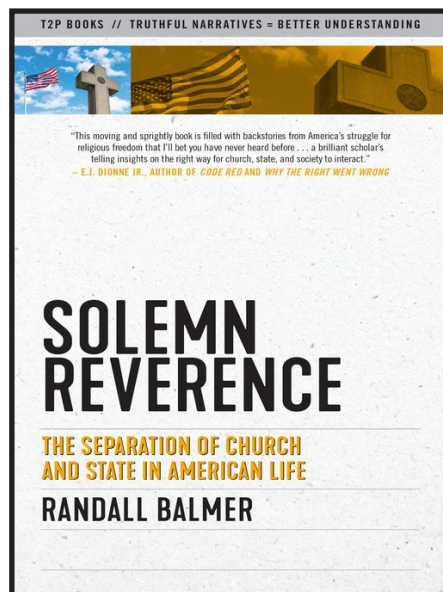
By Randall Balmer, Steerforth Press, 2021

BY ROBERT MCCLUSKEY

What is the best way for church, state, and society to interact? How might the church, our church, be involved in the pressing social issues of the day, the needs of our neighbor, small and large? I write to encourage you to take a closer look at the complex yet critical issue of religious freedom in the United States. Recent events have turned a light on this issue, which has been a constant source of debate and division from before this country's founding. If you are interested in gaining clarity on this issue, *Solemn Reverence*, by Randall Balmer, published just this year, is your best bet. In reading the reviews of this book, one repeatedly comes across the following words: succinct, readable, accessible, concise, and clear. And other words: comprehensive, authoritative, insightful, and timely. For example:

This moving and sprightly book is filled with backstories from America's struggle for religious freedom that I'll bet you have never heard before.... a brilliant scholar's telling insights on the right way for church, state, and society to interact. *E.J. Dionne, Jr.*

This truth-telling book is the most succinct account now available of the history of the government's relation to religion in the United States. If you must read only one book on this exceptionally important topic, this new work by the distinguished historian of American religion, Randall Balmer, is the one to read. *David A. Hollinger, University of California, Berkeley*



In a mere eighty-two pages, divided into nineteen short chapters, we are taken from Roger Williams and the Baptists in the early 1600s, all the way to the current threat of Christian Nationalism. Along the way we encounter the Founding Fathers and the crafting of the First Amendment (including the story of Thomas Jefferson and the mammoth cheese—seriously, it weighed 1,235 pounds!); school wars and the Blaine Amendments of 1875; the Johnson amendment of 1954: John F. Kennedy and school prayer; the rise of the Religious Right in the 1970s; key Supreme Court decisions; and much more.

Throughout this journey, Balmer provides expert analysis of the various efforts to interpret and implement the letter and spirit of the First Amendment, as well as expert synthesis showing how the evolution of religious

freedom has proceeded over the last 400 years.

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” Along with countless other experts over the decades, Balmer agrees that these first sixteen words of the First Amendment constitute a bold, unprecedented experiment in Western culture, the genius of American life, and our greatest gift to the world: the end of theocracy. “It has protected the common good from religious factionalism, and it has ensured the integrity of faith from too close an alliance with the state.”

The separation of church and state in America was an unprecedented experiment, but it was also born of necessity. Religious diversity was [already] rife in the Atlantic colonies, [and] the founder's decision to forswear a religious establishment was a concession to that pluralism.

[T]he phrase *church and state* has evolved into a kind of shorthand for understanding the relationship between two much larger, albeit amorphous, entities.... [It] remains useful, but what we really have is multiple religious movements and organizations confronting several layers and levels of political movements and structures. In sum, this presents us with a dynamic “system” that defies easy description. It is rather a messy set of shifting alignments attempting to frame the exercises of power legitimated by

Continues on page 97

Solemn Reverence

Continued from page 96

disparate claims to religious and political authority.

And so Balmer suggests that the image of a “wall” of separation is better understood as a “line in the sand,” constantly shifting in response to new challenges, interpretations, and conditions.

