Published by the Swedenborgian Church of North America

Volume 246 • Number 1 • January/February 2022

Accepting the Call: Translating *True Christian Religion* for Korean Swedenborgians

BY JUNCHOL LEE

ranslating Swedenborg's *True Christian Religion* into Korean has been a personal, but important, journey for me—twenty-seven years in the making. Though I didn't set pen to proverbial paper until 2019, the project actually began in 1994 when I took my very first Latin class at Bryn Athyn College. At the time, I had a strong passion to learn Latin so that one day I would be able to translate Swedenborg's books. However, I never imagined it would take half my life.

Just one year before that first Latin class, I arrived in America for a short visit after a stint in the Korean army with little hope of continuing my college education, much less studying theology. But my family in New York introduced me to Swedenborg, and soon my short visit was extended by months, and eventually years, when I enrolled in Bryn Athyn College, which at the time was the Academy of the New Church College.

I was surprised to learn that the existing Korean translations of Swedenborg's books were not only quite dated, but, even worse, unreliable. The

The Swedenborgian Church of North America provides a variety of grants and loans from the Augmentation, Iungerich, Mission, and Building Funds to our ministries. This article highlights one ministry that is benefiting from such grants in 2022.

translations were littered with theological inaccuracies and language errors. Determined to right this wrong, I studied Latin for six years, two in college and another four of one-onone study at the Swedenborg School of Religion with the esteemed Rev. Dr. George F. Dole. After such intensive studying, one might assume I was already making good progress with my translation project, but quite the opposite was true. In fact, I realized that I did not even enjoy the work of translation.

I was surprised to learn that the existing Korean translations of Swedenborg's books were not only quite dated, but, even worse, unreliable.

My classes with George, which should have been primarily linguistic discussions, were often filled with lively theological discourse. I discovered that I enjoyed every moment of analyzing, investigating, and understanding Swedenborg's theology. Yet, I learned one important truth about the task of translation from George: it's not about finding a matching word from one language to another but about understanding the meaning of the word in its own context as well as the intention of the writer, and then finding and recreating such a word in another language. In order to do such a

complicated task accurately, George often emphasized the importance of knowing and understanding the cultural and philosophical background of both languages.

After my ordination, marriage, relocating multiple times, and starting a family, the project receded to the back of my mind for nearly a decade until I was contacted by a group of Swedenborgians in Incheon, Korea. Seeking guidance, they asked me to help continue their study of Swedenborg's writings and I agreed to meet with them virtually once per month. From there, my work with Koreans eager to study Swedenborg seemed to snowball, and I found myself leading multiple classes for different groups and individuals. However, it quickly became apparent that I was spending a large amount of time correcting the translations and explaining why they were not accurate. Even so, I had little capacity to pay much attention to the matter and instead soldiered on with the poor translations.

It wasn't until 2017 that I finally understood and accepted the calling I felt so long ago and for which I spent many years preparing—intentionally or not. One day while visiting Korea, Rev. Keehyun Joh and I were discussing the necessity of having accurate translations of Swedenborg's books. He pointed out that I was uniquely qualified for the task not just from a linguistic standpoint, but because I studied

Contents

Translating TCR for Korean
Swedenborgians1
Editor's Corner2
Letter from the President3
Convention Outings4
Garden Church Seeks Co-Pastor6
Chauncey Giles: Chapter 97
From the Social Justice
Committee8
Spirit in Action9
SCYL Officers 202210
Swedenborg, Christianity, and
Ecumenism12
Passages14
Art and Poetry14
What's Happening15
Social Justice Survey16
Free Hosanas16

the Messenger

© The Swedenborgian Church of North America

Published monthly except two combined issues by the Standing Committee for Communication and Information of the Swedenborgian Church of North America (founded 1817, incorporated 1861 as the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America), Rev. Jane Siebert, president.

January/February 2022

Volume 246, No. 1, Whole Number 5470

Editor, design, and production: Rebekah Greenwood

Copy editing and proofing: Robert Leith, Brittany Price, Emily Woofenden, Herb Ziegler, & Trevor

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

Printing: Classic GraphX, Cambridge, MA

 ${\bf Email: messenger@swedenborg.org}$

Editorial, Business, and Subscription Address: *The Messenger*, Central Office 50 Quincy Street

Cambridge MA 02138 Tel: 617.969.4240

Email: manager@swedenborg.org

Subscriptions: free online subscription at https://swedenborg.org/subscribe/. Printed and mailed to US address, \$25/year; to Canada address, \$30/year; to all other addresses, \$40/year; single copies, \$3.00, Libraries & prisoners, free. Send check made out to "Swedenborgian Church" with "Messenger" on the memo line. Other requests, write or call Central Office.

Submissions are accepted at any time.
Submissions must be received by the third
Monday of the month to be considered for the
next issue.

The opinions and views expressed are those of the authors, not of *the Messenger*, the Standing Committee for Communication and Information, or the Swedenborgian Church.

Editor's Corner



Light of the Olympics

Many of us find it hard in the middle of winter, fighting seasonal depression and dealing with early darkness, cold

nights, and blustery snow days. Every four years we are treated to a shiny beacon of light at this time—the Winter Olympics. I have been a huge fan of the Olympics, both winter and summer, my entire life. I remember watching them with my dad when I was little (figure skating has always been my favorite). I can probably name about eighty-five percent of the figure skating Olympic champions in my lifetime and which year they won. I love watching people who have worked hard their whole life getting to the top of their obscure sport and being celebrated for jumping on a tiny sled—face first and seeing who can go the fastest down a half tube of ice without crashing (skeleton). Or who decided that sliding a forty-pound piece of granite down a sheet of ice and sweeping in front of it until it lands in the middle of the target (curling) would be a great game? The sixteenth century Scots of course, and I'll watch every minute of it and learn the rules and explain them to my kids.

