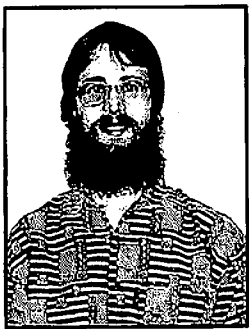


THE MESSENGER

Published by the Swedenborgian Church of North America

April 2000

Training Head, Heart, and Hands for Ministry *A Swedenborgian Vision for SSR:*



Lee
Woofenden

Our seminary is on the verge of transformation. Its old form is gone, along with its familiar residence on

Sargent St. in Newton, Massachusetts. Its next form is not yet determined. We are entering an interim period when the possibilities for its future are wide open.

This gives us a rare opportunity to reshape the Swedenborg School of Religion (SSR) into something that more fully expresses the new realities of our denomination and our world. We have an opportunity to move both our seminary and our church powerfully forward in the direction that our own faith points out to us.

In the May 1999 *Messenger*, I shared with you my conviction that we need to adopt a whole new paradigm for SSR. My article in that issue gave the rationale. In this one, I will begin drawing the blueprint of a whole new way for our seminary to train the future leadership of our church.

As I said in my previous article, we have tried the old intellectual, academic model of theological education, and found it wanting. Instead of growing in numbers and strength, both our seminary and our denomination have fought a rear-guard battle to retain even what we have. Instead of flourishing over the past century, our church has

shrunk along with the mainline denominations in whose image our seminary and our denomination are modeled.

There are many reasons we have not thrived. One of them, I believe, is that we have fallen far short in applying our own beliefs to the way we train our ministers. At the core of our faith is the concept that for anything to be real, it must have a balance of love and wisdom, leading to useful action or function. Yet when we founded our seminary, instead of drawing on that seminal insight, we looked to models of education that had their roots in the faith-alone intellectualism of the previous religious era.

We have been struggling against that self-imposed limitation ever since. In recent years there has been a blossoming of field education at SSR, which has partially compensated for the head-centered path that we inherited when we adopted the academic model. And as I mentioned in my earlier article, SSR's field education program can give us the seeds for the next wave of growth

At the core of our faith is the concept that for anything to be real, it must have a balance of love and wisdom, leading to useful action or function.

and development in training our ministers.

Let me speak plainly: We must drop the academic model of education if we want our church to be a living, thriving part of the new spiritual era that has begun in our world. Affiliating with a mainline seminary, as has been proposed for SSR, would simply tie us even more firmly to an academic model of education, and limit our flexibility even further.

We can move our seminary in much more exciting directions. I would like to share with you my vision for the future of SSR. It is not a fully developed model, but rather a blueprint that provides some outlines for building a new SSR. Whether or not we adopt this particular blueprint, I hope my sketch will move us in the direction of transforming our seminary in ways that reflect our core beliefs and values as a church.

For any model of education to be truly Swedenborgian, it must be founded on the principle of involving head, heart, and hands together in the learning process. As much as our training involves only the head, and not the heart, it is not truly Swedenborgian. And as much as it involves only the heart, and not the head, it is not truly Swedenborgian. And if it does involve both head and heart, then it must also involve the hands—for when head and heart are together, the Spirit of the Lord is present, and our hands cannot help but express the powerful impetus toward active ministry that flows in and through us!

What I am about to outline draws on action/reflection, apprenticeship, and dispersed learning (decentralized) models of training. But enough big words. Let's draw blueprints!

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Concept of Hell Revisited

Robert
McCluskey

The problem of evil has not gone away. But it is being treated in new ways. In a recent issue of *U.S. News and World Report*, the concept of hell was given extensive treatment in light of a new statement from Pope John Paul II, in which he describes hell not as a "literal place," but as a "state of mind." Rather than emphasizing the images of hellfire, brimstone, and eternal physical punishment, a new perspective is rising which thinks in terms of symbol, seeing literal imagery as a metaphor for our freely




willed separation from God. "The thought of hell," writes the pope, "must not create anxiety or despair," but is a "necessary and healthy reminder of freedom." Rather than punishment administered by a loving God (perhaps the ultimate oxymoron!), hell is understood as the necessary consequence of a life devoid of compassion or charity, a life turned in on itself to the exclusion of any other authentic relationship.