“The genius of the founders lay in their determination to avoid entangling the two entities, recognizing that each would function better untrammelled by each other.” The First Amendment not only provides for the the *separation* of church and state, but also for an *open space* between them, commonly known as the civic or public square. A place of freedom where political, religious, and other viewpoints can come together in dialogue, to hear and be heard. It was through this dialogue that the church was able to influence the common good in such critical issues as abolition, suffrage, worker’s rights, civil rights, peace movements, prison reform, etc.

The First Amendment has remained resilient over the years, over the decades. But that does not mean that its future is secure. Those who believe in the separation of church and state must continue to patrol that wall of separation. Some on the left argue that voices of faith have no place in the arena of public discourse, while those on the right don the mantle of victim, insist that the United States is a Christian nation, and engage in rhetorical Kabuki to assert that the First Amendment does not mandate the separation of church and state.... Both positions represent misunderstandings of the First Amendment. The long sweep of American history amply demonstrates the genius of the First Amendment, this grand experiment of constructing a government without the interlocking apparatus of an established religion.

Reflections on George Dole

Continued from page 94

students to think deeply, George’s book *A Thoughtful Soul: Reflections from Swedenborg* is the most popular overview of Swedenborgian thought with students out of the dozen or so solid overviews. *A Thoughtful Soul* is certainly the most creatively shaped of all other overviews: it is organized into categories of thought that speak immediately to contemporary mindsets. Thirdly, his renowned essay, “Image of God in a Mirror,” published multiple times, shapes a creative reflection on the new physics and Swedenborg’s cosmos to construct what could be called “the new Swedenborgian metaphysics” that he would continue to engage and finally address in a book-length treatment—his final published book—*The Universe and I: Where Science and Spirituality Meet*.

Fourthly, in yet another example with numerous published versions, the most recent being titled “Swedenborg’s Modes of Presentation, 1745–1771,” George shaped what has become widely regarded as the state of the question on understanding Swedenborg’s writing sequence. Analyzing choices and decisions Swedenborg made in his publishing decisions, this important work persuasively demonstrates that Swedenborg worked in some ways quite from his own lights and did not

just receive marching orders from heaven—a penetrating view that is crucial for perceiving the complexity of Swedenborg’s intellectual biography.

Fifthly, perhaps George’s most evolved statement as a theologian is found in his book *Freedom and Evil: A Pilgrim’s Guide to Hell*, a work piqued by the query why there weren’t any books on hell during the angel craze decade of the Nineties. Coming at that topic necessitated all of his resources as an interpretive theologian, and I regard this work to be the most profoundly representative of his overall worldview. More than one student has remarked it is the best book they’ve ever read about Swedenborgian thought. There is much more that could be said, but this partial view of the mountain range of George’s thought fits the compass of our gathering today where there are many angles to celebrate about George’s life.

We have had among us one who contributed so robustly to the spiritual tradition that reared and nurtured him—a tradition higher than the sky and deeper than the ocean. George liked to remark that it is a tradition you can never exhaust or outgrow. He proved that best of all, and I feel I can speak for a multitude of students and thoughtful people everywhere who knew him and experienced his gifts: Thank you, George, for your faithfulness in honoring the abilities with which you were endowed that you might give—evolved and regenerated—those abilities right back to God’s realm in ways that make being alive so much more consequential. ☩

Should the church be involved in politics? No. Should the church be involved in charity toward the neighbor, even if that work has a political aspect? Absolutely! As faithful citizens of the *polis*, we should do no less. Our church is currently engaged in a renewed effort to participate in the larger world, to connect with the larger neighbor in ways that bring genuine spiritual healing. This book is both a bright light and a roadmap toward that goal. ☩



Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence has served for more than twenty years as the dean of the theological school. He is the president-elect of the Swedenborgian Church of North America.

