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SWEDENBORG SCHOOL OF RELIGION
48 SARGENT STREET
NEWTON, MASS. 02158



*The Swedenborg School of Religion
Happy 125th Anniversary!*

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Moving Toward the Light

Guest Editorial

Dr. Mary Kay Klein

President, Swedenborg School of Religion

Let me begin by thanking the *Messenger* and its editor, Patte LeVan, for helping us to celebrate our 125th anniversary by dedicating the April issue to the Swedenborg School of Religion (SSR). Next, let me report on SSR's new programs.

In February, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts awarded the school the authority to grant a Master of Arts in Swedenborgian Studies. This is the first time in our history that we have been able to grant a degree. This program will be open to ministerial candidates, and to anyone else who would like the opportunity to deepen his or her knowledge of Swedenborgian theology and its applications. We expect Eric Hoffman, our first M.A. student, to graduate this year, and then to continue on in the ordination program.

We are a community which is focused in our worship and our support for one another's spiritual growth. So, now, in the program of ministerial preparation, we are adding more emphasis on field education to our already strong program in Swedenborgian theology. (Two of our students write about their field education experiences elsewhere in this issue.)

The school has developed other new programs in addition to the M.A. and ordination programs. Last year Eldon Smith was the first to graduate in the lay leader program. Nancy Daniels received a certificate in Swedenborgian Studies. We also have three correspondence courses available.

With these programs SSR offers much to the church, but the school also needs your help. We need your prayers, your ideas, and your feedback. To find good students, we need the help of everyone in the church. We need your financial support. As you know, we are included in the Swedenborgian Church's current fund drive. We are seeking gifts to our seminary's endowment that will enable us to continue to expand our services; we also need donations of items such as computer equipment and a VCR.

In an address given in 1866 at the opening of the theological school, the Rev. Thomas Worcester expressed his hopes as follows: "We desire that this institution may be the Lord's institution; we desire that his Love may fill it, and that His Wisdom may form it; we desire that it may be a means through which He can operate in doing good." In 1991 SSR still strives to fulfill this goal.

Swedenborg School of Religion

A Brief History

Robert Kirven

From the beginning, Swedenborgians interested in the founding of schools had two purposes. One was the parochial goal of incorporating Swedenborgian thought into the content of all subjects and protecting students from other views. The other was the utilization of Swedenborgian perspectives on reality, and on the human capacities of freedom and rationality, in a broadly-based philosophy of general education.

In America, the General Convention of the Swedenborgian Church, in 1817, appointed a committee to study issues involved in ordination; and after almost a half-century of experimenting with preparation by apprenticeship, the church inaugurated a seminary in Waltham, Massachusetts in 1866. An attempt was made to include faculty at the school who supported both of the church's historic purposes. By the next year, however, adherents of the parochial mission withdrew to concentrate their efforts in Pennsylvania, and the convention's seminary continued to follow the second, more outward-looking, goal of Swedenborgian education. Known as the New Church Theological School for its first century (in which it moved from Waltham to Boston and then to Cambridge), it changed its name to Swedenborg School of Religion in 1966 after moving to its present campus in Newton in 1965.

Despite occasional challenges—such as notable crisis in the early 1930s, when a move by a more parochial faction to prohibit teaching of historical biblical criticism was defeated—the General Convention's theological seminary has remained committed to exploring ways of applying



The Swedenborg School of Religion

a distinctively Swedenborgian philosophy of education to the pursuit of excellence in the preparation of ministers.

One significant step in that direction began as a student initiative. After World War II, students began coordinating their studies toward a Swedenborgian diploma with degree programs at accredited seminaries in the Boston area. The school encour-

the denomination. Few had advanced degrees, and few were full-time; most held concurrent pastoral positions at Swedenborgian churches in the Boston area. In the early 1960s, financial assistance was offered to enable a faculty member to obtain a doctor of philosophy degree, and all subsequent additions to the teaching faculty have held either the Ph.D. or the

D.Min. degree.

In a third major step, the school's governance was altered to provide greater efficiency, as well as more secure academic freedom, and to eliminate the potential for conflict between two governing boards. The seminary's property and finances had been held by a corporation legally independent of the national church denomination since 1881, and administered by the board of directors of that

corporation; while faculty appointments, curriculum content, and "all matters of control," were entrusted to a Board of Managers elected by the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. In 1988 the two boards were replaced by a single Board of Trustees of the independent corporation (with a structure which preserves a measure of involvement and influence of the church body).

On February 13, 1991, the Massachusetts Board of Regents of Higher Education granted authority to SSR to grant the master of arts degree in Swedenborgian studies. Along with the M.A. program, SSR developed a lay leader program and a certificate program in Swedenborgian Studies; both produced their first graduates in 1990.

Rev. Dr. Robert Kirven is Professor of Theology and Church History at the Swedenborg School of Religion, Newton, Massachusetts.



SSR Library

aged the practice, and even made it a requirement for a time (the requirement was dropped when the fiscal situation no longer permitted the school to pay tuition for its students at other seminaries while collecting none itself).

Another step involved upgrading the faculty's credentials. For almost a century, the school had operated with a faculty made up of particularly skilled and experienced ministers of

If You Want to Live

Matthew Fox Addresses the Swedenborgian Church's Seminary

At the invitation of President Mary Kay Klein, Dominican priest and author Matthew Fox spoke at the annual board meeting of the Swedenborg School of Religion in October 1990. The following article is an abridged text of his talk.

I believe that I am talking about your tradition when I talk about science and mysticism giving their best. And I think that a seminary situation can be a laboratory for this to come about, combining right brain and left brain activities—art as meditation along with intellectual work in one educational system. When you do that there is much more energy. There is also much more chaos, but that is an essential part of learning. Part of our problem in the West is that learning has become so tidy that there's no room for the spirit. Scott Peck made the point that there is no community without chaos. You seldom have community in churches—there is so much tidiness, you never get to the level of real community, and to the compassion that is born out of understanding another's suffering.

Mysticism and Compassion

I am continually amazed by the amount of "the dark night of the soul" that everybody encounters in their lives. We men have been instructed to keep it all inside; we've been told from the time we were "this high" that boys don't cry, so we keep it inside. Women, having been involved in women's groups for decades, at least now are telling their stories. I think male liberation is about telling our stories, and when men can break through and trust

one another and get the story out, then the mytic can really flow. But as long as that wounded child is not healed inside, the mystic child, which is the divine child wanting to play out in the universe, can't really come out and play. There has to be that naming of the pain, and suffering, and the journey.