Still, this new view is not without its critics. Traditional Christians appeal to the literal sense of scripture, and to deeply held beliefs of the faithful, to reinforce more traditional ideas of sin and punishment after death. And modern thinkers are more willing than ever to dismiss the idea of hell altogether, because of their discomfort with the supernaturalism involved in any concept of an afterlife.

As useful as this article was, I do not think it hit the mark as well as it might have. Instead of simply distinguishing between hell as a "literal place" or a "state of mind," I believe we do well to

remember that our experience of an outward, literal "place" is at all times qualified by our "state of mind," and that our minds are not vacuous entities, but real substance, always in some "place" suitable to our spiritual needs. In other words, hell, and heaven, are states of mind which qualify and condition our experience at all times. Finally, a full understanding of the concept of hell requires that we address the issue of the immortality of the soul. Are we merely natural beings, caught up in the outward cycle of life and death, or are we more than that? Are our lives merely the sum total of our external experience, or is there more to us than that? Does the inner call to justice and mercy and compassion reveal something more than the body, or not? These are questions of faith, not science, and we would do well to reflect on them with an ear for what the spirit is saying to us.

The Rev. Robert McCluskey is pastor of the New York New Church.

Reprinted from the New York church's February 2000 Newsletter. 

The following commentary is reprinted from The Intelligencer Record's regular religion page feature, "In Their Own Words," February 11, 2000. The Rev. Don Rose, Assistant Pastor of the Bryn Athyn Cathedral in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, is a frequent contributor to the column.

Hell Is not God's Punishment

Don Rose

Pope John Paul II and other spiritual leaders of our times have been offering new perspectives on the subject of hell. According to a recent poll among those who believe in hell—53 percent understand hell to be an anguished state of existence separated from God. A respectable 34 percent still believe that hell is a place where people suffer torments in fire.

With respect for those who understand differently I offer thoughts from my religious perspective. I believe that hell is real. I do not believe that God is ever angry or that He takes revenge or punishes people. Let's take the example of literal physical fire. The theologian Emanuel Swedenborg from whom I take my religious tradition uses this as an

example. If you put your hand in fire you will feel consequences. But the fire is not to blame, and neither is God to blame.

The same is true of spiritual fire, the evil passions of hate, lust and selfishness. I will discuss hell fire in a moment, but I want to talk about the punishment-and-reward model of life. This simple model has definite value. If you do wrong, you will get pain for it later. If you do right, you await future reward. We tell our children that, and it prepares them for life in society. There are beautiful literal statements in the Bible that resonate with that model. But there is something deeper behind them.

Suppose I do good deeds and play by the rules or profess certain beliefs for a number of years. Will I get a reward in

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THE MESSENGER

Publisher: The Communications Support Unit
Published monthly, except July and August, by the Swedenborgian Church of North America (founded 1817, incorporated 1861 as the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America).

April 2000
Volume 221 No. 4
Whole Number 5249

Typesetting & Layout
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Press, Plymouth, IN

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The opinions of the contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or the Communications Support Unit, or represent the position of the church. Subscription free to members of the Swedenborgian Church; non-members, \$12.00 a year; foreign \$15.00 a year; gift subscription from a member, \$5.00 a year; single copies \$1.00.

Deadline for material: Six weeks before the first day of the month of issue.

Training Head, Heart and Hands

(Continued from cover)

We'll begin with one of the toughest problems SSR faces. Fifty or a hundred years ago, most seminary students were young, single men who were free to move wherever their desired seminary was located. Today, ministry students come from a much broader spectrum of the population. Many are young married, middle-aged, or older women and men with families and other commitments that make it difficult for them to relocate for seminary training.

Unlike the mainline denominations, we're too small to maintain multiple seminaries around the U.S. and Canada. So we remain stuck in one location—and potential students are unable to benefit from our training program due to that severe geographical limitation.

This is where the synergy of dispersed learning and action/reflection can accomplish for us a result that locating on an established seminary campus never could. We are not big enough to maintain multiple traditional seminaries around the U.S. and Canada. But we *do* have multiple churches and growth centers in and around some of the major population centers in North America. Many of our churches have underutilized buildings, and many of them would benefit greatly from a wider variety of programs, and more leadership support.

This is a marriage made in heaven. We have a seminary that can no longer support its building, and churches that need to make better use of their buildings by expanding their activities and offerings.