From the Social Justice Committee

A Vital Conversation About Fostering Ministries Committed to Justice and Peace

BY LORI GAYHEART

Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism (SAAR) invited us all to a vital conversation about fostering ministries committed to justice and peace on June 27 during the 2021 national virtual convention. In addition to watching a video of individuals sharing why they personally are engaged in Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism (look for it on [The Swedenborgian Church YouTube channel](#), along with other videos from the 2021 Convention) and engaging with a panel of church leaders answering questions about how our theology calls us to get involved, participants had the opportunity to explore the concept of privilege and share hopes and concerns related to social justice work.

Together we took a privileges survey, and then responded to a series of four questions. Responses were anonymous and everyone could see them as they were entered. The responses to the survey were presented as bar graphs. We talked about how privileges, many of them unearned (which just means you didn't do or not do something to have them), benefit those who have them, and negatively impact those who do

not. The privileges you have aren't something to feel bad about, they are just something to be aware of, and, most importantly, they give you an advantage you can use to help others.

Responses to the four questions were presented as word clouds. What in the world is a word cloud you might be wondering? It's a nifty way to visually represent data that really illustrates how a group of people is feeling about a certain thing. The bigger and bolder the word appears, the more often it was mentioned and the more important it is. This gave us an opportunity to get a clearer picture of how folks are feeling around the issue of anti-racism activism from a personal perspective and a denominational perspective—what we are doing, what we should/shouldn't be doing, what we should do next. (See accompanying images.)

Coming together as a group, with our faith in common, to combat social justice issues such as racism can make people feel comforted, and it can also make people feel uncomfortable, especially when, as is often the case with present day social justice issues, it feels like there are “sides” to the



Question 2: The word that best describes how I feel when engaging in, or thinking about engaging in, anti-racism activism is:

issue that are tied to political parties. Figuring out how to make sure everyone feels welcome, safe, and supported wherever they are on this path can be tricky.

Being anti-racist is very different than just not being racist, just like being a person who stands up and speaks out is different than being an innocent bystander. We don't want to be complicit and yet, standing up for, or against, something can sometimes leave people feeling vulnerable and unsure. How to best love our neighbor is not always clear.

There are many ways the church can be involved in social justice and human rights issues, including building awareness, connecting theology to present day concerns, diving deeper into issues and their many facets, and providing resources, opportunities, guidance, and support for those who wish to take action.

This past year, SAAR has offered opportunities for adults, teens, and children to participate in learning and discussion sessions about issues of racism, our theology, the path of anti-racist regeneration, Black history, and

Continues on page 99



Question 1: The word that best describes my feelings about how our denomination should be involved in the fight against racism is:

A Heartfelt Thank You from the FNCA

Here at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly, we wanted to extend a heartfelt *thank you* for your generosity in donating to the upkeep and support of our denomination's summer camps. Donations from convention totaled a whopping \$18,000 this year, and this resulted in our camp receiving \$6,000! We are eternally grateful for the much needed and appreciated financial support.

This year, our camp had many extra expenses—this donation came in quite a timely fashion for us. After almost two years of being away, camp clean-up at the FNCA was quite extensive. We replaced twenty-nine mattresses and several other pieces of furniture that critters had made homes in and we

hired extra cleaners to spiff up the place before our August session commenced. We needed extra health and safety protocols to run our in-person camp, even basic things, like the cost of food, were significantly more this year. We also have upgraded our technology in our lecture hall to reach many people across the world virtually who may have not had any way to join us before! We cannot thank you enough for your generosity. Without everyone's support



we would not have been able to bring everyone safely back together in this much needed spiritual community.

Thank you all for your support, and we hope you find an opportunity to join us in future sessions either in-person or virtually! ☸

Social Justice Conversation

Continued from page 98

how to navigate conversations on race. There is also a newsletter that alternates bi-weekly between a deep dive into a particular issue and one with a more personal/devotional focus (email Rev. Shada Sullivan revshada@gmail.com to subscribe). All are also invited to be part of an ongoing conversation and sharing of resources via the Facebook group Manifold Angels (to join, search for "Manifold Angels" on Facebook and then click the "Join Group" button in the main menu to send a request to join the group or email the group

administrator, Dr. Rebecca Kline Esterson, at resterson@gtu.edu, to request an invitation to be added). There are many directions that SAAR can go next.