Out of that pain comes compassion, and I know that compassion is a very important theme in your tradition, as it would be in any healthy mystical tradition. Out of naming our own pain, we can begin to understand one another's broken hearts, and I don't think there's any other way to learn compassion except that way. Anything else is altruism, vicarious.

**"It is only when
you love something
more than
the fear of death
that you live."**

If mysticism is about heart knowledge, we have to remember that our hearts are in our bodies, and that's a well-kept secret in the West, especially in our educational system. We have to move some of our educational energy from the head into the body.

We ex-Europeans are not just ex-Europeans, we are North Americans, and that means that there's an Indian inside each one of us. Carl Jung once said that he never dealt with

the North American level of spirituality when he didn't find an Indian inside. So, we should not be afraid of what our European brothers and sisters were afraid of—the wisdom, the mystic that is evoked by sweat lodges and drumming and some of the ancient ways of our people here. This is a fine way to get people in touch with their mystic inside, and it's our way, it's one of the gifts we need to give back to the Europeans, especially with the 500th anniversary of Columbus' landing coming up. It might be a way to heal some of that suffering that was brought about by Europeans, who repressed the mystic inside, and therefore misjudged the people they encountered.

Grounding

If the community can be involved in healthy mysticism, then there's always that community energy, and also healthy criticism and a grounding. Grounding is terribly important to mysticism. Howard Thurman, the African-American mystic who was a big influence on Dr. Martin Luther King, says, "The more I relate to the cosmos everywhere, the more I must relate to something somewhere." That's why there is so much suffering coming up in our time. I find that suffering is one of the better ways to localize yourself. Another way is body work. Body work is terribly important if you're going to do mystical work—meditation, massages—we have to get in touch with our bodies. That's why circle dancing is important, or drumming. Drumming is earthy—it's the heartbeat we heard in our mother's womb for nine months, it is very ancient in us—a grounding thing.

Mysticism and Courage

There is a connection between mysticism and courage. "Courage" is just two French words for "big heart." How do we make our hearts larger? That is the issue in compassion, the issue in, I think, the survival of the planet today. So we do need courage to go into mysticism, because we are dealing with a power there.

I think it is very understandable that your church went a different route on the spiritualist branch—I think that was a wise move. But, you perhaps went too far in putting it all into the intellectual side. There is no longer an either/or here, between mysticism and an intellectual life. I think those who are making it that way are working out of a Newtonian paradigm. I think real energetic work is being done in Russia—in a great mystical awakening. It was my reading Leo Tolstoy when I was a junior in high school—*War and Peace*—that drove me into the priesthood, that got me into my own mystical life. Russian scientists have been doing a lot more work in this area than the western scientists, and now that there is more rapprochement going on, I think it is really going to start feeding into our scientific world.

Willingness to Die

As a group, you are very worried about your survival. One of the surest ways of triggering mysticism is to face death. Three weeks ago I put one of our students who has AIDS into a hospital in Oakland. He had come into our program last January. The papers he was writing were just amazing—he was having these incredible dreams. Facing death is a mystical experience for anyone who's still alive, in a spiritual sense. This is why sweat lodges are so powerful. What you're doing together in a sweat lodge is you're facing death with the others. I remember my first twenty minutes in a sweat lodge, I was looking for the fire exit or for a fire extinguisher. And then I realized there was neither, and I was going to die there, and that's precisely when I entered into the process. I moved from praying to mysticism, to trance, to entering into the process.



From left: Dr. George Dole, Dr. Matthew Fox, O.P.
SSR Board Meeting and workshop.

You must as an organization be willing to die. I will tell you what I think would happen in your tradition, if you really started putting your energy into where Swedenborg's genius was, and that is renewal. The word "renew" is so much more radical than "reform", it means to begin again—a new beginning—*renewal*. We renew our religious tradition by getting back to the spirit of our founders, not imitating their letter or their law—because we live in a different time—but their spirit. What would Swedenborg be doing today in 1991? In America? Because that's where you are. That's the question. I ask as a Dominican what would Meister Eckhart be doing today? What would St. Francis be doing today? That's how you renew these traditions. What if you people really got willing to sacrifice as a body, to take the risk, just as you would in a sweat lodge or any place else, to face death, take the risk to go out like foliage season, with your colors showing? To go out as mystics and scientists, and not as people clinging to a Newtonian model of intellectualism—to go out the way Swedenborg came in! You know what will happen? I think that your body will explode with excitement. Because the younger generation is dying—literally dying—it is killing itself—it is in suicidal despair, because it is looking for a cosmology, for this bringing together of mysticism and science in ritual and in practice, and it is not getting it from our churches, and it's certainly not getting it from our secularized

"The greatest discovery in the twentieth century is the expanding universe."

culture. I think that you people have a genuine charisma to offer in this time in history. Even if you don't, you have to face it, you have to be willing to pay the price. Some people ask me, "How do you stay in the Catholic priesthood all these years?" And I said, "It's because I left it years ago." It's only when I left that I was able to be a priest. When I was willing. I learned this from Martin Luther King, Jr.; he was once asked, "How can you march through Cicero and Chicago, knowing people want to kill you?" And he said, "It is only when you love something more than the fear of death that you live."

So as organizations we have to love something more than our fear of dying, and that would be your mystical, prophetic, scientific tradition. You love that passionately, more than you're afraid of death, and you will be amazed at what happens as a result. I think the future for a tradition like yours is significant, and I don't say that lightly.

Expanding Universe

But organization as such can easily become an idol. The church is not the end-all; it's the kingdom or queendom of God that is the end-all. That's much bigger than organization or institution. Organization has to constantly evolve. And now we're learning that this is the basic principle of the universe. Everything is in evolution: our galaxy and all the galaxies. Ernesto Cardinal, in his poem, said that the greatest discovery in the twentieth century is the

(continued on page 59)

Winter Meetings of the Cabinet and General Council

January 14-27, 1991

Fort Myers Beach, Florida

Cabinet Meeting, January 23 to 26

Robert Kirven

The Swedenborgian Church is undertaking an unprecedented effort to reach a national consensus on its goals and priorities. When this agreement is achieved—and the goal is to achieve it by the end of the 1991 session of the General Convention—the church as a whole will be directing its efforts, and allocating its funds, to accomplish the things that Swedenborgians across the country agree are the most important things for the church to be doing at this time. That is the big news out of this winter's meetings of Cabinet and General Council.

