

THE MESSENGER

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Our Theological Deficit

by Stephen Koke

So far, our discussion of theological education has been concerned with programs, financial deficits, and how to perhaps reorganize SSR so that it can function better. We are primarily engaged in corporate and administrative projects these days.

We have had all along another, more personal and internal, kind of problem—how to master our theology so that we can become more aware of the higher realities it talks about and provide a truly wise sense of direction to ourselves and the culture around us. Theology normally seems in good shape because our work is so often limited to the simple central doctrines of more immediate relevance to Protestant culture. We have a basic package of ideas that seems very marketable, and we concentrate on it. But we have shown a strong tendency to neglect problems that turn up elsewhere in Swedenborg's vast system, to not solve or even research them well, and to thereby cut back on a much needed general expertise.

A look at our declared problems in theology, starting with the great discussion journals that began in the early 1800s (e.g., *The New Jerusalem Magazine*, *The New Church Review*, *The Intellectual Repository*) and sampling our literature up to the present, shows that we literally take generations to produce significant work on a problem. Patchwork solutions, preliminary guesses that do not withstand examination, substitute for real answers and are allowed to hold the fort for even a century or more without further work. We are fond, even today, of putting out theories, as if our primary need is just to have something to say, something to fill the holes in our picture of Swedenborg's system.

Some problems, such as the classic problem of how to understand Swedenborg's descriptions of human life on other planets in our solar system, have disappeared, but primarily because we lost interest in them and don't work on them anymore. Swedenborg's *Conjugal Love* is now the biggest problem work for many people. Swedenborg's spiritual world has been hard to understand, and the basis for his authority has been widely misunderstood as simply the fact that he had a lot of spiritual experiences. That put anyone else with spiritual experiences in competition with him. Consequently, we often haven't seemed to know why we are here, if not by an accident of birth or of Swedenborg's books getting to us first. There are many other examples of problems left with insufficient work and forgotten,

but there is not enough space to detail them here.

With too little progress to point to, we eventually put a book or text back on the shelf, allowing our actual working canon to shrink.

Then these unanswered questions pile up, creating more and more reasons to regard Swedenborg as a rather streaky performer, brilliant or mistaken by turns.

That there are pools of skeptical thought in Convention on this or that subject has become evident to me over the past forty years. Having questions and honestly expressing doubts is part of the growth process. What isn't looking good is our lack of work on these problems afterwards and their persistence over enormously long periods of time without real, well-researched resolutions one way or the other.

What could be causing much of this is very busy schedules, especially among ministers immersed in the problems and needs of the institution. Churches seem to crowd out much work in theological studies, frequently placing theology and the institution at odds with each other and weakening our message. But that won't explain the lack of progress with theological questions over our long history when many theological books and periodicals *were* poured into circulation. We haven't seemed to know how to handle Swedenborg's system.

Theological articles in *The Messenger* are almost nonexistent. "Doctrine on the Half-shell" is always eager for submissions, as was "Ask Swedenborg" earlier. The problem, COMSU is aware, is the persistent lack of theologically oriented *submissions*.

Studia Swedenborgiana, SSR's scholarly journal, also has very occasional in-depth studies of Swedenborg. It will typically feature new translations or accounts of how Swedenborg did somewhere in the 19th century, or how he influenced some

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No Hits, No Runs; Just the Usual Snags

In 1986, I had been living in a small town of 8,000 people in northwest Indiana for over a year. I was in some emotional turmoil, ending another phase of my life and contemplating, among my options, a return to southern California, when my older daughter wrote to me from Los Angeles to tell me that she had become a distributor in a multi-level marketing company that produced and sold pantyhose guaranteed not to run. She sent me some samples. Purr-fit was the name of the company. The packages containing the miraculous merchandise showed a white Persian kitten running its claws down the leg of a smiling woman who was wearing Purr-fit pantyhose, thus proving the product would not run, even under the most rigorous conditions. They came in a number of lovely colors. The product had caught on big-time in Los Angeles, and salespeople "in on the ground floor" of the company were making scads of money. My daughter suggested that, since I lived in the general vicinity of Chicago, it would be an exciting opportunity for us if she traveled east, lived with me for awhile, and we worked together to take the Midwest by storm, introducing no-run pantyhose to eager businesswomen in the greater Chicago area who were sick of wasting good money on hose that sprang runs the first time they put them on.

What a great idea, I said. I had tested the hose, wearing them day after day to my job at the county courthouse. I had persuaded some friends to try them, and they were enthusiastic. The stockings didn't run, and it took them a long time to wear out. I was sold. My daughter joined me in early spring, and I introduced her to Doreen, my landlady who lived in the adjoining duplex. Doreen looked like a tiny blonde Dresden figurine, and was so friendly and helpful that for a while at least, it was possible to overlook the fact that her voice could sever your spinal cord.

My daughter proved to be a whirlwind of super-organization. Within a few weeks, we had placed ads for distribu-

tors in several newspapers, had an 800#, received calls, and were holding meetings to educate and sign up prospective distributors. Distributors working under you are known, in multi-level marketing jargon, as your downline. You get a percentage of everything your downline sells, and whatever *their* downline sells. So we had to study and memorize spiels, work every night to keep up with the groundwork we'd laid, do retail selling when we could, and make weekly forays into Chicago, Merrillville, and Gary, because that's where the larger population was. We were even invited to appear on the local cable TV channel with Dave, our star distributor, where we did a little skit extolling the wonders of the product.

Several of the distributors who had signed up were women of color who lived in Gary, which was where the majority of the black population of northwest Indiana was concentrated. One of the most memorable days we spent during this entrepreneurial phase was the first Saturday we drove to Gary, Indiana. We didn't know our way around at all, but we were treated with great warmth and hospitality in every home we visited, with each of the potential distributors or members of their families giving us directions to the next neighborhood we were to visit. By the end of the day we had signed up several distributors and felt as energized as if we'd attended a big block party rather than concluded a workday.

About half a dozen people were showing up at the weekly meetings we held, and we had actually received our first hundred dollar check in the mail from the company. Things seemed to be progressing well. After about three or four meetings at our duplex, Doreen invited us over to her place for morning coffee on my day off. "Honey, I realize you girls are trying to get a business started, but are you planning to have all those people coming into our neighborhood on a regular basis?"

My daughter looked baffled. "Well, sure," she answered. "They're our downline, we're fortunate to have

people interested and ambitious enough to come out here to meetings."

"Well, I understand, and I wouldn't mind, but I have neighbors to consider," Doreen said. We were in a semi-rural area, on a street that dead-ended in a field, and the nearest neighbors were Doreen's sister and brother-in-law. It seems her sister had been out in her front yard when one of our new black distributors stopped and asked if that was where the meeting was.

"The neighbors around here just aren't comfortable with certain elements, if you know what I mean."

Elements. Decent, hard-working, well-behaved people had been reduced to . . . elements.

My daughter said quietly, "I suppose if we'd been holding all-white Tupperware parties, we wouldn't be having this conversation."

Doreen's china-blue eyes hardened slightly. "Honey," she said, "I think you need to understand, this isn't Los Angeles."

She gave my daughter's shoulders a friendly, let's-shape-up-now squeeze as we left.

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Our Theological Deficit

(Continued from cover)

philosopher. Or there will be some other rather peripheral discussion. Again, the reason seems to be a lack of submissions.

Our Daily Bread is now our most frequently theological publication. It deals directly with Swedenborgian thought, but it is not intended to explore deeply and at length, especially into old problems and the more complex ideas. *Studia* should be filling that more scholarly niche, and it is sent free to our clergy; but editor Bill Woofenden's fruitless appeals for comments, and his persistently unused letters section, are more clues to a general ennui in theology.

We aren't producing theology beyond what might be needed for parish work, and I find too much *prima facie* evidence that *Studia* is not even being read.