If we developed regional ministry training centers based in our active parishes and spiritual growth centers, we would not have to engage in the either/or, Boston versus San Francisco style of debate that is now brewing. We could benefit from the advantages that both San Francisco and Boston have to offer, not to mention the Midwest, and perhaps other areas as well. We could bring our seminary to where more of our potential students are. And we could do it without the expense of renting or purchasing more properties.

The financial advantage of using the existing underutilized property within our denomination is the least of the benefits we would gain from moving our seminary out to the areas where our church has its strongest presence. While giving a boost to our local parishes and centers, we would also give our ministerial training process a real-world practicality that is only partially realized through our current field education program. Most of our training would take place in connection with the very churches and centers that our students would be serving once they graduate. The troublesome gap between the seminary and parish experiences would be all but eliminated. Students could move almost seamlessly from seminary to ministry, having already experienced active ministry as ministers-in-training.

How would a parish-based, action/reflection model of ministerial training work? . . . In this parish-based, apprenticeship style of training, we would develop teams of faculty/ministers in each area where we created a ministerial training center.

How would a parish-based, action/reflection model of ministerial training work? Let's start with the faculty. An enduring issue in traditional seminary education is building a faculty that has solid, successful experience with ministry out in the field. An overly academic faculty cannot provide students with the real-world guidance they need as they prepare to lead local parishes and other church centers after graduation. Yet many effective pastors are reluctant to leave their vital service in the field for the academic world of the seminary.

In this parish-based, apprenticeship style of training, we would develop teams of faculty/ministers in each area where we created a ministerial training center. The teams would include

ministers who are actively serving our parishes and centers in that area. They would also include other professionals whose work involves ordained or non-ordained ministries: pastoral counselors, retreat center directors, musicians, public speakers, and so on. Most of our students' training would be provided by people who are actively doing the very kinds of ministry that they are training their students to do.

Once again, the gap between seminary and ministry in the field would be all but eliminated. And instead of drawing some of our most talented ministers out of the field and into the seminary, we would keep our church's leaders active where they are most needed. Rather than competing with our parishes and spiritual growth centers for faculty, our seminary would add to the leadership on the local level of the church.

What would the program be like in these regional ministerial training centers? Here is where this new model for SSR comes into its own. Another gap that traditional seminaries struggle with is the theoretical nature of training that is conducted away from actual fields of ministry. Much of the information imparted in an academic setting is committed to memory in preparation for term papers and final exams, only to be consigned to an unmarked file buried deep under a stack somewhere in the recesses of a newly ordained minister's mind.

A parish-based, action/reflection model of training overcomes this gap between training and practice naturally—almost effortlessly.

First, many of the Bible and doctrinal courses offered at our ministerial training centers would be open not only to ministry students who have formally enrolled in our seminary, but also to members of the local congregations, and even to the general public. This would add a practical, life-centered element to the teaching. While seminary students may be interested in theology as theology, lay people are usually more interested in how it relates to their life issues. The interaction among faculty, seminary students, and lay people in these courses would help keep the

(Continued on page 63)

**"Where there is no vision,
the people perish." Proverbs 29:18**

Continuing Work on the SSR Vision



Jane Siebert

The Swedenborg School of Religion Board met February 5 through 8 in San Francisco. The parishioners welcomed us with fun, good food, and great hospitality in their homes. We joined the exuberant San Francisco congregation for Sunday worship, and people were literally spilling out the doors of the sanctuary.

We want to thank all of you who sent feedback on the first draft of the new Vision. Over 90% of the churches and centers in the US and Canada responded, and 25 individuals sent in their personal observations. We have taken all suggestions seriously and will keep them in mind as we envision the future.

As one Board member has stated, "A vision needs to capture the imagination, unleash creative energies, and harness the collective talents of all the people." The Board, along with George Dole, representing the faculty, worked to clearly define the vision for the School, incorporating the lessons from the past, listening to the input from the people currently served by the School, and envisioning the diverse needs of the future. We are working on a vision that pictures the School as we all need it to be.

Overall, the input supported the first draft of the Vision and the direction in which the Board is moving.

Many thought that the 14 commitments needed prioritization. They recommended that we concentrate our efforts on what we can do and what we must do to assure preparation of high-quality leaders for our churches and centers.

There was consensus on the essential necessity to maintain and expand our Swedenborgian identity, whichever course is charted for the future.