The Cabinet met at the end of January in Fort Myers Beach, Florida, beginning a period of three "piggy-backed" meetings, combined to host Cabinet, General Council, and the Ministers-and-Spouses Institute.

The Cabinet this year consists of the denomination's president, Rev. Richard H. Tafel, Jr., and chairs of the six support units: Carol Lawson, Communications Support Unit (COMSU); Dr. Patricia Basu, Education Support Unit (EDSU); John C. Perry, Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit (FPRSU); Christine Laitner, Growth and Outreach Support Unit (GOSU); Dr. Robert Kirven, Information Management Support Unit (IMSU); plus representatives of the General Council and Council of Ministers, Betsy Young, the denomination's vice president, and David Rienstra, chair of the Council of Ministers. Dorothy DeB. Young, the denomination's secretary, and Martha Bauer, Central Office manager attended by in-

itation.

The Cabinet has a little over six-and-a-half hours of meetings by itself, before being joined by the General Council. The morning's three hours were devoted to reports by cabinet members on activities in their areas of responsibility since the last meeting. A few highlights from those reports:

- PMSU's Church Growth Consultant, the Rev. Eric Allison, has been assisting churches across the country with growth-oriented programs. Cleveland was noted as a site with particularly significant growth this winter, and cooperative advertising campaigns are under way in five churches.
- EdSU has ongoing projects, plus preparations for the convention in Kitchener, but discussion of its report mostly centered on its difficulties in overseeing the work of the Social Action Concerns Committee (SACC) as an educational project—difficulties which were described from SACC's point of view in a letter to the editor in the January 1991 *Messenger*. Discussion covered the distinction between education and advocacy, existing avenues in the church for advocacy, the meaning for the whole church of position papers adopted by voting delegates at a convention, comparison of SACC's work to the National Council of Churches' advocacy role, and other aspects of the issues involved. SACC's request to become a support unit, rather than a program overseen by a support unit, was left "on hold," pending recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee which is reviewing the new constitution and by-laws—recommendations which will be made to General Council at its pre-convention session, and reported at the general sessions in June.
- IMSU reported designing a computer data base program for Central Office use, relating the membership list with various other files kept by the Central Office. This support unit also provides process minutes for meetings of the

Cabinet, to supplement the secretary's official minutes of actions that are taken; and will tabulate results of the questionnaire on ways to limit the costs of future conventions (see p. 56).

- COMSU reported finishing the last budget period substantially under budget, and also announced that *The Messenger* now is being mailed on the fifteenth of the month before its date of issue, so that all members of the church should be getting their issues on time. In further discussion of the SACC letter to the editor, it was announced that a new policy statement on letters will begin appearing in *The Messenger*.
- GOSU is discontinuing several projects which have completed their goals or time limit, or are being transferred to PMSU as ongoing programs. It was reported, however, that the Stone House Book Room, which has produced *The Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound* has succeeded so well that they are requesting extra funding for it! Since the Rev. Paul Grumman, who used to run the bookstore, now devotes his full energies to the growing church, funds are being requested to hire a manager for the bookstore—which is expected to become self-supporting soon.
- Almont Conference and Retreat Center has been self-supporting in all its programs except the Almont Summer School, and is currently searching for a minister and/or director.
- FPRSU made an announcement of importance to all churches planning to apply for aid from the Augmentation Fund Committee: the committee will meet this spring, but not at the Kitchener convention, so all applications for aid must be submitted before the spring meeting. FPRSU Chairman John Perry answered questions about statements at the 1990 Calgary convention, that the church had money to do what it wants, by explaining that historically, we have funded whatever we placed a high enough priority on. The statement remains true, in spite of the fact that the church has a severe shortage, for the time being, of available cash in the income from the non-

restricted funds which can be used for operating expenses. To deal with that shortage, he urged adoption of the practice of "zero-based budgeting," which funds highest-priority programs and lower priorities which can be afforded without deficit, but postpones all other programs until a later year. (Before the end of the week, General Council did adopt a "zero-based" policy—but will not implement it fully until the 1992 budget.)

Priorities and Budget Work

Budget discussions were focused primarily on an attempt to achieve the zero-based budget the president and treasurer had been urging. That proved to be a challenging task, calling for the postponement, if not abandonment, of things hoped for by every group represented on the Cabinet.

- Several committees that meet twice a year will meet only once this year. One committee of the Council of Ministers postponed a project until next year, and will not meet at all this year, with members completing assignments independently at home. A publication was postponed, a projected workshop was canceled, and funding was reduced for several projects that were kept in this year's budget. It was a stringent paring of expenses in every aspect of the church's national activities, while keeping funds available for all of the highest-priority efforts.
- Even with the most earnest efforts, however, it became evident by supper time that a zero deficit was out of reach for this year. Details of the Cabinet's budget work are not useful information in this report, because they all consisted of recommendations to General Council, and do not actually become news until after Council acts. This year, in fact, the budget for the year January 1 to December 30, 1991 (budget we're operating under at the moment) will not be finally adopted until the meeting of General Council after convention.

This extraordinary budget prioritizing procedure was mentioned in accounts of the fall Cabinet meeting; but it is important enough to be detailed again.

The national Swedenborgian Church does have the money to afford the programs to which it attaches the highest priority; but not enough to do everything that someone might hope to do. In order to make our budget accurately reflect the church's priorities—and reduce or eliminate funds for lower-priority items to make money available for

higher priorities—the Cabinet devoted its fall meeting to defining priorities to which all members could agree. Those priorities, reported earlier in *The Messenger* and confirmed by the Cabinet at this meeting, were the following:

Integrating Relationships.

God, neighbor, self, community, environment, larger church, love reaching out

Ongoing Programs to Help People.

Study groups, spiritual growth groups, family ministries

Growth.