Theological neglect also has social consequences: in my forty years with General Convention I have yet to find our professional theologians illuminate, or even clarify, an issue that had become controversial or had upset people around the denomination. The silence after a wave of controversy rolls through the Church is deafening and hard to understand unless we just don't know what to do with a new issue. The Church is left to fend for itself. No studies of the issue appear for years, and typically not at all. Is there some fear about clarifying and publishing on controversial issues? Are we really at a loss? Perhaps more happens in sermons or private conversations; but this church cannot be deeply helped unless its theologians *publish*. It is too small and scattered to get along well with less.

The most dramatic modern example of adverse social consequences is the very ferocious controversy of the early seventies over the proposed ordination of women. The proposal passed by a large majority, but the victory was only political. The theological arguments ran heavily against it; very little of theological importance was presented by the winning side, and it appears to have been satisfied with an overwhelming show of political power. After the voting was over, the conservatives were able to walk away with Swedenborg apparently in their hip pockets, made to look very conservative himself. It is now more than a quarter-century later, and we have yet to clarify Swedenborg's thoughts on the matter. Analyses of the opposing arguments are still missing.

In this way, we allow what one minister told me has actually happened—there is now a fairly large number of people in our denomination who feel that Swedenborg was ahead of his time, as we all do, but add an ominous footnote: he was also behind *our* time. I asked him if this was due to the arguments against the ordination of women, and he said yes.

Whether we are laity or clergy, we normally lack analytical skills. What we may not realize is that the mind doesn't think well in analyzing ideas—taking the watch apart and putting it back together again so that it works. We evidently can't

automatically tell the mind to analyze or evaluate a set of ideas and have it spring into action with high competence. What typically results is highly impressionistic—especially in religion. What is apparent is that our civilization had to painstakingly learn how to think analytically, putting its skills together piece by piece over the last four centuries, especially in the sciences. Analytical thinking is to a large extent an acquired skill, not an instinctual one. Now, the model of good analysis and clarification of ideas in the West is the scientific study. But the principles involved are also taught in classes on philosophy and literary criticism.

All this is relevant to us as Swedenborgians because our theology is in large areas especially demanding of the thinking mind—much more so than other theologies. We have a theology that demands some resemblance in our work habits to an academic teaching and research community, but we persist in working like a small and very typical Protestant denomination with the added disadvantage of great isolation between individuals and churches. That isolation cuts our exchanges with each other down to brief emails, phone conversations, or a few short annual meetings. Swedenborg intended to change the quality of consciousness, virtually rewiring the human brain to work differently and better than before. That effort probably can't come to its full development without a much larger sharing of ideas and discussions.

God is so often in the details of a problem. And large, revolutionary theological systems require, like it or not, really good scholarly efforts, and people who love to make those efforts and have the training for it. Today we may be distracted too much by corporate pressures, becoming primarily administrators of organizations and budgets.

Consequently, a *theological* connection with our lack of growth as a denomination needs a very good look. I strongly suspect that we are not, for some reason, making ourselves look interesting. Our central doctrines are friendly to modern liberal Protestantism, but may not be creating sparks and may be sounding too familiar. *Friendly* may still mean *inconsequential*. We seem to be slowly melting in a friendly way into a vast crowd of churches, all of which look pretty much alike. We may survive this way, but without distinction.

What truly guides us deep inside? The state of our ideas, our awareness, whether we have realized anything at all rousing of late about God or the world or ourselves. Business tends to run on very conservative and dry tracks, narrowing its objectives to patrons and their dollars. Is the state of the institution, the corporate enterprise, overwhelming theological discovery and adventures and

graying our spiritual visions? We need a balanced look at both sides of our life here, for they are going to affect each other.

Stephen Koke is the author of Hidden Millennium, the Domsday Fallacy, and the chair of the Communications Support Unit. ❖

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The Swedenborg School of Religion Board of Trustees is searching for an interim executive. **This position offers the right individual the opportunity to help the board, faculty, and church create an exciting new model of theological education for ministers and our laity.** The contract term is negotiable between the selected individual and board.

The following qualities describe the person we are looking for:

- **Flexible Administrator**—SSR is in a transition phase. We are moving from a traditional form of ministerial preparation to a new format, one possibility being a Swedenborgian house of studies. We need an individual to oversee this transition process and help us build a new model that will carry us into the 21st Century.
- **Visionary Leader and Negotiator**—The Swedenborg School of Religion is examining affiliation with one or more seminaries. We want to explore integrating our course curriculum so that our students might take traditional ministerial classes from the affiliate institution and the courses specific to our denomination from SSR. The interim executive would negotiate and lead this search and decision process in conjunction with the trustees and faculty.
- **Manager and Fundraiser**—The interim executive will manage and oversee the regular progress of the school while the long range plans are

SSR Search for Interim Executive

being formulated. One important aspect of the position is to continue fundraising efforts.

- **Unifying Guide**—Our goal is to involve interested parishioners in the planning process and to assimilate their ideas into the final model. The new executive needs skills to bring people together and assure that all voices are heard to form the new prototype.
- **Technical Interest**—During this interim phase we will experiment with new forms of education such as internet, video conferencing, and telenet. We want to reach out to our laity, potential ministerial students, and other spiritual seekers. The interim executive will work with the faculty and required technical assistance to plan and assess the success of these programs.
- **People Person**—A big part of change and transition is in the presentation and advocacy of the new model. We need an individual that understands people and the process of change to guide us through the transformation.
- **Swedenborgian Appreciation**—We are experiencing a resurgence of interest in Swedenborgian concepts. Commonalities of thought are emerging from various religious seekers. We must position ourselves to enable access to

the writings of Swedenborg and an education model that serves the needs of a diverse and dispersed group.

Dr. Mary Kay Klein is resigning next summer after 15 years of service as president of SSR. During her presidency she led the seminary to degree granting status, brought a sense of order and new standards of academia, oversaw a change in the governing structure to a common board of trustees, established a successful ongoing fund drive, and gave the school new status within the broader body of theological institutions.

As we enter the new millennium, the board of trustees is in the process of refining that vision and seeking an interim executive to lead the way. The Swedenborg School of Religion has just moved from an all-contained building at 48 Sargent Street, Newton, Massachusetts to a modern facility at 1320 Centre Street, in Newton Centre, Massachusetts. The faculty and students have easy access to the Andover Newton Theological School. We have a three-year lease to allow us to evaluate various options and locations for the future.

We need your help to find the right individual for this position. If you or someone you know is interested in this position please contact Dr. Richard Hatheway, chair of the SSR Board of Trustees, 62 2nd Street, Geneseo, NY 14454; email: hatheway@geneseo.edu; phone 716-245-5291 (Work) or 716-243-0507 (home, evenings, and weekends).

The Search Committee will begin reviewing applications December 1, 1999. ♦

The following letter from the Rev. Susannah Currie was published in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Sunday, Sept. 5, 1999.

POPE ON HEAVEN AND HELL

I found Pope John Paul II's "musings" on the nature of heaven and hell to be a refreshing affirmation of my own church's theology (*Inquirer*, August 22).

Followers of the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg have long held the belief that heaven and hell are states and not physical places. The Pope's statement that hell is "the state of those who freely and definitely separate themselves from God" was an important affirmation of Swedenborgian theology from a respected, world-renowned religious figure. The choice to live a life that leads to hell is implicitly being

made by anyone who allows himself to be ruled by a love of dominion over others and a love of possessing the goods of others.

Contrary to the views of some, it seems to me that the Pope's revelation on the nature of hell is an even stronger deterrent to evil actions than the threat of punishment. It puts the responsibility for living a good and honest life clearly in the hands of the individual.

From the perspective of this new revelation, God is perceived as eternally and infinitely loving, waiting for us to turn our lives around and, when asked, helping us to live the good and true life that leads to heaven.