Skis, skates, boards, and rocks—I enjoy it all and will keep it on in the background and watch and absorb as much of it as I can. However, I do find it disappointing that there is so much political turmoil surrounding these upcoming games. United States diplomats boycotting attendance due to accusations of Chinese human rights violations on their own people from the Xiajiang region, or Vladamir Putin has his troops surrounding Ukraine

waiting to invade—will he do it during the games? These are important issues that need to be addressed, but shouldn't this be the time we celebrate these athletes, politics aside? These athletes have worked their whole lives to achieve their childhood goal of representing their country at the Olympic games. Should I have to explain to my kids why all they are talking about is political unrest? Shouldn't I be explaining to them how awesome Shaun White is, in his fifth Olympics, at the age of thirty-five, still shredding on his snowboard and going for his fourth gold medal. I want to explain to them what a "quad Lutz" is and why Jason Brown is at the top of his figure skating game even though he can't land one.

It saddens me that this has to be the focus. Perhaps we should pay attention to these issues not just at the time of the Olympics, but for longer than two weeks. There are so many positive things about the Olympics and athletes to also focus on and celebrate.

The Human Rights Campaign (www.hrc.org) posted an article about meeting the thirty-four LGBTQ+ athletes competing in this year's games, what sport they are competing in, and what country they are representing. Ice hockey, curling, figure skating, biathlon, skeleton, skiing, ski jumping, snowboarding, and speed skating will all have competitors representing this community. Did you know that the 2018 games in Pyeong Chang only had sixteen athletes open about their sexuality, and it was the first Winter Games ever that there were openly gay male athletes? What about Maame Biney, back for her second Olympics

Continues on page 11



Find Us on Facebook!

facebook

Letter from the President

The Year of Providence: 2021-22



Dear Friends,

As we head into this new year of 2022 together, I feel the need for more hope. We are trying to plan an in-person convention for summer of 2022, after two virtual conventions, wondering where we will be in six months. Right now, churches are opening their doors for services with that tension that creeps up and makes us question if this is okay. It seems every time we pop our heads above this pandemic another whack-a-mole hits us back down in a hole.

I'm reading a book, a Christmas gift to myself,

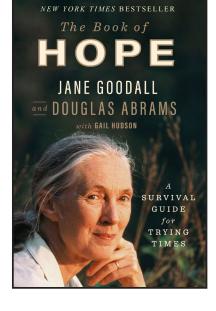
The Book of Hope: A Survival Guide for Trying Times by Jane Goodall and Douglas Abrams. She inspired my desire to live in Africa when I had just completed university nearly fifty years ago. My hope was not just to travel to Africa, but to live there. And my husband and I did for three years with the Peace Corps. I remember waking up in the middle of the night in the Congo under my mosquito netting, the feet of our bed in tin cans filled with water so the fire ants could not visit us in the middle of the night, which worked-most of the time. Yes, I would wake up with the deep

silent darkness enveloping me and say out loud, "I'm in the middle of Africa—thank you, Jane Goodall." It wasn't anything like the lifetime Jane Goodall spent in Africa and around the world, but it certainly broadened the world view and theological view of this Kansas girl who had never travelled outside of the U.S.

I've read Jane Goodall's books and the many books about her. I am always enthralled by her life, following her daring experiences and her patience

to connect with our fellow primates. She went on to help protect them, free them from the science labs, and teach us about ourselves through the insight of our ties with chimpanzees and all of nature.

While Jane was tirelessly working to stop the killing of chimpanzee mothers and stealing their babies to sell on the black market in 1973, Ray and I were on a river supply boat traveling down the Congo River on a needed break. While I was out walking around the barges looking at the various levels of accommodations from





THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCHES WELCOME YOU TO LONG BEACH!

Saturday, June 25th – Wednesday, June 29th 2022

This summer's 198th annual convention will convene in Southern California at California State University, Long Beach. This annual convention is co-hosted by Wayfarers Chapel in Rancho Palos Verdes, The Garden Church in San Pedro, and Agapao Church in Santa Ana, California. Southern California is known for its sunny weather, beaches, and magnificent coastline. Long Beach is known as a waterfront playground full of activities—the Aquarium of the Pacific, whale watching on the water, shopping, tours of coastal breweries, and excellent restaurants. This year, we

have two outings planned



The Pointe Conference Center, California State University, Long Beach

Monday Evening Outing

We will tour the grounds of Wayfarers Chapel, enjoy dinner, and the ordi-

nation service. Some attractions are:

- The Tree Chapel designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, Jr. surrounded by a grove of Redwood trees
- Beautiful landscape and gardens on 3.5 acres of land with stunning coastal views
- The Visitors Center & Gift Shop
- Walk of Honor—a brick walkway in the rose garden with names and dates of weddings, memorials, and other events
- Wayfarers Chapel is the National Memorial to Emanuel Swedenborg

Tuesday Afternoon Outing

A visit to The Garden Church and Feed and Be Fed's Farm location.

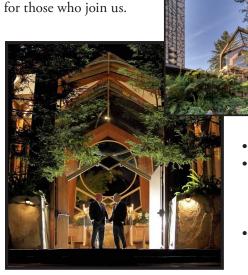
Come, see, and engage in useful service.

- At The Garden Church, we'll tour the space and pack up meal replacement bags for the food insecure in the community
- At the Feed and Be Fed Farm, we'll tour the space, have opportunities to get our hands in the dirt, and connect with the Lord's creation
- Each site will have options for people of all ages and abilities—all are welcome!



Registration for convention will open in early spring.

Please visit swedenborg.org for updates as they become available.



Letter from the President

Continued from page 3

tight cabins to open air mats on the decks, a man came up to me with a young chimp. The baby looked so forlorn. I reached out to hold him and he buried his head in my neck and hung on. The man asked if I wanted to keep him for the day and I quickly agreed. Ray and I talked about it, and we decided to pay for the chimpanzee and try to find a refuge for him when we landed, really having no idea what we might be getting into. The man came to get the chimp and said we could have him the next day for 200 Congolese dollars, which was a lot for Peace Corps volunteers. However, the next day we searched the boat and attached barges and never could find the man and young chimpanzee. We later found out that the ship had been raided overnight and anyone found with a chimp was taken off the boat and thrown in prison. To this day, I remember how much holding that chimp felt like holding my own child and how close we had come to real danger.