- Personal vigor, joy, vitality, spiritual awareness
- Numerical: 50% increase active members, SSR Students, ordination track, lay leader track groups
- Financial: \$3 million

The General Council, at its meeting in Florida also went through the process of setting priorities, and arrived at the same ones, in the same order.

Next June, in Kitchener, delegates to the convention also will have a change to discuss and evaluate priorities for our church. Only after the priorities set by the Cabinet and General Council have been adopted (perhaps with changes!) by the whole national body convention in session, will the Council adopt a final budget for this fiscal year.

Until that time, the church will operate by means of a parliamentary procedure known as "continuing resolutions," but our national priorities—and the budgetary allocations to fund them—will not be finalized for the current year until the whole church (through its delegates) agrees on what activities are most important. It is a major effort to achieve consensus on what we want to do as a church—what we want to spend our money for.

Every member of every congregation is urged to study the list of priorities, looking especially at the more detailed description of them that appeared earlier in *The Messenger*. Discuss them informally and in church meetings. Let your delegates to convention know how

you feel about these priorities, so that the budget adopted for the rest of this year, and for all of 1992, will devote our national church's resources to the projects that you consider most important.

By Friday evening, the members of the General Council had arrived. The evening meeting—and the sessions in the morning, afternoon, and evening of the next two days—were joint sessions of Cabinet and General Council. These, plus the Sunday morning meeting of Council alone, are described by Fran McIntosh.

Mid-Winter General Council Meeting

Fran McIntosh

When you return from a Council meeting held in the south you are always asked about the weather. The truth of the matter is that Council members rarely get more than a breath of outdoors, with meetings from 9 a.m. to 10 at night, and an exhausting schedule of rushing for airplanes and waiting in airports. This year we did have a delightful ten minute walk from our meeting site to Dick and Linda Tafel's home for our meals, and though it was rainy and cloudy, it was wonderfully warm.

At this meeting we took some time out from financial matters to look at directions for our denomination, a rating and weighing of matters that are important to us all. The Cabinet had also conducted this exercise, and, although we sometimes used different terms, we came to an amazing consensus on what was important for us in internal communication and personal growth, ongoing programs and programs to grow and reach out.

Eric Allison presented an exciting picture of his growth ministry, with both positive and negative aspects laid out for us. On the positive side, many churches have set goals, including membership goals for 1991, growth and outreach committees are increasing in number, new members attracted to churches show permanent commitment—302 people have joined 29 of our churches in the last

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Winter Meetings (Continued)

3 years, 12 churches have board members who have joined in the past two years, and 14 churches report that 100% of those who have joined in the last two years are still active in the church. On the negative side, nearly half our churches have set no goals for the year, half do not have growth and outreach committees, over half have no teen-age program. Eric strongly recommended that congregations consider sending their minister and a lay person to church growth courses, such as those given at the Fuller Institute.

A disappointing report advised that expected fund sources for Temenos are not available. A strong directive was sent to the financial team to find sources to fund this exciting retreat center, to match the help offered by the pace-setting Philadelphia church.

We approved zero base budgeting—a process which will reveal projects taking us into a negative position, and ensure that they will be carefully considered.

With a great rush for planes Sunday morning, we all returned to our individual congregations in all areas of the United States and Canada—with hopefully a few more steps taken in creating a better church for all of us.

Ministers and Families Institute

Wilma Wake

Having never before been to the biannual ministers and spouses mid-winter institute—in fact having never before been to Florida—I found it hard to believe that a few hours after leaving Boston the plane would land us in warmth and sunshine. However, as we emerged into the Ft. Myers airport, we saw it filled with people wearing shorts and t-shirts, in contrast to those of us wearing sweaters and juggling heavy winter coats with our luggage. Outside—although overcast and dusk—it was

pleasantly warm and I eagerly breathed in fresh air filled with the scents of growing plants, green grass, and flowers. We were met by smiling Swedenborgians who took us to Dick and Linda Tafel's, where supper was in progress. Then we were shown to rooms sitting on a white sand beach right on the Gulf of Mexico.

Our morning and evening sessions covered such topics as Matthew Fox on creation spirituality, Bradshaw on the family, the inner child, unlocking our spiritual potential, and sessions on church growth and personal retirement. Each morning began with a short worship, a session, and then an hour for us to break into small groups. Then Linda had a luncheon brought in, and we went in many different directions for the afternoons. Many of us enjoyed the consistently warm, sunny, 85-degree weather. We'd gather again at the Tafel's (only a few blocks from our condos), for dinner and then a walk back for our evening worship session, and then a centering down. Wednesday evening and all day Thursday were free time for us to explore the local seafood, go sightseeing, or enjoy the beach. Although our sessions focused on areas of personal and church growth, some of us talked together about our views on the current war in the Persian Gulf and shared our ideas with Dick before his telephone conference with other communion heads in the National Council of Churches. Despite a range of viewpoints, we did manage to come up with "a" (not "the") Swedenborgian position on the current war (see Dick's column).

This week was a wonderful opportunity to spend casual, relaxed time with others—many of whom I had only talked with in the rushed, intense atmosphere of convention.

I am back in the cold, but with many warm memories. As the newest member of the Council of Ministers, I felt it a special privilege to have

been able to enjoy this experience in my first year of ordained ministry. I left personally refreshed, spiritually renewed, and filled with important information and input for my ministry back home.

The Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake is developing a spiritual growth group in Franklin, New Hampshire, in addition to her full-time social work in addictions counseling.

Convention Planner June 26 to 30, 1991

When you arrive at our 1991 convention you will be staying at the St. Jerome and Notre Dame colleges of the University of Waterloo, in the City of Waterloo. Yes. You are coming to Kitchener and will be able to worship in Kitchener's church, but Waterloo is Kitchener's twin city, and only a native can tell the difference between the two.

The St. Jerome and Notre Dame campus was built on the rolling hills of an old farm and is lovely. Just down a hill from St. Jerome's a little bridge will take to across a small creek—complete with ducks and swans—to the main campus where there are fine walking and jogging paths. Throughout the campus there are sculptures and modern art works standing in places and sheltered areas, and the buildings themselves are interesting. There are three museums on campus, one devoted entirely to games—the only such in the world—a hands-on experience for old and young.

If you prefer, a walk can take you around a small lake and past the original farm house. Here you can also visit the optometry museum. The third museum covers Earth Sciences.