Rev. Susannah Currie, Swedenborgian Church at Temenos, West Chester. ♦

Are We Any Closer Together?

Connon Barclay

During my elementary and junior high school years it never seemed to dawn on me how unfair it was that the African-American kids I knew lived on the far side of the hills past the low flatlands used for celery farming. The white families lived on the side closer to the schools, and our walking distance was considerably shorter.

My buddies on the basketball and football teams walked many miles more than most of us after practice. In the winter evenings, after our basketball games, some of them walked alone after dark all those extra miles, yet they never complained. I had no early childhood empathy for the lonely walks they made up and down the little valley that separated us.

We would leave practice or school together and then at certain corners or streets, which for most of us were closer to home, they walked on and on alone.

I offer no excuse or explanation for being so unaware. It was the way of things when we were growing up. Nevertheless, I did learn firsthand how powerful this terrible separation was in my tenth grade school year. This memory seems even vivid today when I'm forced to digest more and more anecdotal information about the lack of progress between all races.

Robert B. and I went to a good school (back then high school started in tenth grade) and we played basketball together. It was a game we both enjoyed on the junior varsity team, but it was hardly the main focus in our lives. After practice Robert B. and I walked together to the downtown area for our nightly job.

We were the only two regular pinsetters at the bowling establishment in the basement of the YMCA. It had five lanes, and four were used for league play. There were two leagues and the last one started shortly after 9 p.m.; we were the weeknight team unless some school activity kept us away.

Between the end of practice and the time for the 7 p.m. league, Robert B.

and I studied in the YMCA reading room. We played hundreds of table tennis games together, and we read the latest issue of *Sports Illustrated* along with our supper—usually small bags of peanuts washed down with our favorite soft drink.

When work started, we each had two lanes to service with our almost-manual pinsetting machines. We would sit poised, ready to jump into the pits, scoop up the pins, and return them to the racks. When the frame was completed, we reset the rack with the heavy white pins.

If this sounds easy, it was not. We worked feverishly, jumping back and forth between the two pits we serviced. It was difficult, tiresome, and back-bending work. However, we were paid 10 cents a line, and we both wanted the money.

Ten cents per game per bowler worked out to six dollars each for a night's work. That was thirty dollars for a full week by a couple of tenth-grade buddies back in the '50s. Some nights our pay for a hard night's work

was supplemented by tips. The bowlers didn't seem to care that Robert B. and I were not of the same race.

Robert B. could scoop up four pins in each hand, which made his task a bit easier than mine. I had trouble holding three pins in each hand, especially by the middle of the late league. We helped each other night after night. We were a fine team.

Pinsetters in the manual-machine days had to watch for flying pins. Our work was dangerous behind those old machines when certain split-leaves were struck by hooking bowling balls. The pins would fly wildly at Robert B. and

me, striking rear walls, ceiling and platforms.

We should have worn helmets, but it wasn't considered or mandated. Our primary protection was each other. If a dangerous split-leave was up, we hollered a warning. On those shots we moved as far from the back walls as possible.

Robert B. and I had our share of bruises and nicks, but we avoided injury that would have prevented work. The only automatic part of the work happened when a league was short a bowler or two, and one of us finished work early. We always jumped in and helped each other finish our evening work together.

Our assisting each other was not taught or forthcoming by being in separate-but-equal conditions. It was quite easy to see that if Robert B. and this left-hander were to handle our mission—our work—we had to work together. We discovered this by BEING together.

It was quite easy to see that if Robert B. and this left-hander were to handle our mission—our work—we had to work together. We discovered this by being together.

It was our misfortune that the last bus from the downtown area left at 11 p.m., and many nights we ran to catch a bus. Even though Robert B. had only a short walk home from the Y, we needed a comfortable seat after hours of chasing pins.

We usually wound

up just walking along together knowing the last bus group was not waiting for us—sometimes we were simply too tired from the long day and night to chase bus fumes.

One block past the bus depot (which was only two blocks from the YMCA), a division took place because Robert B. had to walk only a short distance straight down a hill to where he lived. He would be home within minutes. I had to take a right turn and walk about three miles to where I lived.

It never caused concern for us at the

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NEW CENTURY EDITION UPDATE

Is there a doctor in the house?!

The New Century Edition (NCE) committee will be meeting together early this October at the rustic retreat of Lisa Hyatt Cooper in the Catskill Mountains. The fiery display of changing leaves should provide an inspiring setting for contemplative and scholarly deliberation.

Project manager Stuart Shotwell is currently receiving the manuscript components from the scholars who are contributing to the flagship volume *Heaven and Hell*. The preface from Dr. Bernhard Lang, author of *Heaven: A History*, has been submitted. Dr. George Dole's new translation has received careful scholarly review by both the Latin and English consultants and is being reviewed by series editor Dr. Jonathan Rose and project manager Dr. Stuart Shotwell, as are the scholarly annotations recently submitted by Dr. Robert Kirven.

The scholars contributing to the Introductory Volume are hard at work to meet a November deadline, and the foundation is pleased to announce that Dr. Jane Williams-Hogan has agreed to provide an essay for this volume treating of the history and sociology of Swedenborgian church movements.

Editor's note: The Swedenborg Foundation's April 17th Sesquicentennial luncheon at Glencairn Museum in Bryn Athyn, reported in the June Messenger, launched the public introduction of the New Century Edition as well as a year of events celebrating the Foundation's 150 years of publishing. Talks on the NCE by translators George Dole and Stuart Shotwell were published in the June issue, with Jonathan Rose's and Lisa Hyatt Cooper's held back until October due to lack of space. The following talks serve to introduce two more members of the translating team to Messenger readers. Lisa Hyatt Cooper's presentation was in the form of a letter to her parents.

A More Faithful Translation

*A talk by Jonathan Rose,
series editor of the New Century Edition,
given at the Swedenborg Foundation
Sesquicentennial Luncheon
April 17, 1999*

Imagine a man coming in to Glencairn right now, standing excitedly in the doorway, and saying to everyone in a loud voice, "Did you see how dark and windy it is outside? But there's a gorgeous rainbow!" This causes something of a commotion. A little child over here asks her mother, "What's going on?" The mother answers, "There must be an exciting storm out there." At the same time over in the other corner a man with a hearing aid asks the man next to him, "What did the guy in the doorway say?" The other man, who happens to be a meteorologist, replies, "He indicates markedly reduced luminous intensity and elevated anemometer readings, but he also reports the current visibility of a resplendent spectral refractive arc."

Now the meteorologist in a sense translated the message from the man in the doorway to the one with the hearing aid. Was the meteorologist's version accurate? In one sense, yes. It was intellectually more than complete. But it was probably not understood, and would only have been understood if the deaf man had been a specialist with a large vocabulary. The original message had a very different tone and intended audience. It stirred the heart as well as the mind, and was delivered in such a way as to be understandable by anyone.

To recast someone else's message in your own words and do it faithfully is a significant challenge, as anyone who has been in a marriage group can tell you. Faithful translation from one whole language and culture and time period to another is that much more challenging.

In my view complete faithfulness in translation involves following the original's lead not only in intellectual content, but also in tone and style, and perhaps most importantly, intended audience. Translators of Swedenborg in the past have often behaved as though

Swedenborg's Latin had no style, and therefore they could impose whatever English style they felt was suitable. And they have disagreed about what was suitable. Some have made Swedenborg sound friendly and colloquial. Others have made him sound complex and arcane. (None of them did nearly as badly as the meteorologist!) Translators also seem not to have paid attention to the type of audience Swedenborg aimed at, but have adapted the message for whatever audience they were moved or commissioned to address.

God bless them, though. God bless the translators of the past. They labored in good faith to the best of their ability to fulfill the model of translation they had espoused. And they did well.

In fact, it is thanks to their efforts, their courage, their successes, and their failures, that the model of faithful translation has evolved to include elements they themselves perhaps did not even notice in the originals. The New Century Edition plans to take the next step, by carrying across into good modern English an impression of the tone and style of the original as well as its cognitive content.