There is a lot to unpack and process here. We encourage you to reflect and talk about the concept of privileges with friends and family and to join the Manifold Angels Facebook group for ongoing open discussions about social justice and our role in anti-racism activism. We hope to provide another opportunity to come together as a group for further conversations in the near future. ☸



Question 3: The word that best describes how I hope to grow personally and spiritually as a result of SAAR's work is:



Question 4: The word that best describes what I hope SAAR will do in the upcoming year in our efforts to dismantle racism is:

Lori Gayheart is a member of the Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism (SAAR) Leadership Team, the Social Justice Committee (SJC), and LaPorte New Church, and co-editor of the SAAR newsletter. She is the administrator at Renaissance Academy, a Montessori charter school in LaPorte, and lucky mother of three amazing kids. She is committed wholeheartedly to the pledge recited daily at Renaissance by staff and students: "Just for today, I will try to strengthen my mind; I will study; I will learn something useful. I will not be a mental loafer. I will do something that requires effort, thought and concentration. I will strive to be a positive force in the world." Please email Lori Gayheart at ninjaheart42@gmail.com, if you would like a copy of the survey and the results.

Passages

Deaths

Rev. Dr. George F. Dole, 89, died



peacefully on June 29, 2021, at Mid Coast Hospital in Bath, Maine. Despite the brevity of his final illness, his family was able to gather by his side.

George was born in Fryeburg, Maine, to Rev. Louis A. Dole, pastor of the Fryeburg New Church (Swedenborgian), and Anita S. Dole, author of an extensive Bible study course still in print. In 1937, Louis became the pastor of the Swedenborgian church in Bath, resuming a connection with the city established when his own father had been the minister there. Thus, Bath became George's true hometown. At Bath's Morse High School, George discovered two of the great constants of his life: his delight in learning and his talent for running. He capped a senior year of athletics by graduating as valedictorian in 1948, at the age of sixteen, and went on to Yale on a full scholarship then offered by Pepsi-Cola.

At Yale, he competed in track at the varsity level and majored in classics, graduating Phi Beta Kappa in 1952. He took his twin passions to Oxford University, where he studied Hebrew and, in just one notable event, won the Oxford-Cambridge Mile. This particular achievement earned him a place as one of six participants in the historic race at Iffley Road Track in 1954, when Roger Bannister was the first to "break the four-minute mile."

After George received his M.A. from Oxford, he was accepted into the doctoral program in the Department of Assyriology at Yale. On his

return to the United States, he met the third and greatest constant of his life: his sister Louise introduced him to Lois Seekamp, then a registered nurse who was babysitting for Louise's children. Lois had grown up in the Swedenborgian Church of the Neighbor in Brooklyn, New York. She had even been named after a congregant there, Lois Burnham Wilson, who is now widely known for having co-founded Alcoholics Anonymous with her husband, "Bill W."

George and Lois married in 1957. The death of George's thesis advisor, and the replacement of that faculty member with a new advisor who was not amenable to the topic of George's thesis, led the young couple to strike out on a different path. George had always wished to be a Swedenborgian minister, and now he and Lois moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, so that George could attend the New Church Theological School. Lois worked at Massachusetts General Hospital until their first child, Stuart, was born in 1959.

After being ordained in 1960, George began his pastoral career at the Cambridge Society of the New Jerusalem. At the same time he transferred his studies to Harvard in order to continue work on his thesis under the renowned Assyriologist Thorkild Jacobsen. In 1965, his thesis, *Partnership Loans in the Old Babylonian Period*, was accepted with distinction.

In 1969, he enlarged his service to others yet more by beginning to teach part time at the Swedenborg School of Religion in Newton. He continued as pastor in Cambridge until 1973, when he turned to teaching full time. In addition to personally rendering guidance and assistance to students of religion, George wrote numerous articles and books about Swedenborg's theology, occasionally even translating German or Russian scholarship for the benefit of English readers.