Come see for yourself. We're waiting to welcome you!

*Fran McIntosh
Convention Planning Committee*

Advance Convention '91 Registration

CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Kitchener, Ontario, Canada

University of St. Jerome's College, Waterloo

June 22-June 30, 1991

(Convention Sessions: June 26-June 30, 1991)

"HEALING OURSELVES - HEALING THE EARTH"

Please complete in full—one application per family

Surname(s) _____ Given Name _____

Surname(s) _____ Given Name _____

Address _____

City, State/Prov. _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Accompanied by _____

Children:

1. Name _____ Age _____

2. Name _____ Age _____

3. Name _____ Age _____

☐ My Guardian at Convention (if no parent is present) will be _____

Address _____

☐ I will arrive at Toronto Airport on: Date _____ Time _____

Airline _____ Flight _____

☐ I am driving to Convention on: Date _____ Time _____

My first meal will be: Date _____ ☐ breakfast ☐ lunch ☐ dinner

☐ I am a passenger in the car of _____

Arriving at Convention on: Date _____ Time _____

☐ I need directions to Waterloo from _____

☐ Other mode of transport _____

Date of arrival _____ Time _____

☐ Departure Date _____ Time _____

☐ Special Parking Requirements _____

☐ I would like a single room. (limited availability)

☐ I would like a double room with _____

☐ I would like to have a roommate assigned to share my room.)

☐ I/We would like (if possible) to have a room near _____

NYCL members between the ages of 13 and 19, unaccompanied by parents, please complete

Transportation

Accommodation

Special Needs

Note: St. Jerome's College doesn't have easy access for wheelchairs in most buildings, and some stairs are unavoidable.

All buildings are NON-SMOKING

Special Requirements for Children

(Children's programs will run during Pre-Convention days beginning Sunday, and continue through the week until after worship on June 30)

Other Programs

(We will be in touch to give you more information on your choice.)

Rates for 1991 Convention Room and Board

Registration Fee

Financial Assistance

- ☐ I am a vegetarian, with these exceptions _____
- ☐ I have these dietary restrictions: _____
- ☐ I am not able to climb stairs or walk very far.
- ☐ I have these medical requirements: _____
I am ☐ diabetic ☐ a heart patient ☐ other: _____
- ☐ Other physical / special / dietary needs: _____

My child / children: (please indicate)

- ☐ will be participating in the Children's Program for ages 5-12 beginning on: _____
Name(s) _____ Date _____
- ☐ will need the Child Care for ages 2 and under beginning on: _____
Name(s) _____ Date _____
- ☐ will need the Child Care for ages 3 & 4 beginning on: _____
Name(s) _____ Date _____
- ☐ special needs are: _____
- ☐ has / have ☐ has / have not attended a pre-school program.

- ☐ I intend to use the available recreational facilities (swimming, gym, tennis)

I wish to co-register for the following programs:

- ☐ New Church Youth League Officers
- ☐ Ministers' Spouses (June 22-26; ministers' spouses only)
- ☐ Women's Alliance Dinner
- ☐ Stratford Theatre (June 29)
- ☐ Mennonite Tour and Shopping (June 29)
- ☐ Doon Heritage Village (June 29)
- ☐ Elora Gorge Hike (June 29)

- ☐ Adult / Teen: \$45 CAN. (+ tax of 5%) daily (single room) June 22-30 (noon)
- ☐ Adult / Teen: \$40 CAN. (+ tax of 5%) daily (dbl. occupancy) June 22-30 (noon)
- ☐ Youth 4-12 years: \$32 CAN. (+ tax of 5%) daily (double occupancy)
- ☐ Youth 4-12 years: \$25 CAN. (+ tax of 5%) daily (extra mattress in room)
- ☐ Child (3 and under): No charge if occupying same room as parents, and no charge for food when fed from parent's plate.
- ☐ Other accommodation needs: _____

☐ I have enclosed a check for [\$50.00 CAN.], \$45.00 U.S., ([\$45.00 CAN.] \$40.00 U.S. if mailed before May 1, 1991) payable to 1991 Swedenborgian Convention to cover registration. Teenagers pay [\$40.00 CAN] \$35.00 U.S. (Ages 13-19). Registration is per person and covers some special costs and events. Please mail this form and your fee to: 116 Queen St. N., Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, N2H2H7.

Please bring proof of citizenship for all family members to enter Canada
(i.e. birth certificate, passport)

- ☐ For young people and children. Please write to Rev. Dr. Ted Klein, 273 Perham St., West Roxbury, MA 02132

Matthew Fox Addresses Seminary

(Continued from page 53)

expanding universe. I think that's an amazing line, even if it is not true, it is worth meditating on . . . from a pinhead to a trillion galaxies! That means that everything also is evolving, and if we want to cling to our organizations, whatever they be, we're not obeying the laws of the universe. We're going to be cast out. And this is why that death/life cycle is such an important cycle for all of us. When Jesus talked about the seed dying, it is not just our individual psyche that undergoes the dying, but our organizations do, too.

Birthing the Church

The churches are too busy looking in the past, and therefore they are not offering a vision. But if we go back to the spirit of our founders, I think there is vision in all of them. They were mystics, and they have a lot to teach us.

There is a word coming out of

Latin America today, "Ecclesio Genesis"—birthing the church. It is very evolutionary, it fits physics, but it is also causing our imagination creativity and work. *Ecclesio genesis*. The church is not a thing, it is not just sitting there for you to fit yourself into, but it is this call to *birth church*. When I was down there, I met with several people, including Bishop Cosidalgo. He works with natives in the Amazon rain forest; he was silenced by the Vatican—he's a saint, he writes poetry, just a beautiful man—he put his arm around me and said, "Matt, an epoch of the church has ended. Don't put your energy into that former epoch. Put your energy into Ecclesio genesis. Birthing the church." I think that information applies to us today. I think we all have to birth the church. And I think this is very Swedenborgian. It has a future. Let's take some responsibility for it, and how it plays out. We don't really know, but if you stay grounded in your tradition, I think things will unfold. The need is so great for healing and spirituality in people's lives. I feel in our culture we have secularized everything, from

prisons to sport to art and work, and so the healing is to be the resacralization of things, and I think it is your mystical traditions that do that. To me the sacred means the awe, finding the awe of things, and with the help of today's scientists . . . and then ancient traditions and traditions of art as meditation, we have rediscovered the awe in us and around us, and anything can happen then.