It will also attempt to convey some impression of the physical form of the originals. Swedenborg's Latin theological works, published in the 18th century, were not just words floating in midair. They were words in a particular typeface, in specific sizes and fonts, with a specific overall look. Ornaments (graphics) every thirteen pages on average gave the books both decoration and structure. The volumes were published on laid paper in a generous quarto size with large margins, and frequently bound in leather, all of which formed part of the original communication.

Previous English translations of Swedenborg, though, have ignored the aesthetic quality of the originals. In fact I would say that English translations are some of the most unattractive books I have seen. Here, too, the New Century Edition is designed to be a step forward, to be a graceful modern publication that yet carries some of the timeless beauty of the originals. But

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A More Faithful Translation

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perhaps the most important way in which the New Century Edition intends to parallel the originals is in its intended audience. Communication by definition hopes to travel from A to B. A wishes B to get a particular message. And you talk one way when you are talking to B, another when you are talking to C. The excited person in Glencairn's doorway had something to say to everyone about the beauty and drama going on outside. That intent and his emotion automatically shaped his choice of words and tone of delivery.

It is my belief that Swedenborg chose the language style, the diction and grammar, and the aesthetics of his publications in order to reach as wide an audience as possible. Anyone with any knowledge of Latin can verify this by trying a simple experiment. Read a few pages of Swedenborg in the original and see how much you understand. And then open any other eighteenth century Latin volume. Read a comparable number of pages in a comparable amount of time, and be honest with yourself about how much you understand. Swedenborg's Latin is off the bottom of the reading difficulty chart. Not off the top, off the bottom.

Could those of you who have read Swedenborg in previous English translations say the same? Is Swedenborg one of the easiest authors to read in English? No. Why not? As George said, it is profoundly difficult to make profundity read simply.

Our desire to reach a wide audience with a faithful rendition of Swedenborg's thought content involves particular challenges. A number of things that were accessible or easily understandable in Swedenborg's time are no longer current, yet they remain an integral part of the work. Like the mother who explained to her child that the darkness and wind meant there was a storm, the New Century Edition will have prefaces and annotations to help readers who have little or no background in Swedenborg or the eighteenth century.

So do you see what we are trying to do? When you look over your handout,



(From left) Translators Jonathan Rose, Stuart Shotwell, Lisa Hyatt Cooper, George Dole.

don't look at the words alone, although they are crucial. Also feel the tone of the delivery and note the quiet beauty of the typeface, the ornaments, and the margins. Imagine what a few hundred pages in that size in a good binding would feel like in your hand.

I believe that Swedenborg would be pleased. "That's more like it!" he would say, only in Latin with a Swedish accent. "Hoc melius est!" I think he would be encouraged that we noticed and tried to convey the beauty, and tone, and style, as well as the thought content of his incredible message about the darkness, the wind, and the rainbow. And I think he would be particularly pleased with the Swedenborg Foundation's mission to broadcast his message as widely as possible.

Toward Living Color and Warmth...

Dear Mom and Dad,

I am so thrilled to be working on the New Century Edition, and I know that you're thrilled for me, for which I'm very grateful. I don't know whether you have any idea *why* I'm so excited, but that doesn't really matter; like good Swedenborgians you find that joy in another is joy in yourselves, so if I'm happy, you're happy. Still, maybe I could share with you some of the reasons for my excitement.

I studied the Writings throughout high school and college, where I found them

intellectually stimulating, occasionally moving, and *very* hard to read, especially in large doses. (I'd like to be able to say, by the way, that I also found them useful in my life, but I hadn't gotten around to trying that yet.) It helped that I had teachers who would describe the overall structure of the work, providing a setting for the individual passages I was reading. It also helped that I had grades hanging over my head; that forced me through longer stretches of reading than I could have sustained otherwise.

I always felt vaguely guilty for not finding the readings easier (and for not seeing how they really did apply to my life), especially since I was aware that new readers of these works sometimes responded to them the way a person dying of thirst would respond to a drink of water. From time to time I wondered whether I could have gotten more emotionally involved if I'd first come across the material as an adult rather than growing up with it all my life. I thought the inadequacy was mine.

Of course it *was* partly mine. It's impossible to feel the full impact of Swedenborg's message until you've lived a little, and my mind was as much on my social as my spiritual life. But I've come to feel that the fault was not all mine; the medium had been blunting the message.

I'm sure I've told you before about the experience I had after taking a year to study classical Latin. I remember sitting in the apartment I was house-sitting the following summer and reading one of the works—it may have been *Heaven and Hell*—in Latin and being horrified at how unsophisticated the language was. I kid you not, the book struck me as being almost like a kindergarten reader after Cicero and Virgil. That's the first thing that was missing from the translations: simplicity.

Then about six or seven years ago I started reading *Arcana Coelestia* in the original Latin as consultant to John Elliott on his new translation. Some of his methods opened my eyes to what constitutes *real* translation. He would find ways of using genuine English idiom to express the Latin. Suddenly the English began to come alive.

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Toward Living Color and Warmth...

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But even more strikingly, I began to find myself utterly moved by the Latin itself—even to the point of tears, on occasion. I discovered that the whole spiritual world was there in the text, waiting to exert its influence!

On Easter you asked me what I thought of a particular new translation; I forget which of the works it was. I got a laugh when I said that translations are too hard for me to read. This is true even though all the new translations are much closer to presenting a truly faithful view of the text. I'm afraid our efforts will also fail to convey fully the beauty and the emotional content of the original. I wish everyone could read these writings in the Latin! Want me to come over and teach you?

Failing that, I do have a request. You may be very happy with the older translations that you already know, and if so I would never ask you to give them up. But it's possible that there's something for you, too, in the new style. What I ask is that you try reading a volume or two with an open mind, just to see what happens. You can even look at them as completely separate works from the Standard Edition. You don't necessarily have to choose between them. I hope you'll find all the intellectual content you ever had, in more digestible form, with the notes and prefaces providing a context like that which my professors once provided for me. But more especially, I hope you'll find all the living color, all the urgency, warmth, and joy that were missing for me in the older translations.

I bless you every day for the heritage you've given me. I hope my work will give a little something back.

*Much love,
Lisa*



SCYL Report

First of all, I would like to thank a lot of people on behalf of the teens in the Swedenborgian Church Youth League; Lee Woofenden for his help and support with the Bridgewater church teens, Betsy Lau for her help and support with the Midwest teens and for her continuing work with the Almont Survivors, and the Boston church for its assistance with the teen programs here at convention.

The SCYL officers are: for the East Coast, Myrrh Woofenden; Midwest, Heidi Neuenfeldt; Canada, Matthew Fleming. The officers that were able to attend Convention are Andrew Seibert, *Clear Blue Sky* Editor; Elliot Bazano, West Coast; and myself, Carrie Carson, SCYL president. I would also like to mention the SCYL has continued to have two delegates present at our annual conventions.

Last year, immediately following the session at Almont, a van full of teens traveled to Fryeburg to join the teens there for their summer camp.

This year, SCYL teens have been active in a number of retreats. Almont New Church Assembly hosted a Winter Retreat that drew a crowd of fifty people. The theme dealt with the differences between men and women. For the Memorial Day Retreat, two vans from the Midwest were joined by about 20 New England teens at Blairhaven. The theme of the retreat was "The Spirituality of Music."

SCYL continues to produce its newsletter, CBS (*Clear Blue Sky*). This newsletter is compiled by submissions of the teens and is printed by the CBS editor for the teens.

I believe that CBS is one of the most important aspects of what SCYL does. CBS is able to reach out to those teens who are isolated from the Swedenborgian Church by where they live. This newsletter is an important key in keeping the youth of the Church connected not only to each other but to the ideals and teachings of Swedenborg.