In *The Book of Hope*, co-authored by Douglas Abrams through personal interviews with Jane Goodall, they take on the worsening climate crisis, our global pandemic, and the overwhelming political divide to find the hope necessary to search for answers and how to move forward—both personally and globally—in dark times such as these.

The questions surrounding us right now are daunting. How can we stay hopeful in what seems like a hopeless time? How do we encourage our kids to sustain their own hope? What can we do? What should we do? What will we do?

When Doug asked, "What is hope?" it was evident Jane had thought a lot about hope, lived and spread hope, and knew what it felt like to almost lose hope. Hope is a part of her essence and

being. She told him, "Hope is what enables us to keep going in the face of adversity. It is what we desire to happen, but we must be prepared to work hard to make it so. Like hoping this will be a good book. But it won't be if we don't bloody work at it."

Jane continued, "...all hope does not require action, because sometimes you can't take action. If you are in a prison cell where you've been thrown for no good reason, you can't take action, but you can still hope to get out." And in the next breath, "...in certain contexts (action) is essential. Take this dire environmental nightmare we are living in today. We certainly hope that it is not too late to turn things around—but we know that this change will not happen unless we take action."

I found encouragement through Jane's "Four Reasons for Hope: The Amazing Human Intellect, The Resilience of Nature, The Power of Young People, and The Indomitable Human Spirit." Each reason for hope covers a chapter in their conversation, which was delayed with the sudden illness of Doug's father, shutdowns with the pandemic, and travel restrictions causing their conversations to, appropriately, finish via Zoom.

Jane Goodall is an inspiring woman and now at age 87 is called "Virtual Jane" as she lectures and teaches and ignites hope in adults and children. Her message for all the readers of her book and all of us:

...realize that we can win these wars, that there is hope for our future—for the health of our planet, our societies, and our children. But only if we all get together and join forces. And I hope, too, that you understand the urgency of taking action and each of us doing our bit. Please believe that, against all odds, we can win out, because if you don't

believe that, you will lose hope, sink into apathy and despair—and do nothing.

We can get through the pandemic. Thanks to *our amazing human intellect*, scientists have produced vaccines at record speed.

We should be so grateful for the incredible resilience of nature. And we can help the environment heal not only by means of the big restoration projects but as a result of our own efforts as we choose how to live our lives and think about our own environmental footsteps.

There is great hope for the future in the actions, the determination and energy of *young people around the word*. And we can all do our best to encourage and support them as they stand up against climate change and social and environmental injustice.

Finally, remember that we have been gifted not only with a clever brain and well-developed capacity for love and compassion, but also with *an indomitable spirit*. We all have this fighting spirit – only some people don't realize it. We can try to nurture it, give it a chance to spread its wings and fly out into the world giving other people hope and courage.

Together we can. Together we will.

Thank you, Jane Goodall, for helping me get in touch with my youthful optimism and hope and remembering when my generation of baby boomers were ready to take on the world; we did make a difference, but it is not over. We all have a continuing responsibility. Thank you for helping me restore my hope and reconnect with the work ahead. I have faith *the indomitable spirit* is the light and fire of the Divine Spirit, alive and well within us all.

With love and care and hope for 2022!

—Rev. Jane Siebert

¹ Learn more about the Virtual Jane Goodall Project: https://news.janegoodall. org/2019/06/24/hope-in-a-digital-world-themaking-of-virtual-jane-goodall/

Garden Church Seeks Co-Pastor

Re-imagining Church and Loving the Lord – Progressive and Passionate – Seeking Justice and Growing Community

Who We Are:

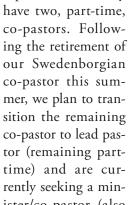
The Garden Church was founded in 2015 and we became a congregation in 2018. We are a community seeking to re-imagine church as we grow together in a vibrant urban garden, planted in the heart of downtown San Pedro, California. A unique community, San Pedro is part of the City of Los Angeles, but it has a small, old town feel. Unlike most other L.A. communities, the freeway does not run through it, since it is not on the way to anywhere else. From here you can go to beautiful and interesting Catalina Island on a boat that crosses the twenty-four miles of the channel. Or you can take a cruise to points north and south. But staying here is also wonderful. There is a beautiful beach, a view of the ocean and distant mountains, a yacht club, sev-

eral parks, good places to hike, and downtown art galleries close to the Garden Church. There is a classic Warner Grand theater, a famous ballet school, and several good restaurants. San Pedro is a close community, of multi-

community-minded people with lots of energy that spur it on its way forward towards greater development.

We are committed to the Lord, worship, study, and embodying God's love in this world. Our gates are open to all, and we meet people where they are. We gather for worship outside in our garden sanctuary on Sunday afternoons preceded by working together in the garden and followed by a community meal. Throughout the week we are open in conjunction with our nonprofit, Feed and Be Fed, an urban farm which is responsible for our garden on 6th Street and farms on the Los Angeles Unified School District property located 1.5 miles from the church. We are a community of faith, committed to feeding and being fed in body, mind, and spirit. We currently

> co-pastors. Following the retirement of our Swedenborgian co-pastor this summer, we plan to transition the remaining co-pastor to lead pastor (remaining parttime) and are currently seeking a minister/co-pastor (also



part-time, up to 50%) to work as a team ministry. You can learn more about us: www.gardenchurchsp.org and on social media (Facebook and Instagram) @gardenchurchsp

We Are Looking For

The minister we seek must be a clergy member in good standing in the Swedenborgian Church of North America (SCNA), have an active spiritual life, feel called to innovative ways of being church and be eager to engage in the work of creation care, eco-justice, and food and social justice. We are looking for a collaborative leader who enjoys working as a member of a team, is a self-starter, has good follow-through and is open to anyone who comes through the gates. We are looking for a grounded spiritual leader who can help make complex spiritual ideas applicable to our daily lives. We have the privilege of helping and working with a variety of people and situations, such as those who are unhoused, have active mental illness, and are in emotional distress. We have an ongoing co-operative relationship with a San Pedro inter-faith group of pastors. This group includes several faith traditions including Judaism, Christianity, and other faiths. At times, pastors from these faiths are invited to participate in worship services at The Garden Church. Our group is composed of a variety of faith traditions worshipping, working, and eating together. Currently our part-time Swedenborgian minister offers Theological Thursdays for those interested in studying the writings of Swedenborg in greater detail.