Matthew Fox is the author of The Coming of the Cosmic Christ and Original Blessing, and director of the Institute for Culture and Creation Spirituality in Oakland, California.

Attention Readers!

When you send a change of address for *The Messenger*, we process it as soon as we receive it. However, because our work schedules are two months ahead, please allow four to six weeks for your *Messengers* to begin arriving at your new address. Thank you for your patience.

General Council Needs to Know Questionnaire

Due to our need as an organization to improve our fiscal management, General Council has looked at various ways to curtail the high expense of holding yearly convention sessions. We would like your response to the following:

1. Hold convention sessions every 3 years with regional meetings in the interim. (Check One)
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree
2. Hold convention sessions every 2 years with some type of alternate program in between. (Check One)
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree
3. What comments or suggestions do you have, regarding frequency of conventions?

4. If Convention sessions were to continue to be held yearly, would you be willing to help offset the cost by participating in any of the following? Please rank the options in order of those you would be most willing to do, with #1 being highest and #3 being lowest.

- _____ a. Pay a higher registration fee.
- _____ b. Volunteer on convention staff to reduce staff costs.
- _____ c. Pay higher room/board rates to help cover costs of meeting rooms.
- _____ d. No, I would not be willing to participate in any of the above.
- _____ e. Other suggestions or comments, regarding sharing/reducing costs of conventions:

Please send your completed questionnaire before May 1, 1991 to: Central Office, The Swedenborgian Church, 48 Sargent Street, Newton, MA 02158.

The Students' Perspective

The field education requirement at the Swedenborg School of Religion enables students to experience first-hand what is required of them in the ordained ministry. Currently, two SSR students, Pamela Shuttleworth and Eric Hoffman have experienced a good part of the total requirement, and agreed to share their thoughts about what they have seen with *Messenger* readers.

Pamela Shuttleworth

Pam has been in a variety of churches so far—Boston, Cambridge, Washington D.C., and will spend time in Detroit this spring. She has participated in Blairhaven and Fryeburg camps, and did a C.P.E. (Clinical Pastoral Education) with the Hospital Chaplaincy Council of Miami, Ohio. She reports:

Seminary students that I have met from other denominations have been impressed that we get our feet wet right away; I was the only first-year seminarian in my C.P.E. group. We get such a wide variety of experiences that the students from other seminaries I've met seemed almost jealous (most of them are only required to do a year-long internship and one C.P.E.). All of what we do is sure to make us better ministers

when we've graduated.

Right now, I'm working at the Boston church. On the last Friday of every month we have a luncheon and program as an outreach to the elderly community on Beacon Hill. We greet about 25-40 per week, and fewer than ten of them are affiliated with the church. Since many people are returning each month, we feel that it is an effective outreach to the community.

I am gaining a lot of experience working there, too. My pastoral skills are being sharpened in giving the elderly a sense of community, watching them sharing their histories with peers who understand what it was like forty or fifty years ago, and holding their hands. Steve Ellis, (pastor of the Boston church) and I spend a lot of time serving them. They seem to have a great time, and

I have a great time as well.

At SSR, I think I am most impressed by the sense of community that's here, from the Board of Trustees on down. We do worship services not because it's required, but because we want to be there. I'm also looking forward to the outreach potential of our M.A. program. Last March, after the on-site visit by the Board of Regents, everyone walked around here as if something new had just been born. It's very exciting to be here now.

Eric Hoffman

Like Pam, Eric has visited many diverse churches. He has worked in Cambridge and St. Louis, and has led worship in many others, including Elmwood, Yarmouthport and Boston. He spent time at Paulhaven in northern Alberta, and Fryeburg, as well as limited teaching at Blairhaven and Almont. He served his C.P.E. at the Deaconess Hospital in Boston, and will be at the Wayfarers Chapel this spring. He writes:

My field education experiences are something I think I will treasure forever. It's one thing to learn that our church has this amount of people, with only this many churches, and our depressing growth trend over the past couple decades, but it's quite another to actually see what's going on in these few congregations. I have met people who can get just as excited about Swedenborg as I can, and it's a wonderful feeling to be able to connect with people like that. It's also refreshing to see and participate in a vibrant, open and caring community after spending so much time buried in a book.

Right now, I'm working with the



From left: Recent graduate Nancy Daniels, with Pam Shuttleworth, Eric Hoffman, Pavel Heger, our Czechoslovakian student.

Cambridge church in their outreach to the Harvard community, since I've always found it odd that the church is literally surrounded by Harvard, yet has few student visitors. At this stage, I'm working with F. Bob Tafel, minister at Cambridge, to get acquainted with the congregation, and also becoming familiar with the people and programs at Harvard. I hope to learn what the specific spiritual needs are for a student at Harvard, so the Cambridge church can be better equipped to provide them. A new Swedenborg Society is beginning, under the sponsorship of Eugene Taylor (associate in psychiatry at the medical school there), and I'm becoming involved in that to try to turn more people on to our theology. There are many intriguing people there, and I'm enjoying getting to know them.

I have become quite attached to the people at St. Louis where I spent five weeks in the spring of 1990, and I'm very much looking forward to the reunion at the 1992 convention to be held there.

I have been working on a project since 1983 that is becoming more applicable to ministry as it develops. I enjoy drawing in my leisure time, and have recently been turned on by the concept of sequentially illustrated storytelling (what most people know as a comic book). A Swedenborgian comic book, containing stories that incorporate Swedenborgian ideas, would be a wonderful and highly effective means of communicating what our church is about. This could be directed not only to children but to anyone who enjoys the medium. I intend to do more research this summer, and should soon be able to present a more detailed plan to bring about this form of outreach.

One thing I will miss about SSR is being around so many people who know their stuff. I am well aware there will probably not be another opportunity like this, to tap into the collective understanding of Swedenborg such as the faculty here has, so I am trying to absorb and piece together and paraphrase as much as I can now. It will be a unique challenge to take what I've learned here out into the world and apply it, and help others to apply it. Not being one to refuse a challenge, I look forward to that.