Because I live in the country, two hours drive from the nearest Swedenborgian Church, I am very attuned to the need for vehicles such as CBS. In addition to CBS, I have developed an idea to bring the teaching and people of the Church to those isolated teens and to any who would wish to access the information.

After talking with Lee Woofenden, I am pleased to announce that SCYL will soon have its own web page. One item that I hope to see appear on this web page will need the aid and support of ministers. I would love to see a weekly, or even monthly, sermon posted on this page that is focused on the issues that our teens and young adults are faced with.

I have hopes that this web page will become a gathering place for the members of SCYL with a chat or messaging program, along with information on retreats, and maybe a place for CBS online. This web page will hopefully not only bring the youth of our Church closer to each other, but closer to the Lord and the teachings and ideals of Swedenborg especially in the area of how one should live their life to the spiritual fullest.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone for their support of the Youth of the Swedenborgian Church. If anyone has any questions about the web page, or would like to write or submit inspirational pieces or sermons, I can be reached through email at carrie@hiram.edu . . . Thank you.

—Carrie Carson
President, SCYL

Editor's note: At this writing, according to the latest issue of CBS, the SCYL has gotten a web page. Because of restricted funding, currently it is only a Yahoo! Club, but if interest is there, a more elaborate web page will be developed. The URL is <http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/scyl/> and it is free. Membership is required for some activities. For information on how to get on the SCYL e-mail discussion list, e-mail cbs_editors@yahoo.com ♦

A Night of Marital Love Renewed

Kit Billings

Like a number of other churches in our denomination we operate a wedding ministry. On Sunday, May 16, 1999 we held an evening program in celebration of marital love and romance at the Virginia St. Swedenborgian Church. We called the event a "Festival of Marriage." This was the second time in this church's history that we have hosted such an event.

Unlike the initial program, which was put up during the Rev. Richard Baxter's tenure, this one was a Sunday evening event that stood on its own; it had no direct connection to our Sunday morning worship service. Our hope was to cultivate that special romantic feeling that sundown provides. Our primary motivation for organizing this program was to minister to this unique group of men and women who have deep ties to our congregation, yet may never connect with us again after their weddings are completed. We wanted to reconnect with them, to celebrate their growth in love, and to offer something that can be hard to find in our modern culture: an emotionally moving and intellectually stimulating program just for married adults that is spiritual in nature and is based in the arts and theology.

We used several means of outreach and were pleased with the attendance of thirteen returning couples, in addition to six volunteers from our own congregation.

Our wedding committee went all out on this one! We decorated our parish

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house (a nice hall off the sanctuary) and had candles and pink roses on each table. An artist in our church created two beautiful, large placards listing the contents of the program. We offered punch, nuts, and other snacks displayed in lovely serving dishes. We served coffee to our guests and later, during sharing time, a beautiful and delicious wedding cake. We hired a professional harpist who played a prelude, two solo pieces in the middle of the event, and background music toward the end.

The program began with two of us reading six selections of poetry relating to relationships, romance, marriage, and weddings. Then our harpist finished elevating us into heaven's realm by playing two soul-stirring pieces. Next we led the group into the sanctuary, where four readings were offered, two of which I selected from Swedenborg's book, *Love in Marriage*. Following a prayer by me, we had a couple from our church lead the group in a ceremonial lighting of the Unity Candle as they rededicated themselves to each other for another forty-two years! Our organist, Sylvia Lange, then offered a beautiful selection. After this we asked everyone to join us again in the parish house for cake, refreshments and the sharing of stories as we opened up our wedding albums! As people exited, we gave each wife a single rose from the vases on each table.

I anticipated that this program was going to be special and God made it that and more! There was a lot of joy spread throughout the room that night...amidst a group of people who had largely never met before. Everyone enjoyed the evening immensely. It was truly one of the most sacred and enjoyable events I had ever participated in. The subject of real love in marriage, with all its peaks and valleys in between, ushers the Lord into a room in powerful ways.

That night our hearts were open to God's warm, celestial light, and I suspect that some of those wonderful married

angel pairs, which Swedenborg wrote about at length, were drawn quite close to us. The couples felt deeply fed by it all, and they showered us with thanks for organizing it. Our plan is to do this again every two or three years to reconnect and renew in the Lord's light of love.

The Rev. Kit Billings is pastor of the Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church in St. Paul, Minnesota.



Editor's Note: At this year's convention, I attended the Rev. Renee Billings' mini-course entitled, "Giving and Growing: Turning a Small Church Inside Out." The course was based on an ongoing six-month growth and outreach project initiated at the Royal Oak Swedenborgian Church. (Last spring, the church's board of trustees voted to return to their original incorporated name, Church of the Holy City.) The ideas and actions described in her mini-course were so innovative, I asked her to write a summary of the project, which is presented here.

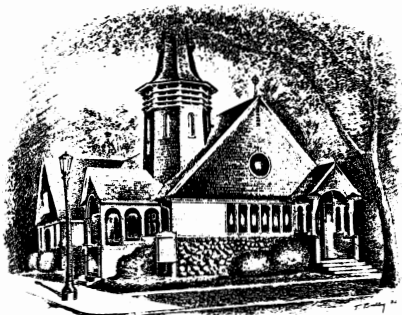
Giving and Growing

Renee Billings

Our "Giving and Growing" outreach is based on some of the ideas found in the book, *Conspiracy of Kindness: A Refreshing New Approach to Sharing the Love of Jesus with Others*, By Steve SjoGren. The book and the ideas were presented to us by Stephanie Ford and her family, members of the Church of the Holy City. On a monthly basis, our church goes out into the local community and surrounding cities, at times, to do "random acts of kindness." While striving not to be noticed or intrusive, we leave useful gifts with inspirational scripture or New Church quotes attached on labels, the gifts chosen to appropriately represent a holiday, important event happening, a need that we can tend to, etc.

I shared with the mini-course group our New Church theology that supports

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Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Giving and Growing

(Continued from page 129)

such an approach. Put simply, the New Church defines love as “other centered,” as giving without any thought of reward and to feel another’s happiness as one’s own.

Furthermore, Swedenborg envisions that the Lord’s love and wisdom come into ultimate reality when united in use or purposeful activity. We see the truth of this happening. The people in our church who prepare for the outings and actually go out and do the giving—are changing inside. The “doing” is bringing together new levels of love and wisdom inside of us. We are feeling the presence of the Lord with us in transformative ways. For example, we are finding a greater openness and self-respect for our church, as well as other people’s ways; a greater love of sharing for its own sake, a noticeable increase in energy within the congregation (including people who choose not to be involved in the outreach), closer bonding among members and friends who are involved, and this affects the whole church family and other aspects of our ministry, as well as increased inquiries among the people in church about our theology that inspires such giving and involvement in the well-being of the larger neighbor.

The Church of the Holy City is growing, and we believe it is because our focus is on “giving for its own sake,” charity to the neighbor as a priority, which includes one another—and those who might need a little kindness and providential contact from the Lord in our surrounding area through our outreach.

The Rev. Renee Billings is pastor of the Church of the Holy City in Royal Oak, Michigan.



Kansas

Update from the Rev. Adam Seward, Hutchinson:

There’s not much to ask a person with a serious illness. “How are you

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doing?” belabors the obvious. So, I figure that everyone sees it as a happy occasion when there’s news to pass around.

On July 14, I entered Via Christi Hospital to have a heart catheterization procedure done. Part of the result was an increase in my ejection fraction (how well the heart pumps) from 20% (discharge from hospital last October) to 49% (July 14). The standard ejection fraction for a healthy person is between 50 and 70%.

On August 18, I met with my cardiac doctor. He confirmed that my ejection fraction (how well my heart pumps) had reached 48% or more, which is just below the percentage of a normal functioning heart. He also said that I no longer needed a heart transplant, which I had refused anyway. The almost full recovery has been attributed to following my diet, and to the heart drug Coreg.