The next priority that rose to the top was the maintenance and preservation of the Swedenborg library and archives. This collection, which has been housed and maintained by the school, is irreplaceable. It helps sustain our number one priority.

The needs of those who cannot travel to a central location due to family or jobs are also high on our list. We have rejected a model that relies solely on distance learning, but plan to incorporate opportunities for distance education in the final plan.

The Board also heard from many parishioners that they wanted Urbana included in the site selection process. We agreed to expand our search. John Titus chairs the Site Review

Committee. Other members include: Bob Reber, Dick Stansbury, George Dole, Ron Brugler, and Jane Siebert.

The entire board visited the Pacific School of Religion, and then the Site Committee met for further discussion with their administrative team. We were greeted with open arms at PSR. They are very interested in the diversity that our theology would offer to their interfaith seminary. They have a burgeoning appreciation for our denomination. We found many of Swedenborg's writings and collaterals in the library collection they share with the Graduate Theological School at Berkeley. In March the Site Committee visits Andover Newton Theological School and Urbana University in April. The Committee is charged with the monumental task of gathering information for the future location of SSR. The Committee recognizes the complexity of this issue as we move forward.

The Board continues to put great effort into the negotiations with the Cambridge Society about the Chapel. After lengthy discussion the Board reached a general consensus that there exists a substantial variance between the offer of \$630,000 from the Cambridge Society and the value acceptable to meet our responsibilities as trustees. The mediated agreement appraisal was \$3,330,000. The Board is charged with the responsibility to manage the School's assets in accordance with the governing statutes. We are responsible to the School and the Church at large. To accept an offer of one fifth of the appraisal value would constitute a considerable gift to the Cambridge Society in a time when we do not have enough income to meet our budget. This would not meet our responsibilities as elected trustees. The Board continues to search for a way to sell the Chapel for an equitable amount and enable the Cambridge society to continue to worship in the Chapel. A common conviction that we heard from the churches and individuals is that the future of our seminary and denomination go hand in hand. The term "interdependent" was used. The entire board is aware of this immense responsibility. We can do what we are called to do only if you continue to give us your input, encouragement, and support. Thank you for the responses to the Vision Statement. Together we will clarify the vision and rise to it.

**"A vision needs to
capture the
imagination,
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collective talents
of all the people."**

Jane Siebert is chair of the SSR Board and a member of the Swedenborgian Church in Pretty Prairie, Kansas.



Traveling Companion



James
Lawrence

There's an anecdote in the biography of the German composer Felix Mendelssohn about a time

when he was visiting some family friends in the country. Informed that the church in the town center had an especially fine organ, he trekked down into the town one afternoon to see whether he might arrange for an opportunity to spend some time playing it. Upon approaching, he could hear the church organist practicing, so he slipped in to sit on a back pew and listen for awhile.

He was indeed thrilled with the range and complex pitches that the organ could produce, and after some time had passed, Mendelssohn climbed into the organ loft and placed a hand on the organist's shoulder. "Pardon me," he ventured, "but would you permit me to play for just a little?"

But the old organist, who had been playing on the same instrument for thirty years, wasn't used to such invasions, and he rather sharply declined the request, saying, "Only I play this organ. It is not for anyone else." Mendelssohn nodded and stepped back, indicating for him to continue playing.

A little while later, unable to resist, the famed musician again came up to the organist and placed a hand on his shoulder, and again requested to play, this time saying, "Just for a few minutes—I won't hurt the organ." But still, the older man firmly turned him down.

After quite a bit more time elapsed, Mendelssohn once more approached the man after he had completed a hymn and said in a beseeching tone, "Just five minutes. I won't hurt the instrument—I know organs. Permit me but five minutes with it." Irritated but worn down, the elderly organist slid off the bench with a scowl, and Mendelssohn seated himself at the console of the

organ and began to play.

Five minutes, ten minutes, fifteen, twenty, almost an hour passed. The organist stood listening with tears streaming down his face. Suddenly, Mendelssohn stopped, and looked up at the church organist, embarrassed that he had played so long. But the elderly one had immediately recognized genius in the playing and had at last realized the identity of the great artist in his presence. Shaking Mendelssohn's hand vigorously, he said, "I cannot believe how close I came to missing the opportunity of hearing the master make music on our instrument."