One great beneficiary of George's acumen and labor was the Swedenborg Foundation, for which he served as director for forty-two years and as president for three. The film script he wrote for the Foundation, *Images of Knowing*, received a Gabriel Award in 1986, and in the very next year his second film script, *The Other Side of Life*, garnered several other honors. Beginning in the 1990s, George spearheaded the Foundation's ambitious project to translate Swedenborg's theological works from Latin into accessible modern English. Not only was he central in the planning for the series, but ultimately, he translated fifteen of its eighteen titles. Its first and flagship volume, *Heaven and Hell*, is Swedenborg's most popular work, and in George's fresh and lucid translation it will continue to inspire readers for years to come.

George retired from classroom teaching in 1999. In that year, he and Lois moved to Bath, where he became pastor of the Swedenborgian church. In a further contribution to the local community, he joined the Rotary, which he literally blessed with the invocations he gave at its meetings.

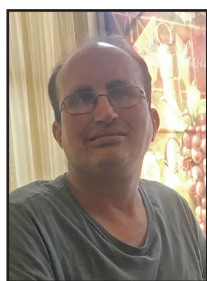
New technology, which George had always welcomed with zest, allowed him to "unretire" in 2001 and resume teaching via a video link with the Center for Swedenborgian Studies in Berkeley, California. In 2020 the Center recognized his decades of contribution to Swedenborgian scholarship by establishing a faculty chair in his honor.

Even in fields in which George was not a professional, his interest led him to excel. He read broadly and thought deeply in fields such as science, politics, and economics. He loved music, and with his keen sense of pitch he was the cornerstone of the tenor section in several local chorus groups. He and Lois were members of a Gilbert and Sullivan society for many years, and George

Continues on page 102

A New Kind of Unconditional Love

BY BENJAMIN ROBINSON



My message for you today is that I offer you peace, the kind of peace and unconditional love you can't find in the outside world. It is in

all of us. We just need to say the words to release the power of those words. We are our own mentors, our own healers. We just need to tap into a divine power which is greater than us. We are a part of a spiritual community. Everyone I have met and am still friends with has affected my growth. Each of you has taught me some things that show me an important life lesson or refocus one I already knew. We are teachers and students of life. Each of us brings a gift to the table.

No one gift is less important than the next person's. We can't judge another person's gift to the world. We are here to create a beautiful mural of our divineness, and sometimes, we go on a different path, but slowly over time and love we are brought back to our path of divineness. That is a beautiful gift. So, pray for others that they may find unconditional love and peace. Help them walk the path and don't judge them if they don't have what you want. Move on and find inside you the gift that you are seeking.

This idea relates to what it said above because sometimes we can be blind in our own thinking and sometimes what we feel in ourselves. By offering ourselves unconditional love and peace, we can open ourselves to seeing the light in ourselves. The healing that comes to us is so clear. I grew up in the General Church. For many years I had a lot of confusion around the writings, God, etc. I still do, but now I break it

into easy steps that I can understand. In doing that, I am able to better understand my relationship to the divine. It is an ongoing conversation, but I love the growth I've seen in myself over the years.

My own healing has also allowed me to see that I can't do it alone. God has to be there, too. That is one of the beautiful things I love about our inner church community and the church as a whole. It is our understanding that we see heaven around us sometimes. It is only small pieces, but seeing those can help us shine our own lights here on earth.

We can teach each other how to find our own heaven by leading by example. One of my favorite stories in the Bible is the story of Jesus' birth, in the manger scene, because if you look at the deeper sense of the Word, this is our story of what happens inside of us all the time. I have to remind myself how I am showcasing my inner manger scene today. It is important to note that our inner selves reflect what is happening in the outside world.

I've been working on maintaining peace and calm on the inside while the world around me is in chaos. It is super hard to do sometimes. I want to react to everything going wrong, all of the injustices, but I noticed when I come from a place of the divine, things look different, and the Light of the World comes into the dark places. I only just started tapping into this, but the beautiful part is that it takes a while to do, but I work on it everyday and in the moment find peace and unconditional love within myself. ☸

Benjamin Robinson is a member of the Virginia Street Church in St. Paul, Minnesota. He was brought up in the General Church and lived in Bryn Athyn for a few years before coming back to Minnesota where joined the Convention Church.