The doctor said that I could return to full-time work at my own discretion. I am talking with the Pretty Prairie church about beginning part-time work. I have chosen not to return to full-time work within at least the next six months. Lynn and I do not want to prematurely overexert my heart. After that, we should be able to tell how it will impact me.

I will probably not become “fully” recovered. Even with my improvement, there are some things that I can no longer do. My strong baritone singing voice is gone. There are unpredictable times each day when I have to stop what I am doing and rest. As long as I do this, I have a normal day, with, of course, less energy than a normal person. One can see that this makes some traditional pastoral duties difficult, if not impossible, to fulfill. Although there is no doubt that I will be able to work full-time, the type of work that I do may have to drastically change.

On the positive side, my problems with concentration are now gone, and I have begun to study and to write again.

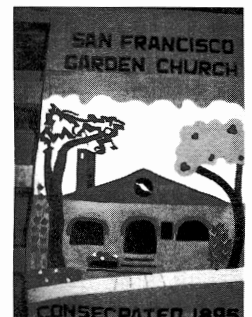
I am managing a small internet mailing list, which has helped me with my isolation. One bizarre result of my condition is that I rarely have arthritis attacks now. I am capable of many of the activities which I did before, if I am careful. However, the key word here is “careful.” For instance, I have to remind myself sometimes that I can no longer jog. I have to avoid prolonged exposure to the sun (medication side-effect). Manual labor is no longer an option. Otherwise, I can have a reasonably normal life, as long as I follow my diet and take my medication.

This is significant news. My understanding is that people with my condition usually do not live long. Up until mid-July, that was my prognosis. The doctor and his nurse were quite shocked when they saw my heart catheterization results, because people with my condition are not supposed to improve. I think that this is a cause for celebration.

Lynn and I are still very aware that we have come through the past year because of the love and support of the people of Convention, and especially because of the care of the members of Pretty Prairie New Jerusalem Church. It is now possible for me to look forward to decades of service as a minister in General Convention. It looks like you’re all going to be stuck with us for awhile.

San Francisco

As reported by San Francisco church member **Ray Wong**, an “unforgettable” three-day Memorial Day weekend retreat was attended by 65 adults and children from the S.F. congregation at St. Dorothy’s Rest in Camp Meeker, an old lumber mill town in the Redwoods established in the 1860s by “Boss” Meeker. The weekend



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San Francisco

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was filled with lectures and discussions relating to spiritual growth in daily lives, organized sporting events, yoga, guided tours, dancing, campfire singing and marshmallow roasting, flower arranging, a talent show, communion service, and according to another attendee, **Bette McDonnell**, "worshipping the Divine in each other."

Edmonton

The Rev. Min-Heui Cheon, who served the Edmonton Swedenborgian Church in Alberta from September 1997 through April, 1999, resigned on April 30, 1999, following a six-week leave of absence. On April 17, she was united in marriage to Warren Krull. As reported in their newsletter, the Edmonton congregation has rallied together to make up a roster of people willing to do services until they decide whether to continue in that vein or advertise for an other minister. The church celebrated its 40th anniversary September 19th.

Kitchener

John Maine, 1999 graduate of SSR's Lay Leader program, was consecrated as Kitchener's second lay leader September 12, 1999.

New York

Did you know ...
Helen Keller's personal



friendship with the late **Rev. Clayton Priestnal**, former pastor of the New York New Church, led her to consider the New York church her spiritual home? On April 15, two representatives of Channel 4 in Great Britain visited the church as part of their research for an upcoming special on Helen Keller. Apparently an effort was being made to emphasize the powerful influence that Swedenborg's writing had on her life.

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Boston

A special celebration at the Boston Church on May 16 honored **Dorothy deB. Young** for her 25 years as the church's secretary. Dorothy suffered a light stroke in early June, but is doing fine now ... The fabulously successful Beacon Hill Coffeehouse, hosted by Boston church members **Jamie and Elaine Peebles**, got another writeup in the *Boston Globe* under Hot Picks for Tony Cuffe, one of Scotland's most innovative and exciting acoustic guitarists.

Cambridge

Dr. Eugene Taylor's latest book, *Shadow Culture*, was recently published by Counterpoint Press. In it, he traces the roots of the New Age, which he identifies as the third Great Awakening in American spiritual history. Taylor is vice-president of the Cambridge Society of the New Jerusalem.

A Sunday In Memory of Yom Hashoah The Holocaust

By Michael Latkowitz

Recently I attended a most unusual service for a Christian church, especially in the city of Boston. An awe-inspiring Yom Hashoah event in memory of the loss of ten million men, women, and children in Nazi Germany. Six and a half million Jews just because of who they were. The other four million Christian souls because they dared to oppose Hitlerism, sixty-six years ago, 1933. Yet what has the world learned from this inhumane tragedy? We now hear and see still another holocaust, in Serbia this time. Oh, the theme is different. Instead of the "Jewish problem" it's "ethnic cleansing."

Has the world gone insane?

The new Yom Hashoah was established by the Israeli government as a day to commemorate this event in history so that the world, its people, would act accordingly so that no dictator in any country of the world could ever order a genocide in our time. The 1946 United Nations Anti-Holocaust Treaty guaranteed that. So we thought. Yet thousands of Albanian refugees are being slaughtered in the name of Serbian empowerment. The well-planned program by the Boston Church of the New Jerusalem, Swedenborgian, demonstrated a useful lesson against intolerance by the thoughtful presence of Job in a biblical presentation with our beloved pastor the Rev. Steve Ellis, portraying Job. In the play, Job, responding to the insults of his adversar-

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ies, and suffering the indignities thrust upon him, experienced the cycles of misery and torment induced by some of his so-called comforters, a motley crew of negative attitudes. A note of gratitude at this point for the wonderful narration given by Maggie Sullivan, "Eliphaz the Semite," an exciting and numbing bit of musical and sound engineering by Juliet Cunningham.

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Exciting Developments at Washington D.C. Church Cited

Dear Editor:

I read with some concern the Rev. Erni Martin's description of the National Church and the Church of the Holy City in the June 1999 *Messenger* article, "Invitation to Dialog." Martin writes:

"When the national church was built a century ago, it was expected that 'the elite of Washington' would be drawn to the church, to be edified by the new dispensation. This did not happen, nor will it happen." The article goes on to describe by way of contrast the good things that are happening at several other centers in the denomination.

Erni has assured me that he didn't mean to imply anything about our present situation in Washington. However, lest readers of *The Messenger* come away with an image of the National Church only as a failed dream from the past, let me share what we are currently experiencing, and our hopes for the future. In fact, we are quite optimistic about our current prospects.

In fact, the National Church is at an exciting location for a Swedenborgian ministry. Its immediate neighborhood has undergone extensive renovation in recent years, and is attracting many of the young professionals who are flocking back to the city. Our neighbors are in general well-educated and are interested in a variety of spiritual traditions. It is a highly diverse population, containing among other groups a large and visible gay community. There are many, many spiritual seekers within walking distance of the National Church, and we are drawing them in. We are, perhaps, no longer a church for the "elite of Washington," but certainly a church well placed to welcome in its immediate neighbors and support them on their spiritual journeys.

In fact, the beauty of the National Church, despite the obvious neglect it has suffered, is part of its appeal for those who walk through our doors. And in the course of my two years as pastor here I have found that reverential worship and intellectually stimulating preaching can provide welcome nourish-

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ment for the spiritual seeker. We have been experimenting with an increasingly participatory style of worship, and we all have been moved by what participants have offered from their own spiritual journeys. In this past year we have acquired a number of new regular attendees, all of whom live within walking distance of the church. At their insistence, we have extended Sunday worship in the main sanctuary to continue throughout the summer. These are exciting developments and bode well for our ability to draw from our neighborhood.