Interested candidates should contact Elizabeth Sala at: southbaygarden7@gmail.com by February 15, 2022. 🕮

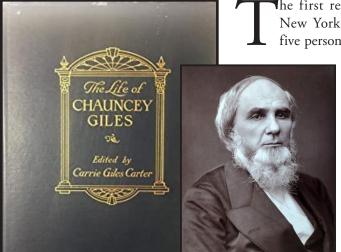




The Life of Chauncey Giles

Chapter Nine: The New York Society—Introductory

SUMMARIZED BY LOIS DOLE



Somewhere I found a small pamphlet by Chauncey Giles titled "The Blessedness of Death," and I found it so comforting. When rearranging a bookcase, I came across his biography, written by his daughter Carrie Giles Carter; I thought I would look into it. I found it so fascinating: it's mostly letters written to and from him that tell how important finding New Church teachings were to him, but also capture the feelings of the times about church beginnings in this country. This is the next installment of my summary.¹

he first recorded meeting in New York was in 1794 with five persons present. The soci-

ety was not organized until 1816. It was named the "Association of the City of New York." Its members used the medium of conversation to disseminate what they felt to be the gist of New Church teachings. The first of New

Church periodicals was written by Mr. Woodworth, the author of the poem "The Old Oaken Bucket." He continued as its author for a brief time.

In 1840, Mr. Barret came from the Unitarian Church to the New York society. His lectures were so popular that they were put into book form. Rev. Thomas Worcester ordained him in 1841. When he became pastor in Cincinnati, a renowned biblical scholar, George Bush, became reader for a while after reading Swedenborg and accepting New Church tenets. He was ordained in 1848, becoming pastor in New York. At the time, the subject of ecclesiasticism was a hotly debated topic. New York withdrew

from Convention, not returning until Chauncey's pastorate there.

The society met in eight different places before the erection of the church on 35th Street, which was dedicated on February 6, 1859. The property was left to the church by Mr. James Chesterman, a society member, in his will. There was considerable concern that the property was too far from the center of town.

Among the society's members was Dr. Hans B. Gram, the first homeopathic physician in the country, and John Bigelow, who was ambassador to Germany and the author of *The Bible that Was Lost and is Found*.

The New York minister just prior to Chauncy was the much beloved Rev. Abiel Silver. He was pastor from 1860 to 1864, when he decided to return to Wilmington, citing the difficulty of ministering to a congregation scattered in New York, Staten Island, Long Island, and New Jersey.

Mr. Thomas Hitchcock of the New



York society was the prime mover in recruiting Chauncey to come there.

Lois Dole resides with her daughter in Bath, Maine.

"Our evils cannot be removed unless they come to light. This does not mean that we are to do them so that they will come to light but that we should take stock of ourselves—not just our actions but our thoughts and what we would do if we were not afraid of the laws and of dishonor."

-Emanuel Swedenborg, Divine Providence §278

¹ See prior installments in the October 2021 Issue, May 2021 issue, March 2021 issue, November 2020 issue and July/August 2020 issue.

From the Social Justice Committee

Not in My Name!

BY ROBERT MCCLUSKEY

Ifirst learned of Christian nationalism in 1984, when I joined the Religious Liberty Committee of the National Council of Churches. The specific issue was "Christian Identity," a new militia movement at the time. Its strange, underlying tenet was that White people, not Jews, are the true Israelites favored by God in the Bible. Since then, the movement has waned, but Christian nationalism continues to grow.

Christian nationalism has been present in America since before the founding of the nation. It has manifested in a variety of forms but has never gone away. Here we recall the KKK and the southern Democrats of the 50s and 60s. "From its beginnings, the Christian nationalist movement has endorsed American exceptionalism, the idea that the U.S. is more righteous and upright than other nations, but during the last sixty years—beginning with the Religious Right—a significant number of Christian nationalists have become increasingly partisan, divisive, ideological, and militant."1 Here we recall the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017, and the January 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.

"Christian nationalism is characterized by the following religious affirmations:

- That the United States was founded as a Christian nation;
- That America is exceptional. That is, God has given the United States particular blessings and privileges
- 1 From a draft Policy Statement of the National Council of Churches U.S.A., March 2021: "The Dangers of Christian Nationalism in the United States"

not available to people in other countries, and the nation must remain Christian for those blessings to continue;

- That only Christians are the proper custodians of this nation's heritage;
- That Christianity (or a particular form of Christianity) should have privileged status in the United States, particularly in matters of law and political policy;
- The even when their presence is tolerated, people who practice other religions or none cannot be fully American—they are not welcomed, their voices are discounted, and they are not to be trusted with political and cultural leadership;
- That Christians in general, and some Christians in particular, should enjoy a level of legal protection not granted to those who practice other religions; and,
- That Christians have been made to suffer unjustly, leaving them no alternative but to respond with revolutionary zeal to preserve the United States as a great Christian nation."

Christian nationalism poses a significant danger to the integrity of both church and society.

We can also note that Christian nationalism:

- Is largely White (and eager to deny the sin of racism)
- Is largely male (denying leadership positions to women)
- Elevates the nation to divine status (idolatry)
- Distorts the radically inclusive message of the gospel (xenophobia)
- Ignores or bypasses moral injustice

- (poverty, racism, war, immigration, housing, climate change, etc.)
- Prefers conspiracy theories to facts and truth (seeking to whitewash the complex history of America)
- Turns those who are different into forces of darkness, enemies to be defeated, deported, or destroyed, or at least contained by political means

Christian nationalism poses a significant danger to the integrity of both church and society. By seeking to make a particular form of Christianity a litmus test for government policy, it violates the establishment clause; and by seeking to marginalize and disenfranchise all religions that do not align with its mindset, it violates the free exercise clause. It thereby threatens both democracy and religious freedom.