It is a nice little story that suggests how easily any one of us can get so tunnel-visioned in our daily routines that we miss blatant opportunities to recognize the Master in our midst. A two-and-a-half-hour journey late in the afternoon of Easter day undertaken by two disciples who are joined along the way *incognito* by the Risen Lord is perhaps the favorite of all the post-resurrection appearance stories. Their business was taking them to Emmaus, which translated means "hot spring"; Emmaus was probably to the southwest of the old city, where there is today, at about the same distance of seven miles, a ruin and a spring. Though called disciples, they probably became disciples, because they were not of the inner eleven, and though sad and perplexed about the day's events, they were still somewhat short of believing. That is why, as Jesus draws up close and asserts his company upon them, he says to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe."

But they were—and this is the key point—willing to have the horizons of their faith extended and transcended. They become deeply engaged by the powerful words of insight and deeper purpose that their traveling companion imparts to them as they journey along together.

When they arrive in Emmaus, Jesus appears to be continuing his journey, but the two are moved to urge him to stay with them. It is evening, after all; why not share their hospitality? So he goes into a home with them. And then comes the mystical moment. As they sup, Jesus reaches over, takes a loaf, breaks it, gives it to them: *and receiving the bread they*

recognize him! Then, he vanishes from their sight.

The correspondences of the story suggest a juncture in our spiritual journeying when an interior relationship with God is developing—this is indicated by his entering within their home. The bread which he blesses and breaks is the warm goodness of divine love itself. And in this instance, there is an open reception of that goodness—and it is experience that leads directly to their ability to recognize Who is with them.

The Emmaus journey presents us with a wonderful paradigm of the mystical moment, the kind that many of us have had in various ways—the sudden knowing awareness of the presence of God that can become increasingly our customary perception of how things actually are. I would distinguish the Emmaus experience from merely contemplating God. Oftentime I think of God when I see something beautiful or hear something exquisite, when I am awed by vastness, or elaborate intricacies. There are matters of greatness and magnificence that cause my mind to contemplate God, but what I think this Emmaus recognition is closer to is another type of knowingness—of actual recognition.

An Emmaus encounter is an immediate sense—especially a sudden sense—of the presence of God. For instance, I was recently suffering from my all-too-common feeling that I was swamped with undone tasks, and on this particular afternoon, with some resentment I pushed myself away from the screaming mountain on my desk for a scheduled appointment with a wedding couple. About forty-five minutes into the meeting, a joy at who I was experiencing they were and were trying to become swelled up almost palpably from around my heart and rather suddenly washed over all my soul's preoccupations; I felt suddenly such a goodness, and in that recognition I inwardly affirmed how purposeful the divine life is, and without thinking about it, I said in my inner mind, "Wow, thank you, Lord."

That's a little Emmaus experience. Do you have them? The bread of divine goodness blesses some little situation, and in a sudden reception of a higher

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I hope that I will be graduating from SSR and be ordained at this summer's convention in Urbana. I am not certain yet as to what my ministry will be, but teaching Swedenborgian doctrine is something that has been an interest of mine. This fall, I took a class at SSR on *True Christian Religion* and Christology. For my paper, I put together a course on "Knowing the Creator" from a Swedenborgian perspective. It's a long paper, but I'll share some parts of it here. The first section suggests some of the ideas I would like to present in the first class:



Why Know God?

Jun-Chol Lee

of a perfect union of the interior and exterior of our mind, which will eventually lead us to perpetual conjunction with God. Therefore, Swedenborg insists, "For everyone must prepare the way for God, that is, must prepare himself for reception; and this is done by means of knowledges" (TCR n.24).

Swedenborg divides human growth into three steps: These regions are opened in people successively—the outmost region, where there is life in the lowest degree, from infancy to childhood. This is done by means of knowledges. The second region, where there is life in a larger degree, from childhood to youth; and this is done by means of thought from knowledges. The highest region, where there is life in the highest degree, from youth to manhood and onward; and this is done by means of perceptions of moral and spiritual truths (TCR n.42). In the Christian faith we believe that we are created in the image of God according to his likeness.

The Bible says, "Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness'" (NRSV Genesis 1:26). Being created in the image and likeness of God is the fundamental belief in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This God, here, is not God as the Lord Jesus Christ, but God as the Creator of the universe. The essence of God from eternity is doing the work of creation here. And the most important point for us is that we all resemble this God the Creator, God the Infinite.