In fact, the National Church is an ideal location for the other kinds of programming that Erni mentions in his article. We have started to offer meditation classes and healing services. And we are working with the Rev. Eric Allison, our denomination's growth consultant, to plan and publicize a broader range of programs that will appeal to the surrounding community. Church of the Holy City is indeed "happening" in new and inspiring ways. We are eagerly awaiting what the next few years will bring.

The National Church is owned by the denomination and is in need of a major rehabilitation program. However, I am heartened by the good working relationship I have enjoyed with the trustees of the National Church. We have just received the report from an architectural survey, and we are working together to research a number of possibilities around the ultimate disposition and renovation of this property. The challenge is great, but so is the potential.

Meanwhile, I hope that readers of *The Messenger* will share my excitement about our prospects at Church of the Holy City and will pray for our success. Anytime your travels take you through the nation's capital, do stop by for a visit—we'd love to see you.

Rev. Dr. Jonathan Mitchell
Washington, D.C.

Our Thoughts are Prayers

Dear Editor,

As our church goes through its current and continuing evolution, it's easy to get caught in the negative energies that accompany seeing our dreams and expectations foundering on the rocks of change. It's also easy to blame others for decisions that contribute to the seeming turbulence caused by movement from one way of being in the world to another.

Even though I do not always agree with what and how things are being done, I have found the words to the following hymn to be most helpful in maintaining perspective. I share them because there may be times when someone else may also want to curse the darkness:

Our thoughts are prayers, and we are always praying.

Our thoughts are prayers. Listen to what you're saying.

Seek a higher consciousness, a state of peacefulness,

*And know that God is always there,
As every thought becomes a prayer.*

Lon Elmer
Seattle Washington



A Root Question

Dear Editor,

I have just published an article, "A Brief History of the Two Swedenborgian Churches in Kitchener" in the April and May issues of *New Church Life*. It chronicles the beginnings of our New Church from 1833, in what was then Berlin, Ontario (the name was changed to Kitchener in 1916 during the first World War) and brings us up to present times, including the exciting news of how Mrs. Betty Schneider of the Church of the Good Shepherd discovered our mutual early history in the basement of the church and how she

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A Root Question

(Continued from page 132)

moved to preserve the records and start a Swedenborgian archives.

Among the responses I received to the article is the one following and I am wondering if this e-mail message from Cynthia DiMarco could be placed in *The Messenger*? Did one of the General Convention churches in Toronto burn down in earlier times?

I have written to the Olivet Church in Toronto, asking them to put the message out as well but I do not recall hearing that a General Church burned in Toronto, so I am wondering if the connection Cythnia is seeking may be in your branch of our church?

This is the trouble with genealogy. Once people become interested in their roots and begin to search, so many of the people who would remember are gone!

I hope we can be of some help to Cynthia and her mother.

Paula Naill
Owen Sound, Ontario

My name is Cynthia Coy DiMarco. I live in Royal Palm Beach, Florida and I'm a member of the New Church. I read your article in *New Church Life* and felt a possibility of hope that my

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mother and I could finally find some information on our ancestors. In particular a woman named Maud Carter.

My mother believes she was born after the Civil War, around 1868. She was baptized in a little church in Kitchener, or Toronto, Canada. My mother remembers Maud trying to get a copy of her birth certificate but, found out the church had burnt down with all the records being lost. She was the daughter of Emma Feleison (we're not sure of the spelling on Feleison) and George Carter. Emma Feleison was the daughter of Adolph and Emmalita Feleison. Apparently Adolph was a Lutheran minister who was driven out of Germany because he was preaching from his pulpit about Swedenborg's writings. We have not been able to get anywhere on our search for these people. We believe Adolph and Emmalita had some sons who did not believe in the writings and were very much opposed to the religion. It's possible they broke away from the church. If you can find any information regarding any of these people, please, let me know; if you need any more information I'll try to find it.

My address is 126 Parkwood Drive, Royal Palm Beach, Florida 33411 My E-mail address is Dimar126@AOL.com My telephone # 1-561-790-3814 **This is exciting!** But I don't want to get my hopes up too high yet.

Cynthia DiMarco ❖

Are We Any Closer Together?

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long-walk juncture near the end of another night. Why would it, when it didn't cause concern during my short walk to school in the morning when Robert B. walked all those before-school miles? It was just the way things were back then.

I remember how dark it was when as I reached various corners, especially as I approached the old courthouse. It was so dark, and I always had a choice: take a shortcut with one street light, or go the long way with evenly spaced lights. Admitting my young fear, I still remember whistling to eliminate any uneasiness about the dark corners. It was not an ideal time to recall Stephen King type tales. Once past the courthouse my tired feet carried me over the low railroad track area and into my neighborhood. In retrospect this memory of the tradition of separate neighborhoods gave two youngsters one truth. The old days were wrong. Teenage school life and work would have been more enjoyable and even more of a learning experience—and our together time might have been more conducive to preparing us for being adults—if Robert B. and I could have walked home together rather than going our separate ways.

I do not wish to think of my grandchildren, or Robert B.'s grandchildren, whistling alone as they walk in darkness.

Connon Barclay, a free-lance writer and retired corrections officer, is making his Messenger debut in this issue. Barclay has appeared in the New York Times, the Chicago Tribune, Reader's Digest, the Wall Street Journal, and numerous religious magazines. He credits his mother, an editor, writer and teacher, as an inspirational force for his writing career. Mr. Barclay lives in Holland, Michigan



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(Continued from page 131)

Eerie cycles of ongoing misery and of misery broken, the brilliant flow of sounds, the whirlwinds. The inspirational lighting of a single candle. "To save one life is to light up the world." The Hava Nagila come to the harbor was mimed by the talented church choir to illustrate the forced silence upon the Jews by Nazi oppressions. Moments of silence were requested of the church members and friends present in the church for prayer.

Finally, as a person raised in the Jewish tradition I truly applaud this wonderful church for taking the initiative to educate both their church members and the public about the Jewish people and against anti-semitism. I am proud to be a member.

Michael Latkowitch is a member of the Boston Swedenborgian Church.

Reprinted from the Boston church's June 1999 newsletter.



Thank You

The Swedenborgian Church wishes to acknowledge and thank the individuals and churches who made contributions in 1998-1999, as of September, 1999.

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M. Celeste Ashley
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Urbana Society
Vivian Vanderberg
Stephanie & Michael Wagner
Ruth Wagoner
J.C. & Gloryann Webb
Craig Weigle
Harriet Whithead
Albert & Irene Wilson
Marjorie Winsor
Chuck & Verda Winter
Charles Witzel
Carolyn Wright



No Hits, No Runs; Just the Usual Snags

(Continued from page 122)

Neither of us quite grasped the finality of that velvet-glove warning. We decided to hold the upcoming scheduled meeting and then work with our people to figure out another place to meet. We were both angry. "Our rent is paid on time, and nobody's making any disturbance here, we're as quiet as a sewing circle. Can she legally do anything about our meetings?" my daughter asked. I didn't know, but we both realized things could get unpleasant, and the time and work involved in a move would be so disruptive to our progress it might be months before we gained back the lost momentum.

As it turned out, we didn't have to make that decision. An eviction notice arrived in our mailbox two weeks later, along with a nice note from Doreen telling us they weren't zoned for a business being conducted in the home, and she loved us and was sorry to see us go. We discovered as tenants we didn't have any rights, and we didn't try to fight it. There were no dramatic confrontations or ugly words. We didn't forge on in the face of adversity to become the pantyhose tycoons of northwest Indiana. My daughter moved back to Los Angeles. I moved to another place. The Purr-fit company went out of business due to mismanagement. I saw Doreen a year later in a local market, and she greeted me with enthusiastic hugs and excited shrieks of well-wishing as if nothing had ever happened. I responded with pleasantries.