Quick Tip from A/V Consultant Ben Phinney

Want to start live-streaming but feel overwhelmed by all the equipment and logistics you envision will be needed to get going?

Don't let this fear hold you back. Start small and build incrementally as you get comfortable with the process. You can literally start live-streaming right now without needing to buy a single thing. All you need to start live-streaming is a device with a camera and internet connection that can run Facebook. That is it. There is likely one in your pocket right now. While this may not be the approach you are envisioning, if your vision of a live-stream feels overwhelming and is actually preventing you from even getting started, then simply start small and reframe your vision as where you are building towards and not where you need to start from.



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Editor's Corner

Continued from page 86

As we enter the fall season—and many that took the summer off are returning to services—I encourage all of you to take advantage of the opportunities for virtual growth that are out there. Yes, it might be hard at first, but the energy put towards it will return two-fold and continue to strengthen our church community in ways we could have never imagined.

—Beki Greenwood
Messenger@Swedenborg.org

Passages

Continued from page 100

delighted in taking on comic roles. He also played classical guitar and a harpsichord that he had built from a kit. He had solid skills as a handyman, which he put to use in maintaining the rustic family camp in Wayne, Maine. His friends often received gifts of maple syrup, apple cider, or crabapple jelly made with his own hands.

As the years passed, he never lost his zeal for speed; he continued running noncompetitively into his mid-eighties. His perennial fitness was legendary among his acquaintance, and, in fact, he outlived all the participants in the historic Iffley race. In 2014, the Fryeburg New Church Assembly, a Swedenborgian church summer gathering, established an annual race in his honor, the [Dole 3 Miler](#).

Despite all of his interests and accomplishments, at the end of his life George said that his greatest reward was his family. He was a most beloved husband, father, and grandfather, who blessed the lives of his family with his support, love, generosity, vitality, and humor. He is survived by his wife, Lois; his children, Stuart, Alicia, Sarah, Andrew, and Bruce; his daughter-in-law, Sarah Buteux; and his grandchildren, George and Genevieve.

The center of this rich and productive life, and the basis of George's every interaction with the world, was his faith. His trust in the goodness of God was absolute.

A memorial service was held on August 14 in Fryeburg, Maine at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly. A live recording of the service can be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/GeorgeDoleService>

Donations in George's memory can be sent to: George Dole Chair, The Center for Swedenborgian Studies, 1798 Scenic Ave., Berkeley, CA 94709 or Bath Church of the New Jerusalem, P.O. Box 1139, Bath, ME 04530

Commemorating 9/11

Continued from page 93

were both overwhelming and all consuming. Even though I know Alicia's soul lives on in the heavenly realm and she is at peace and filled with heavenly joy, we still had to grieve our loss in the earthly realm. I realized that there was no escape from the devastating grief and that I must honor that pain, process it, and hopefully come out the other side. I described it at one point as standing on an overlook looking into a deep, dark abyss, then spiraling downward into the darkness, wondering if I would find my way back out again. At the lowest and darkest point, I saw a light shining that kept getting brighter! And I knew that it was the light of God leading me onward. Prayer and much love helped me to find my way through the darkness of grief, and I found a greater love and renewed meaning and purpose on the other side. Bev and I want to thank each and every one of you, our church family, for helping us get through the overpowering grief and desolation after our tragic loss and the twenty years since. We will continue to work together to bring light and love to our world. May God's blessings be upon us as we strive to build a just and loving world, and may peace be upon you. ☩

The following prayer, found among Alicia's belongings, was earmarked as one of her favorites.

PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, let me bring hope,

Where there is darkness, light;

And where there is sadness, let me bring joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

To be understood as to understand;

To be loved, as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;

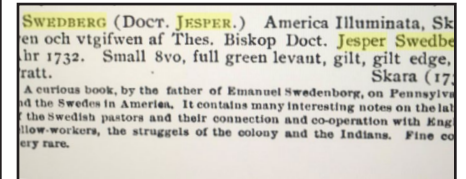
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

History Mysteries

Continued from page 104

With the help of a good doctor and the appropriate meds, I am healthier than I have ever been. I plan on spending my retirement in pursuit of my own version of "History Mysteries," a lot involving the history of General Convention.



Right now, I have restarted working on the *History of the Wilmington Church* that I began for their 150th Celebration. Another project I have already had some success with is tracking down what Jesper Swedenborg (Not the Bishop, but Emanuel's brother, see above image) did in his time here in the Delaware Bay Communities of New Jersey. Jesper convinced the congregants in Racoon Creek to actually pay the tithes they had pledged, and a log church was built in there. Along with money, they paid by each contributing a number of notched logs for the construction. Over the next few years, Jesper was several times named as godfather at baptisms.

Randy Laakko has me intrigued, having mentioned the burial of one of Emanuel's nephews at The Olde Swedes Church in Wilmington—stay tuned. ☩



Sue Ditmire came to the Swedenborgian Church through Kemper Road Center, in 1972. In 1983, after moving to New Jersey, she joined the Wilmington Church. Sue spent the last

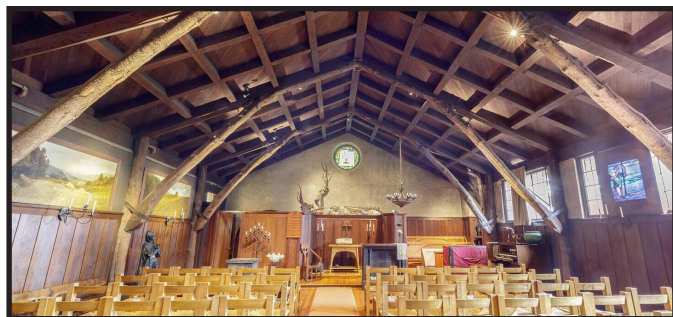
forty years raising a family, working at the family car business, and researching history when she had time. sueditmire@gmail.com

What's Happening

Two Swedenborgian Churches Named Among the Most Unusual

Fodor's Sixteen Most Unusual Churches in North America

Fodor's *Travel Guide* put out an article this summer listing sixteen of the most unusual churches in North America, and two of our California churches made the list. This list celebrates worshiping in unexpected style: "Churches are meant to inspire and exude the best of human spirituality, both inside and out."

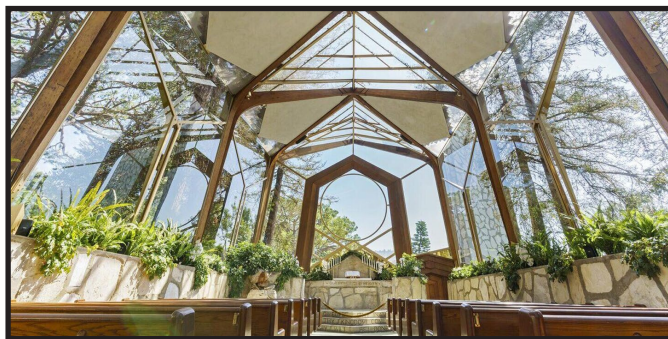


The San Francisco Swedenborgian Church

"A wood-burning fireplace, whole tree trunk arches, wood-paneled walls, paintings of Northern California landscapes, Maplewood chairs with marsh reed seats, and candles in wall sconces lend a homey, rustic feel to this church in the affluent Pacific Heights. One of the earliest examples of the Arts and Crafts movement in California, this 1895 church is a National Historic Landmark."

Wayfarers Chapel

"Called the *Glass Church*, this glass chapel with floor-to-ceiling windows atop a bluff above the Pacific Ocean, shaded by redwood trees and flooded by natural light, is a stunner. A masterpiece of organic architecture with wood beams and local stone, it was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright's son, Lloyd Wright, who said he was inspired by the peace and sublime majesty he felt while sitting beneath towering redwoods."