Why should Swedenborgian churches in the United States be concerned with this issue? Because we are Christians and Americans. Many Christian leaders have long spoken out against Christian nationalism. They understand that Scripture calls us out of a sectarian and nationalistic mindset. As Swedenborgians, we are more than well equipped to affirm a radically inclusive, inter-religious, and non-partisan mindset; not just theologically, but culturally and civilly as well.

"The alternative to Christian nationalism, however, is not disengagement from politics, but a willingness to work in the public realm...to foster good for all people in this nation and the world. Christians are called both to support the government of the United States insofar as it serves this beneficent goal and to work diligently

Not in My Name! Continued from page 8

for reforms wherever and whenever it does not." If we remain silent, if we do not engage, Christian nationalism will continue to grow as a corrosive and divisive movement in our midst. The best response to Christian nationalism is to boldly proclaim to the nation, as others have done, "No, not in my name!"

Besides its more overt or militant expressions, Christian nationalism can also operate in more subtle ways: in the media, the culture, the church, and in government. For instance: it is quite possible for a church to identify itself as politically conservative or progressive/liberal. While this may help to ground its members to a specific identity, it does so at the cost of religious freedom. "Taking sides" makes sense in many areas of life, but it only makes sense in the church if the side we "take" is that of the Lord's: the One who takes no sides but loves and embraces all.

Like most mainline Protestant churches these days, we are a *pur-ple* congregation, a mix of both Republicans and Democrats, though

mostly Democrats, I suspect. Because I believe both political parties have contributed to our nation's current political dysfunction, I regularly offer an equal-opportunity critique of the political arena. Our faith stands in judgment of our nation's lawmakers—of whatever ideological stripe—when they fail to uphold the values implicit in the gospel demands for justice. . .. I do not use the terms progressive or conservative in my preaching and teaching because these are labels rooted in secular ideology and are not Christian terms. Reclaiming a Christian vocabulary as we talk about politics, which includes the fallibility of every political party or ideology or leader (i.e., human sinfulness), is one of the most important roles of the pastor, especially in our divisive political climate right now. (Rev. Scott Anderson, 9/24/18)

As I have written elsewhere, the question is not *if* the church should be involved in the public realm, but *how*. How can we bring our moral witness, our vision for inclusion, justice, peace, and unity to bear on the real world, to affect beneficial change? While we are certainly not a Christian nation, we are very much a religious nation.

The freedom of religion granted to us in the First Amendment carries with it both the power and the responsibility to bring our voice into the public square, to bring religious and spiritual values to bear on our actual lives, without overstepping constitutional limits or disparaging other religions. The church is now able to pursue its ministry of healing and justice free of government and political interference. The First Amendment calls us to stand apart from partisan politics and allows us to address the issues that affect the well-being of our neighbors. Let us avoid taking a divisive stand against our fellow citizens, and instead take a unifying stand against all that is false and unjust.

SAAR is presenting a five-part series exploring the church's relationship to civic engagement. I invite you to par-



ticipate in this timely event.

Rev. Robert
McCluskey is a
member of the
Social Justice
Committee and the
Standing Committee
on Educational
Resources.

Spirit in Action: Civic Engagement and Religious Life

Session Two: Interfaith Advocacy 101

Monday, February 28, 7:30 – 9:00 PM ET

We all want to help our neighbor and help make the world a better place through useful action. But sometimes it is hard to know how to have a meaningful impact. Ours is a tradition that encourages people of faith to be active and conscientious citizens. We will explore this aspect of the Swedenborgian tradition as well as concrete ways to be civically engaged in a five-part series from January through May.

Join us for the second installment:

Interfaith Advocacy 101 (Led by the Friends Committee on National Legislation)

- What does interfaith advocacy look like in Washington, D.C.?
- Who is the Friends Committee on National Legislation, what does FCNL do?
- How do members of Congress react to faith-based advocacy?
- Why is faith-based advocacy important?

This is a **non-partisan** event series, designed to support civic action generally, without preference to specific issues.

To register, contact Rev. Shada Sullivan at revshada@gmail.com.

Save the Dates for the Upcoming Installments of this Series:

March 28, April 25, and May 23

Swedenborgian Church Youth League

The SCYL 2022 Officer Elections

BY KURT FEKETE

The 2022 Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL) officer and chaplain elections took place at the virtual winter retreat this past December. The teens selfnominated, ran unopposed, and were elected unanimously. This is a completely new team of officers as all the previous officers served two full terms (2020 - 2021) and have aged out of the SCYL. I thank outgoing officers Josh Moore, Jack Cadden, Nathaniel Hamilton, Ronnie Viges, and Ivy Little for their dedicated service over the last two years. Rev. Renée Machiniak returns as League Chaplain. Renée has served in this capacity for several years and diligently stays in touch with and works with our teens. She attends retreats, both virtually and in-person, whenever she can, and does a great job presenting lectures, leading discussions, and caring for the spiritual and emotional health of the youth.

Please join me in congratulating and welcoming our new officers and returning chaplain. They make a great team, and I'm very excited to work with them in this challenging, yet exciting new year.

Molly Moore

President

I am from Saginaw, Michigan, and



this is my first year being on the executive board for SCYL. I enjoy baking, golfing, and reading in my free time, along with

The 2022 SCYL Officers

President
Molly Moore

East Coast, Finance and Fundraising Officer Trent Carson

Midwest and Public Relations
Officer
Oliver Hamilton

West Coast and Activities Officer Wyatt Steinhiser

Clear Blue Sky (CBS) Co-Editor Julien Billings

Clear Blue Sky (CBS) Co-Editor Zsa Zsa Dolley

Canada Officer Open

League Chaplain Rev. Renée Machiniak

participating in several school clubs, such as student council and French club. In addition to my extracurriculars, I attend First Presbyterian Church in Saginaw, and actively participate in the youth league. I am very excited to be the president of the SCYL for 2022

and can't wait to see what the year brings!