There was nothing much to mark what happened, except perhaps an increased awareness of the many ways fear cheats us all, and a heightened sensitivity to news reports of hate crimes. And of course my recollection of the experience, which was triggered by Connors Barclay's reminiscence, "Are We Any Closer Together?" Maybe it's good for us to just tell each other these things from time to time.

Patte LeVan ❖

PASSAGES

Marriages

Dzeryk & Hohnstein—Nancy Dianne Dzeryk, daughter of Irene Dzeryk of Edmonton, Alberta, and Larry John Hohnstein of Spruce Grove, Alberta, were united in marriage June 19, 1999, in Spruce Grove. The uncle of the bride, the Rev. Erwin Reddekopp, officiated.

Williamson & Archer—Marie Elizabeth Williamson and Clifford Archer were united in marriage August 15, 1999, at home in Bridgton, Maine, the Rev. Kenneth Turley officiating.

Death

Morris—Margaret Cole Morris, lifelong member of the San Diego Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world July 8, 1999. A memorial service was conducted July 16, Eldon Smith, authorized lay leader, officiating. ❖



Change of Address

Rev. David and Shirley Sonmor
#14 1391 - 98 Street
North Battleford, SK
S9A 0M1

Swedenborgian Church Meeting Dates

Oct. 15-17	EDSU Almont	Jan. 16-19	Council of Ministers ExCom. Remond, WA
Oct. 21	Investment Committee Temenos	Feb. 8-14	
Oct. 22-24	General Council Temenos	Feb. 24-26	MINSU Ft. Myers Beach, FL
Oct. 29-31	SSR Board Meeting Newton Centre	Mar. 18-19	Urbana Trustees
Oct. 29-30	Urbana U. Trustees	Apr. 27-30	SSR Board Chapel
Dec. 27-30	SCYL Retreat Almont	May 5-6	Wayfarers Chapel Board
Jan. 13-15	Wayfarers Chapel Palos Verdes, CA	June 28-July 2	Convention 2000 Urbana U.



THE LIGHTER SIDE

A father was reading Bible stories to his young son. He read, "The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city, but his wife looked back and was turned to salt."

His son asked, "What happened to the flea?"



Coming in November:

*A
Dove at the
Window*

LIVING DREAMS
AND
SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

Compiled and edited
by Vera P. Glenn

A moving collection of true stories of visitations from heaven through dreams, accompanied by quotations from the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

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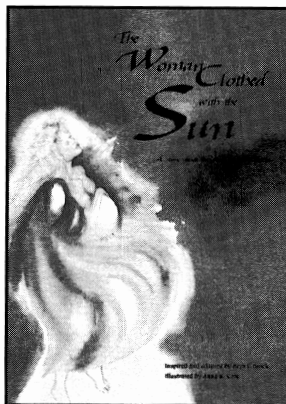
The Woman Clothed with the Sun

A story from the book of Revelation

A lesser-known Bible story, *The Woman Clothed With The Sun* has the feel of an ancient myth. It is one of the visions seen by the apostle John while he was exiled on the island of Patmos. A beautiful woman, a fierce dragon, and mighty warriors who fight against the beast are all powerful elements in a story that has been a mystery for centuries.

Anna K. Cole brings these stirring scenes to life with swirling watercolor paintings, and the text that accompanies her illustrations is taken directly from the book of Revelation. An introduction presents unique insights based on the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, an eighteenth-century Christian writer.

Children can enjoy the beautiful pictures and epic tale, while adults can use the introduction to inspire deeper thoughts about the story. *The Woman Clothed With The Sun* invites the reader to look for and feel the symbolism and messages in this vivid depiction of a great struggle between good and evil.



Available from Fountain Publishing for \$15.95 plus \$1.00 for 4th class shipping or \$4.00 for first class shipping. P.O. Box 80011, Rochester, MI 48308-0011, E-mail: ftnpublish@aol.com ❖

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 15 years after his death. This 1787 organization eventually spawned the present General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. As a result of Swedenborg's own spiritual questionings and insights, we as a church today exist to encourage that same spirit of inquiry and personal growth, to respect differences in views, and to accept others who may have different traditions. Swedenborg shared in his theological writings a view of God as infinitely loving and at the very center of our beings, a view of life as a spiritual birthing as we participate in our own creation, and a view of Scripture as a story of inner-life stages as we learn and grow. Swedenborg would conclude, "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.

Johnny Appleseed Heritage Center Introduces Playwright and Songwriter for Outdoor Historical Drama

At a news conference on July 14, 1999, trustees of Johnny Appleseed Heritage Center, Incorporated (JAHCI) in Mansfield, Ohio, introduced Billy Edd Wheeler as playwright and songwriter for its outdoor historical drama that will present the life of John Chapman (1774-1845) and celebrate the early history of North Central Ohio, where Appleseed spent most of his life.

Mr. Wheeler is the author of 21 plays, of which three are outdoor dramas that include the long-running *Hatfields and McCoy's* at Beckley, West Virginia and *Young Abe Lincoln* near Lincoln City, Indiana. His five best-selling books of humor include *Laughter in Appalachia*, now in its 13th printing.

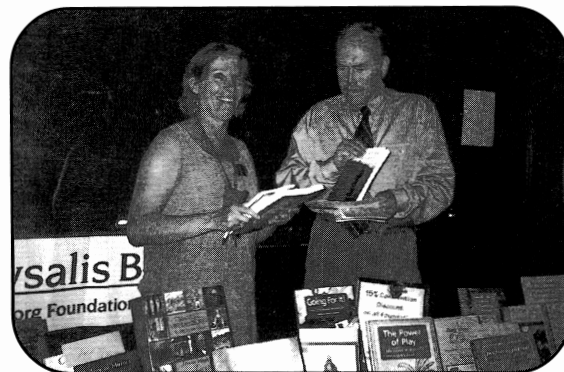
He is recipient of Billboard Magazine's Pacesetter Award for Music and Drama and 12 awards from the American Society of Composers, Authors & Publishers. Also, he has managed United Artists Music Group in Nashville and was recently nominated to the Hall of Fame by Nashville Songwriters Association International. His songs have sold over 50 million units as recorded by Judy Collins, Johnny Cash, Neil Young, Kenny Rogers, Kingston Trio and eighty-some others here and abroad. Songs include *Jackson*, *The Rev. Mr. Black*, *High Flying Bird*, *The Coming of the Roads*, *Ode to the Little Brown Shack*, and *Coward of the County*, which was made into a movie. His most recent album is titled "Songs & Legends of the Outer Banks," containing songs about the Wright Brothers, Blackbeard, and North Carolina coastal themes.

Bill Jones, lifelong Appleseed researcher and JAHCI's founder, president, and executive producer of the drama, developed the story from which Mr. Wheeler will write the play and compose songs.

Johnny Appleseed Heritage Center will offer

more than an a two-hour historical outdoor musical drama in a 1,700-seat, naturally contoured and wooded amphitheater. An interactive museum focusing on Johnny's life, the region and apple industry; indoor lecture hall; reference library; gift shop; children's programs on philanthropy, conservation and our environment; apple-menu pioneer meals; living history and reenactment; orchards; gardens; nature trail; festivals; annual scholarship awards; Ohio historic roadside markers; Appleseed Heritage Corridor and Scenic Byways are being developed for inclusion.

Focusing on Johnny Appleseed as a unique national hero, the Johnny Appleseed Heritage Center exists to promote, support, and nurture his legacy as a humanitarian, philanthropist, and naturalist through family-oriented cultural, educational, and historical venues such as outdoor drama, museums, and related programs. ❖



Bill Jones, Johnny Appleseed historian, browses Swedenborg Foundation offerings with Foundation staff member Susan Poole, during the '99 Convention at Pepperdine in Malibu. Bill was a special convention guest, presenting a talk and a mini-course on Appleseed and the plans for the Johnny Appleseed Heritage Center.

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