The Family Connection

Noah and the Ark

A musical play for Sunday school children

by Ken Turley

Presented by the children and friends at convention 1990

In a lighthearted but thought-provoking one-act musical play, this dramatization of the story of Noah is at once funny, serious, sad, and joyous. It incorporates narration, dialogue and song. Simple to stage and involving any number of children of mixed ages, *Noah and the Ark* is filled with engaging music and dramatic action and is a great way to get children and their parents familiar with the images and general outline of the story of Noah and the flood, and the message of caring for our planet and all the creatures that share it as their home.

Each script, containing the complete text, performance notes and suggestions, and sheet music for piano/guitar and unison voices for all songs, is available for \$5.00 a set. Use the order blank below to order. Please allow 2-3 weeks for delivery.

Dear Ken and Laurie,

I would like to order the following:

	Number of Copies	Amount
Script and sheet music for Noah and the Ark		
\$5.00 for each complete set	_____	\$ _____
Postage and Handling		\$ 2.00
Total Amount		\$ _____

Return order and make checks payable to:

Rev. Ken Turley
2 Forest Rd.
Windham, ME 04062

Please send this order to:

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____

Seeking to Make a Difference

Robert McCluskey



In November 1990, the National Council of Churches (NCC) celebrated its 40th year during a meeting of its General Board in Portland, Oregon. Delegates of the Swedenborgian Church to the General Board of the NCC are Robert McCluskey, chair; Richard H. Tafel, Jr. Dr. Dorothea Harvey, and Linda Baker. The Swedenborgian delegation had the honor of leading the Board in morning worship on the opening day of the meetings. (Richard Tafel's introductory remarks to the Board and Dorothea Harvey's sermon were printed in the February 1991 *Messenger*.) Of the many issues addressed, most debated were a resolution on the crisis in the Persian Gulf and a policy statement on family violence and abuse submitted by the NCC's Commission on Family Ministries and Human Sexuality. This last item had its first reading in May 1990, and was presented at the Swedenborgian convention in June 1990.

Gabriel Habib, general secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches addressed the Board, calling on the U.S. churches to take a prophetic stand, politically distinct from that of the U.S. government of the Gulf crisis, and to "exhaust all peaceful means" before resorting to military action in that region. He pointed out that the crisis was not to be confused with a religious war, for Muslims and Arabs are themselves divided on the issue.

The Board adopted a three-page message on the Gulf and Middle East crisis, along with a twelve-point resolution calling for specific steps to address the situation: for Iraq to withdraw completely from Kuwait; for the continuation of sanctions against that country, exclusive of food and medicine; and for a withdrawal of all U.S. forces from the region except those explicitly recommended by the United Nations Security Council. The resolution

stresses the need to support the U.N. as the key international entity through which a genuine peace is possible; it emphasizes the need to address all the conflicts in the Middle East if a lasting peace is to be realized; and it urges member communions to remain vigilant and prayerful for peace, and to guard against partisan and racist responses to the crisis.

Family Violence and Abuse

The policy statement of family violence and abuse reviews the social, legal, psychological, pastoral, and ecclesial contexts of domestic violence, and offers a scriptural basis for addressing the problem. The statement also addresses the issue of sexual victimization of clients by pastors, physicians, and counselors. The policy states that "there has been profound silence throughout the centuries in the face of men's injustice toward women, and unconcern about the abusive treatment of children within the family setting." It was noted that for many the statement will generate a good deal of controversy, by its charge that "inaction by church leadership has sustained the injustice of family violence . . . Some moral theologies have excused or ignored wife and child abuse." The statement's purpose is to be a vehicle of education about family violence and abuse in church and society.

Other Actions

Frank Chicane, general secretary of the South African Council of Churches, described the complexities of the ongoing situation in South Africa. He called for support and pressure to get the South African government to the negotiating table as soon as possible "so we can have a new society." Key challenges facing the country include: education of a "lost generation" of uneducated, unemployable youths who know only

how "to fight system"; affirmative action to correct decades of economic and educational disenfranchisement; and return of land, seized to enforce apartheid.

The General Board unanimously elected to general secretary, Joan B. Campbell, the first woman minister to hold that post. The Rev. Campbell, who has standing as a minister in both the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the American Baptist Churches (U.S.A.), has a history of involvement in the ecumenical movement. Currently, she is executive director of the World Council of Churches U.S. Office and will assume her new position April 1. The Rev. Richard Tafel represented the Swedenborgian Church on the search committee for this post. The Rev. Campbell succeeds James Hamilton, who was appropriately honored for the skill and grace with which he led the Council over the last two difficult years.

The NCC Board called on corporations to adhere to the World Health Organization's International Code of Breast-Milk Substitutes; pressed for expansion of the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) supplemental feeding program to serve all eligible women and children, and directed the attention of the churches to the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, urging the U.S. government to sign the convention.

The NCC Board also elected as associate general secretaries of the NCC the directors of the Council's four units. The Board heard reports from: (1) The Lutheran Church on a bold and well articulated document on the state of the ecumenical movement; (2) three Council members on the increasing violence and horror in Liberia, and of the difficulties experienced by refugees in neighboring countries. They called on member communions to increase their contributions to Church World Service and to urge the government to renew its commitment to peace in Liberia with which the United States, and many U.S. churches, have historically had a special relation; (3) a Conference on the Substance Abuse Crisis, held in Washington, D.C., in October 1990 attended by represen-

(Continued on page 63)

Opinion

In this section of the Messenger we are pleased to present the varied views of our readers. Letters published here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Editor, the Communications Support Unit or the General Council of the Swedenborgian Church. Published letters may be edited for brevity and clarity.

When you see an opinion with which you disagree, please send your own views to the Editor so that The Messenger can be a forum for individual viewpoints. We welcome letters on all pertinent topics.

An Open Letter to Messenger Readers:

Dear Friends,

I want to share with you an important program of the National Council of Churches, a program that offers a way for us to be involved.

The program is called the Ecumenical Minority Bail Bond Fund. The NCCC recognizes that the economic disadvantage of poor/minority persons, coupled with frequent abuse of the bail process in their cases, creates a double injustice.

Last spring, the Swedenborgian delegation to the NCCC saw a powerful video on this project. While there are many NCCC projects and programs, our delegation believes that this project is particularly worthy of support.