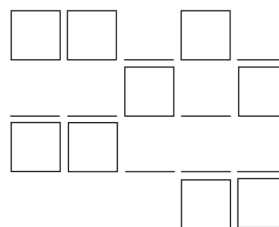
SCCI Technology Grants up to \$3,000 are Still Available

Applications should be made with consultation from Ben Phinney AskPhinney@gmail.com and may be emailed to Holly Bauer at: Bauer.HollyM@gmail.com. See the [May issue of the Messenger](#) for more details.



With broadcasts every Thursday & Sunday, *Spiritual Sunshine: A Swedenborgian Community Online* is your affirming, interfaith community—with a presence on YouTube, Facebook, and your favorite podcast platform.

We seek to uplift God(dess) in all people's diverse ways of living.



G I T L E
T U T R O
N R U A T D
R A N O D P

George: "Want some advice?"
Me: "Of course,

_____ !

Revisiting a Favorite Jumble

by Jason Greenwood

Answers will be printed in the next issue.

Answers to the June Jumble:

LLama, Crumb, Offer, Oyster

A shipping error in April for the bakery led to an abundance of:
"May Flours"

Convention's History Mysteries

BY SUE DITMIRE

In the summer of 1994, I read a sentence in a book. “In 1868, 172 women (including four “colored” women) attempted to vote in Vineland, New Jersey.” I thought I was knowledgeable about the women’s suffrage movement, but had never heard of an attempt so early, by so many women. I live near Vineland and decided to find out more about it.

That is how my obsession with historic research started. I found no other references to the event in any books. The librarians in Vineland had never heard of it. I found one gentleman, Frank Andrews, at the Vineland Historic Society, who not only knew about it, but had the list of women who had attempted to vote. I transcribed the list and put it online, looking for descendants. I am happy to say the event is now included on most Women’s Suffrage timelines as the first organized attempt of a group of women to vote.

Over the next ten years, as I could find the time, I discovered that Vineland was a planned city that had started in 1863. Even with the start of the Civil War, the Temperance and Aquarian Community grew rapidly. People were drawn to relocate from all over the country to a new community,

where they could become equal members and start with new ideas of how to do things. It also helped that Vineland was within a few hours by train to Philadelphia and the commercial markets of the eastern seaboard cities.

I found what information I could at the Historic Society and then scoured the 1870 Census to locate others. Sometimes I was able to find where they had moved from and found them on that locations Census. As I found out more about the individual women, it became even more interesting. One of the voters, was Margaret Pryor, who had been one of the signers of the Declaration of Sentiments, at Seneca Falls in 1848.

The women who had attempted to vote were Quakers, Unitarians, Spiritualists, and Swedenborgians. That’s right, Swedenborgians. The Swedenborgians were having periodic lectures by missionary ministers from Philadelphia and the New York Association. The Swedenborgian Church was formed in Vineland in 1870.

Despite not being able to locate the Vineland Church records, I was able to identify at least eight Swedenborgian families who had moved to Vineland and four women who were on the

voting list. I am still on a quest to find the church’s records and membership lists. I believe I will find that more Swedenborgian women were on the voting list.

While looking in the records in the New York Church, hoping to find the Vineland records, I came upon a document about the Swedenborgian Church in Orange, New Jersey. It piqued my interest, because the year after the women attempted to vote in Vineland, another group effort was made in Orange, New Jersey, and a third group in Michigan did the same. I began to feel it was not a coincidence that there were Swedenborgians in all of these areas.

The list I found was Church Ministers and Officers from 1867 to 1910. Amazingly, women were holding Church offices—the first one in 1874. In 1894, women were consistently being elected as officers. Interestingly (coincidence?) Rev. Adolph Roeder had become minister in the Orange Church in 1885, after he resigned his position at the Vineland Church.

I retired in April, after turning Ditmire Motorworks operations over to my children, Joel and Beth Harvie.

Continues on page 102