Wyatt Steinhiser West Coast and Activities Officer



I live in LaPorte County, Indiana. I love spending time with others from Almont New Church Assembly, and I love being outside on my bike.



Oliver Hamilton Midwest and Public Relations Officer

Hello there! My name is Oliver Hamilton, and I'm the officer for the Midwest and

P.R. I am currently taking classes to become a machinist, and that's what I plan to pursue for my career. My hobbies include video games, electronics, 3D printing, reading, and many other sporadic interests.

Trent Carson

East Coast, Finance, and Fundraising Officer

My name is Trent Carson, and I live in Westerville, Ohio. I am thirteen



years old and attend Walnut Springs Middle School and am also taking advanced classes in English and Biology at Westerville North High School. I enjoy being physically and mentally active and am on the Westerville Tennis and Cross-Country teams as well as Band and the Junior National

SCYL Officers

Continued from page 12

Honor Society. When not partaking in school activities, I enjoy playing board games with friends and family as well as drawing maps, playing the piano, and learning French. I am encouraged by my father Craig Carson, who was a past SCYL president, as well as my mother, Katie, and my three siblings: Lilly, Natalie, and Aiden. We also have two adorable kittens: Patch and Pepper.

Julien Billings

Co-Editor,
Clear Blue Sky
Hi! My
name is Julien Billings
and I'm from
LaPorte, Indiana. I love to
read and play
video games in

my spare time.



I attend Almont and I occasionally attend the LaPorte New Church.



Zsa Zsa
Dolley
Co-Editor,
Clear Blue Sky
Hi, I'm Zsa
Zsa Dolley. I
am a ninth
grader and now
a co-editor of
Clear Blue Sky.

In my free time I like to sketch, listen to music, and do photography. I love going to retreats and can't wait to gather in-person again.

Follow SCYL Clear Blue Sky on Instagram: instagram.com/ scylclearbluesky/



Translating TCRContinued from page 1

Eastern philosophies (Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism) alongside Christianity while also reading and teaching Swedenborg's books in depth as a scholar and minister. Though I felt this truth in my heart, I remained hesitant simply because I knew the challenge that lay ahead.

And so, a few years passed after that realization in Korea. By that time, the Incheon group and I had already read Four Doctrines, Divine Love and Wisdom, and Divine Providence, and I felt they were prepared to study Swedenborg's only book that is close to systematic theology, True Christian Religion (TCR). When a member shared a translation of TCR that was recently done by a Korean Swedenborgian minister, it became crystal clear to me that it was finally time to begin my translation project. Though I was by no means certain of my ability as a translator above all others, I knew I was fully prepared to provide an accurate translation both linguistically and theologically.

Hearing about my endeavor during a church meeting, the San Francisco Church's council expressed their desire to support my translations, and we soon discovered that the denomination has a fund to aid such projects. I would like to express my sincere gratitude toward the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church and the Iungerich Fund for acknowledging the importance of this project and their support of it.

Each week, I spend about one hour translating TCR. Though it is a very slow process, there are at least three groups I work with who are actively benefiting from my efforts: the Agapao Church in Santa Ana, California, the Korean Swedenborgian group in Incheon, and Rev. Keehyun Joh and his group in Korea.

To be honest, there are still aspects

of the task that give me pause. I wonder if I'll even be able to finish the whole project and whether it will have much impact for Korean people. At the same time, I recognize the difficulty and challenges I face as a rookie translator. Most interestingly, it has become apparent to me the difference between Eastern and Western minds in their approach to this philosophical and theological material. Despite these hesitations, one thing that I can promise to myself and to my Lord is that I will continue with this project as long as I am alive!



Rev. Junchol
Lee serves the
San Francisco
Swedenborgian
Church as
Senior Pastor,
and lives in
San Francisco,
California,
with his wife,
Heejoung
Moon and two
children, Roiy
and Joan.

Editor's Corner Continued from page 2

after being the first Black woman and youngest person to ever make the short track speed skating team in 2018. Then there is the Jamaican four-man bobsled team—they are back in 2022, after twenty years since last qualifying. I hope the stories about the athletes become the focus and they are not used in a world political chessboard.

Even with the politics and the attention on the pandemic, we can still support how important the Olympic games are to these athletes and their families (who can't even be there).

Good luck to Team U.S.A. and all of the athletes around the world dedicated to getting to the top of their sport. I will be watching you.

—Beki Greenwood Messenger@Swedenborg.org

Swedenborg, Christianity, and Ecumenism - Part 1

An ODBlog Post from SpiritualQuesters.org

BY THOM MULLER

This new church is the crown of all the churches that have ever existed on this planet because it will worship the one God, who can be seen, within whom is the God that cannot be seen, like a soul in a body." Emanuel Swedenborg, True Christianity §787

Since the beginning of the Swedenborgian movement, followers of the Old Swede have had a variety of approaches to engaging other faith traditions. This has varied from the quasi-isolationism and dissociation from Mainline Christianity of the ear-

ly Academy Movement to the admission of the Swedenborgian Church of North America into the National Council of Churches.

Central to Swedenborg's theology is his concept of the New Church. As many of his eighteenth-century esoteric contemporaries, Swedenborg believed in a progressive and successive history of the Earth. He distinguishes five aeons, ages, or dispensations: The Most Ancient Church, a somewhat ideal spiritual state of connectedness with God in which humans were vegetarians and communicated directly with the divine in nature, the Ancient Church, the Israelitish Church, the Christian Church, and finally the New Church. This new church, or new age, the coming of which he claims to have witnessed and equates to the spiritual second coming of Christ as well as the descent of the Holy City New Jerusalem from Heaven, is most clearly visible, so he claims, through an increase



Engraving depicting the Twelfth Book of Revelation: the woman clothed with the sun is attacked by a seven-headed dragon as her child is taken up to God.

in religious and spiritual freedom and a reconciliation of love and wisdom, science and religion, spirituality and faith. Nowhere does Swedenborg indicate that the New Church was to be a separate, new ecclesiastical organization.