I showed the video as part of the New York Swedenborgian Church's monthly Sunday afternoon discussion group. It was so moving to those present that we raised more than \$300.00 that afternoon. The Swedenborgian delegation to the NCCC is asking individual congregations and associations to publicize the opportunity to make contributions to this fund in the name of the Swedenborgian Church. Donations may be sent to our Central Office in Newton, Mass., and earmarked for the NCCC Ecumenical Minority Bail Bond Fund. We are seeking to raise a minimum of \$1,250.

The video on this project is available; to borrow it, contact me at the New York Swedenborgian Church. Any member of our NCCC

Commencements

Marriage

Fowler and Seutter—Ruth Ann Fowler and Gary Seutter were united in marriage January 4, 1991, at the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

Richards and Epp—Dawn Richards and David Epp were united in marriage December 23, 1990, at the home of their friends, Mike and Linda Hitchings of Saskatoon, the Rev. David L. Sonmor officiating.

Brown and Sonmor—Jean Brown and Gordon Sonmor were united in marriage December 29, 1990, at St. Andrews United Church in Lumsden, Saskatchewan, the Rev. David L. Sonmor officiating.

Death

Lovell—Wayne Lovell, long-time member of the Bridgewater, Mass. Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world September 11, 1990. Resurrection services were conducted September 13, 1990, the Rev. Marlene Laughlin officiating. Mr. Lovell was a dedicated member of the Youth League and various other church committees, local and national, for many years.

Klassen—Don Klassen, 44, a lifelong and devoted member of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario, died in a work-related accident December 15, 1990. The resurrection service was conducted December 19, the Revs. Paul Zacharias and Eric Allison officiating. Don was choir director and a former church board president, and will be greatly missed by a wide circle of family and friends.

New Congregational Leader at Kemper Road

The Kemper Road Swedenborgian Church (KRSC) has elected Jerry W. James as its new congregational leader. He assumed the vacant position, left by the Rev. Dick Tafel's acceptance of the denomination's presidency, January 1. Jerry has been a member of KRSC for three years and brings over 20 years of private and public sector management experience to his new position. The congregation encouraged Jerry to make this significant career change to serve during a special time in the life of KRSC.

delegation would be glad to provide information and answer questions: In New York, Robert McCluskey; in New England, Dorothea Harvey; in San Francisco, Linda Baker; and in Florida and on his presidential travels, Richard Tafel.

*Yours in Christ,
Rev. Robert McCluskey, Chair
Swedenborgian delegation to the
National Council of the Churches
of Christ
(212) 532-5742*

Seeking . . . a Difference

(continued from page 62)

tatives from 16 member communions of the NCC.

The NCC Board reaffirmed its commitment to continue dialogue with the Universal Fellowship of

Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC), a process that had been interrupted during the period of restructuring. It participated in a worship service celebrating the 30th year of the Consultation on Church Unity, an effort begun in San Francisco in 1960 to move denominations beyond mere conciliar relationships toward a genuine re-unifying of the Christian Church. And finally, members witnessed the unveiling of a new logo for the NCC, as it moves from its "fortieth year of ecumenical witness and service into its fifth decade."

More detailed information on these or other issues before the Council is available from the NCC's Office of Information Room 850, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10015; (212) 870-2227 or from my office, 112 E. 35th Street, New York, NY 10016.

The President Reports

All of us in the church have been deeply concerned about the war in the Persian Gulf, and I call on you to join me in daily prayers for a just and lasting peace throughout the entire Middle East, the Baltics, South Africa and the entire world. I enclose here for your information and discussion, thoughts on the Gulf War written by our ministers and spouses during their biannual meeting this past January.

A Swedenborgian View of War

We trust that our loving God does not will war, or any act of destruction. We are confident in God's promise, "I will never again destroy every living creature . . . While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." (Genesis 8:21-22). We are kept in freedom—perhaps even the freedom of self-destruction; but if that happens, it will be our own doing. Even in that extreme case, however, we are assured of God's care for our individual lives to eternity.

In a Swedenborgian view, wars break out when deeper and subtler forms of violence have been tolerated or ignored or denied. They represent not the deterioration of human values, but the revealing of evils which had been hidden.

We are called at the present time to a more honest understanding of the causes of this war—not to "fix the blame," but to plan for peace. Ours may be the more just cause, and we trust that it is; but it is in-

cumbent on us to pay closest attention to our own failings, since these are our special responsibility.

As we pray for peace with wholehearted trust, while working for peace and justice in our personal spheres of influence, we will be lending our best effort to the cause of peace in the world. As we truly hope for the best for all our human sisters and brothers, there will be no room for the distortions of self-justification. As long as hostilities continue, we will resist any spirit of hatred and nourish the spirit of reconciliation, so that when hostilities cease, we may move the more speedily toward greater justice in world affairs.

*The Swedenborgian Church
Ministers and Spouses Institute
Ft. Myers Beach, Florida,
February 1, 1991*

The cup is still half full!
Peace,



Richard Tafel, Jr., President

Report of the Nominating Committee of the Swedenborgian Church

Nominees

Vice President - Betsy Young
California)
Recording Secretary - Gloria Toot
(Ohio)
Treasurer - John Perry (Maine)

General Council: Howard Torpey
(California)
Joe Lederman (Ontario, Canada)
Rev. Robert McCluskey
(New York)

Support Units: Growth and Outreach
- Chris Laitner (Michigan)
Pastoral Ministries - Pat
Zacharias (Ontario, Canada)
Information Management -
Steve Koke (California)
Communications - Lorene
Lederer (California)
Financial & Physical - Barb
Boxwell (Michigan)
Education - Pat Tuko
(Indiana)

Committee on Admission to the
Ministry: Paul Zacharias (Ontario,
Canada)
Elizabeth Johnson (Washington)

Nominating Committee: Sharon
Slough (Alberta, Canada)
George Chapin (Massachusetts)

Swedenborg School of Religion:
Mary Crenshaw (Michigan)
Board of Trustees:
Margaret Kraus (Kansas)

The above slate includes: 11
incumbents
7 first-time candidates
10 Associations represented
11 Women
7 Men
2 Ministers

Respectfully submitted,

*Ron Brugler, Chair of the
Nominating Committee*

**The Swedenborgian Church
of North America
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Newton, MA 02158**

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