In the late eighteenth century, just shortly after Swedenborg's death, distinctly Swedenborgian groups had already been formally established. The Exegetic-Philanthropic Society in Sweden was heavily influenced by the emerging Spiritualist movement. In England, an abolitionist society around the political activist and spiritual leader Charles B. Waldström had attracted a large number of followers who used the writings of Swedenborg as their main inspiration for the abolishment of African slave trade. Finally, the Theosophical Society (not to be confused with Blavatsky's group) became the first semi-ecclesiastical New Church organization, but had no established clergy or liturgy, and did not

require its members to resign from membership in their denominations (neither does the modern Swedenborgian Church of North America by the way).¹

It was at this time that John Clowes, an esteemed and active Anglican minister, who had been preaching Swedenborg's theology from his pulpit at Manchester's St. John's Church, with little opposition from his superiors (and was, in fact, offered the position of bishop following his increased popularity), entered into a significant public debate with Robert Hindmarsh. Hindmarsh, who had been

raised in the Methodist faith, was a wealthy businessman in the printing business. He had read Swedenborg, accepted his writings as divinely inspired, and became a charismatic proponent of the new theology. He was instrumental in the formation of the Theosophical Society.²

Clowes had established a reading group in Whitefield, dedicated to the study of Swedenborg's writings. In 1787, the idea of acquiring a building for worship, and holding separate, distinctly Swedenborgian worship services, was discussed in the Whitefield group. (Until this point, members of the society had remained members of their established churches.) Clowes saw this as a dangerous move towards separating from the

¹ Block, Marguerite Beck. *The New Church in the New World: A Study of Swedenborgianism in America*. p. 65

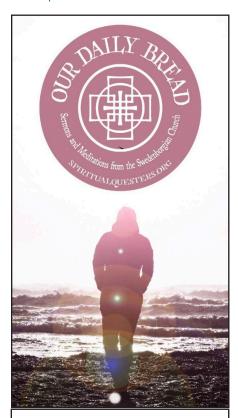
² Ibid p. 67

Swedenborg ODBlog

Continued from page 12

"old church." He held the strong belief, likely confirmed by his success in promoting Swedenborgian theology among his fellow Anglicans, that the New Church Swedenborg writes about was to emerge directly out of the "old church," and encouraged his followers to be patient.³ Hindmarsh, on the other hand, entered the debate with a passionately separatist stance. His position may be partly due to his Methodist background. While Anglican authorities tended to be mostly tolerant towards their members' incorporation

3 Ibid p. 65



Our Daily Bread at

SpiritualQuesters.org is your resource for recent sermons, meditations, reflections, lessons, interviews, and original content from within and beyond the Swedenborgian Church of North America.

of Swedenborgian theology into their faith, the Methodists had taken a much more authoritative position, actively alienating and even excommunicating adherents who became too involved in the study and promotion of Swedenborg.⁴ This left Methodist followers of Swedenborg, among others, with no formal church community, clearly making the prospect of a sepa-

Part of the reason for the variety of approaches among Swedenborgians is the ambiguity of Swedenborg's theology as it relates to existing religious structures.

rate denomination appealing.

In 1787, the first distinct, separate Swedenborgian church was officially established by Hindmarsh and his followers at a private home in Manchester. In its constitution, the newly formed society declared the necessity of baptism and holy supper being performed in a distinctly New Church manner, thus requiring a distinct New Church priesthood. A dissenter's license (required by the state to officially cut ties with the Church of England) was obtained. That same year, the congregation rented a small chapel as their own place of worship.5 This marks the beginning of a new period of Swedenborgian religion, in which there exists a distinct, visible, and separate church, self-identifying exclusively with the theology of Emanuel Swedenborg. In 1791, the first Swedenborgian house of worship was built, the New Jerusalem Temple in Birmingham, England.6

Part of the reason for the variety of approaches among Swedenborgians is the ambiguity of Swedenborg's theology as it relates to existing religious structures. While Swedenborgians have traditionally done well on the inter-faith level due to his universalist view of religious diversity, its relationship to Christianity has been complex. While Swedenborg's theosophy is decidedly Christian, it explicitly rejects many of the theological tenets of established Christianity. His concept of the New Church has been at the core of this tension.

It appears that Swedenborg himself believed that his writings would permeate European academic and theological discourse, slowly reforming many realms of thought and philosophy. This never quite happened. Mainline Christianity has never had much use for his theology. The dominant realms of Swedenborgian influence have been alternative spirituality, the arts, and literature. The obvious question for Swedenborgians became how it ought to relate to existing structures. Is the New Church to replace or reform religious thought and experience? Is it meant to be a "church," in the classical sense of the term, or is it a spiritual state which effects humanity regardless of religious or denominational affiliation? Or maybe both? Neither? Is the Old Christian Church really dead?

Tune into Spiritual Questers.org for Part II: Swedenborg and Protestantism—coming soon.

Rev. Thom Muller is pastor at Hillside, an Urban Sanctuary, in El Cerrito, California, as well as senior editor of *Our Daily Bread*. His passions include the intersection of spirituality and psychology, interfaith



theology, and the Western esoteric tradition. A native of Germany, Rev. Muller was ordained into the ministry of the SCNA in 2016, upon receiving his theological education at Bryn Athyn College of the New Church and the Center for Swedenborgian Studies and Pacific School of Religion at the GTU Berkeley.

⁴ Ibid p. 67

⁵ Ibid p. 67–69

⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afR_ DBrjOjs&t=2s 3D rendering of the Birmingham Temple, by the Rev. Joel Glenn

Passages

Deaths



Keith Mull, 98. Many of you will remember Keith and Marian Mull from the Pawnee Rock New Jerusalem Church, in Kansas. Mar-

ian was a loyal attendee at our annual conventions and grew up in the Swedenborgian Church. She passed to the spiritual world in 2005. On January 2, this year, Keith joined her at age 98.

Keith served on the Urbana Board of Trustees, Urbana, Ohio, for many years, and his guidance was appreciated and trusted. He was a hard worker, successful, and well-known farmer/stockman, building two commercial feedlots in the Central Kansas area.

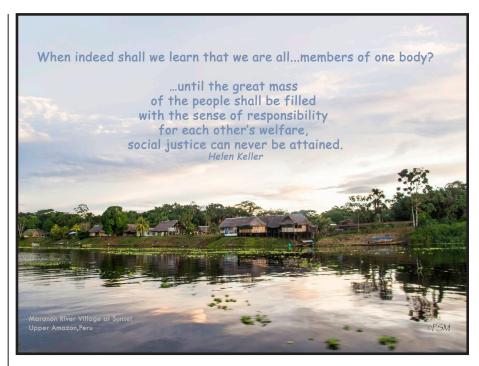
In 2013, his son, daughter-in-law, granddaughter, and great granddaughter all died in a horrendous small plane crash. He told me when I went to visit him that he had a choice: to wallow in his grief, and his grief was very, very deep, or go on with life. At age 90 and semi-retired, Keith returned to his office in the feedlot that his son and granddaughter had been running, and threw himself into his work, seven days a week. They just sold this feedlot one week before his death.

Our prayers and condolences go out to his personal and church families. —Rev. Jane Siebert



Eldon Smith, 95, passed peacefully into the spiritual world on January 2, 2022. Eldon and his late wife

Annella will be remembered by members of Convention as the Consecrated Lay Leader (Eldon) and Administrator



Photography Quotes by Page Morahan

In the Garden

BY BETTE MCDONNELL

Out here, under the sky of a late Autumn evening with the sea a soft not-too-far-off murmur I tilt my head to earth's unbounded roof and see the stars—the light of the eyes of all the souls in heaven—showering their tenderness down upon us, across the pasts of heavy burdens, shared memories.

Not forgetting the gifts those burdens give still, I hear them whisper in the alive stillness of the night, if you want, if you want, give and give, and in giving, receive the present of today when they brought me here to know you and come again to love.

(Annella) of the San Diego Society of the New Jerusalem, roles in which they faithfully served for many years. Eldon was a life-long member of the church in San Diego and was thoroughly dedicated to Swedenborgian teachings. In retirement he remained a warm, welcoming presence at the church. His gentle spirit will be missed. Well done good and faithful servant.



Bette
McDonnell
writes poetry,
loves exploring
nature, and
has been a
member of the
San Francisco
Swedenborgian
Church since
the 90s.

What's Happening



Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism (SAAR) has a biweekly email newsletter that provides education around issues central to antiracism, ideas for actions to take, and inspiration to keep at it longterm. Email Rev. Shada Sullivan, revshada@gmail.com to join the email list.

Save the Date!

2022 Annual Convention

The Tree of Life: Into the Garden

Long Beach, California June 25-29, 2022



NEW! Follow the Messenger on Instagram!

Get the Messenger by mail

- US Address \$25/year
- Canada Address \$30/year
- Other Address -\$40/year

Visit the website for details or to subscribe to the free online version of the Messenger: Swedenborg.org/ news-announcements/ newsletter-the-messenger/



Did you know the Swedenborgian Church of North America has a YouTube channel? Virtual content that has been created, Convention and the Swedenborgians in Action Against Racism program, can be found here for viewing at anytime! Click the YouTube logo above to subscribe!

Do you write poetry, create puzzles or games, or have pieces of art you would like to share? We'd love to see them! Send it along to: Messenger@Swedenborg.org.



SwedenborgianCommunity.org

With broadcasts and written messages most weeks, Spiritual Sunshine: A Swedenborgian Community Online is your interfaith-Swedenborgian community—with a presence on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and your favorite podcasting platform. Join us as we seek to empower awareness of and connection to the spiritual sunlight from Divinity within all of us.

BTETUR DOCAIR TYOSAT THSCTI How can you make the number seven even?
"

Jumble by Jason Greenwood Answers will be printed in the next issue.

Answers to the December Jumble:

Sleigh, Turkey, Grinch, Infant What holiday song would likely be heard at a renaissance faire? "Silent Knight"

Address Service Requested

the Messenger January/February 2022

About the Swedenborgian Church

Emanuel Swedenborg was born January 29, 1688, in Stockholm, Sweden. Although he never intended a church denomination to be founded or named after him, a society was formed in London fifteen years after his death. American groups eventually founded the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches.

As a result of Swedenborg's spiritual questioning and insights, we as a church exist to encourage that same spirit of inquiry and personal growth, to respect differences in views, and to accept others who may have different traditions.

In his theological writings, Swedenborg shared a view of God as infinitely loving and at the very center of our beings, a view of life as a spiritual birthing as we participate in our own creation, and a view of scripture as a story of inner life stages as we learn and grow. Swedenborg said, "All religion relates to life, and the life of religion is to do good." He also felt that the sincerest form of worship is a useful life.

Happy New Year from the Social Justice Committee (SJC)!

Help Us By Taking a Brief Survey

We are excited to continue our engagement in the work of social justice this year. To help us prioritize and grow our work, we would love to hear from you. At the dawn of 2022, what moves you, drives you, and inspires you? Let us know by completing this brief (less than two minute) social justice survey. Thank you for sharing your passions with us.

If you have any questions, please send an email to Rev. Dr. Amanda Riley at: amanda@gardenchurchsp.org.

Blessings,
—Rev. Dr. Jonathan Mitchell and
Rev. Dr. Amanda Riley,
Co-Chairs of SIC

Take the survey: https://tinyurl.com/SJCSurvey2022

Free* Hosanna Hymnals

Does your church, camp, or retreat center need more Hosanna hymnals? Central Office has a surplus of them and would like to make them avail-

able to you. This beloved hymnal is being stored in our storage facility in quantities of thirty-nine hymnals per box. To order your box of thirty-nine hymnals please email manager@swedenborg.org or call 617.969.4240 by March 1, 2022. Quantities are limited, first come, first served.

*Central Office will pay for retrieving the boxes from the storage facility, and you will be asked to cover shipping and handling to have them sent to you.