Swedenborg claims that the purpose of creation is a heaven from the human race. He says, "This vast system which is called the universe is a work coherent as a unit from things first to things last, because in creating it God had a single end in view, which was an angelic heaven from the human race" (TCR n. 13).

This means that a secret to becoming angels of heaven lies in knowing Who the Creator is, from which we will have a clearer concept of our own nature. Beginning with the Creator we can have an optimistic view of human nature and destiny, because being created in the image and likeness of God tells us clearly that we are not just meant to be a part of this finite and material nature.

Swedenborg explains, "Angels and men are substances and forms created and organized for receiving what is Divine flowing into them through heaven. For this reason they are called in the book of creation 'images and likenesses of God' (Gen. 1:26, 27); and elsewhere 'his sons,' and 'born of him'" (TCR n. 20). I think this is a very powerful and encouraging statement that we are vessels into which the Divine can flow. If we cultivate our mind enough to receive the Divine inflow, we will be one with God in our heart.

Final Session: In the last session, what I would like to do is to encourage people to have a free discussion on the topic. They can ask questions, or they can share their own understanding of God the Creator in their life. I prepared these three points to give them a practical summary that they can remember and use in their further discussion after the class.

1. The unity of God, which is one God, means that all religions have sprung from one source. If there cannot be two infinities, then all authentic

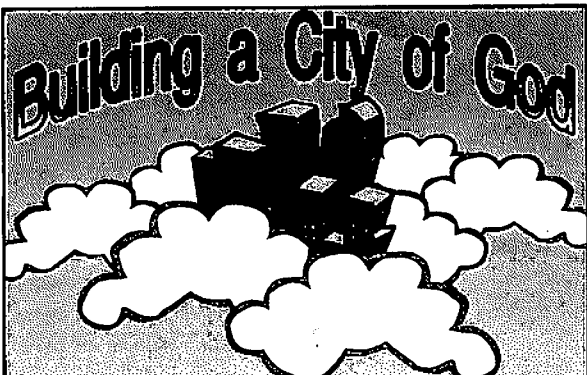
The ultimate goal of this leading is to reach the point of a perfect union of the interior and exterior of our mind, which will eventually lead us to perpetual conjunction with God.

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Why know about the Creator? This was a question from a teenage girl, when I was leading her Bible study class. Knowing the Creator does not simply mean that we are going to understand the whole secret of creation. But what we can understand is who we are and how our world began to exist. The Creator is not just a God or the Ultimate Reality who set forth the order of the creation of the universe, but the actual origin and fountain of the creative force in the universe. In other words, the whole created universe is in the Creator. So to have an inquiry about the Creator is to have an inquiry about our origin, nature, and destiny.

Knowledge matters in the development of faith. The role of knowledge is very important and significant in the process of human regeneration, according to Swedenborg. But it is also a universal principle that no human is ever born with full wisdom of life, so we must learn from the world after our birth. Gathering knowledge in one's mind is the first step in every learning process. In Swedenborgian theology the importance of proper knowledge is vital. Based on knowledge, human understanding can practice its way, finding a deeper meaning to life. Finally our will, corrupted by inferior inclinations, can be led to a higher level. The ultimate goal of this leading is to reach the point

Building a City of God



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Swedenborgian Church
at
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CONVENTION 2000 REGISTRATION

The 176th Convention of the Swedenborgian Church will be hosted jointly by the Ohio Association and by Urbana University to celebrate Urbana University's Sesquicentennial.

TRANSPORTATION: We recommend that those who are flying to Convention plan to arrive at the Dayton airport rather than the Columbus airport. Columbus is under construction and Dayton is closer. There are vans available from Burgundy Taxi Service, Springfield, Ohio (937)323-3283. The cost is \$52 for a whole van which can carry four to six passengers for the one-way trip to Urbana University's Grimes Center. Each additional passenger is \$50. There may be additional fees for meeting a flight that does not arrive on time. For those who wish to share vans, we will try to find folks arriving at the same time. Please make sure you provide us with your arrival information so we can do the match-making.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING: We will provide separate care for children ages 0 to 4 and a more structured program for children from 5 to 12 during scheduled activities from Wednesday evening through Saturday morning.

PAYMENT: All bills must be paid at least two weeks in advance.

ACCOMMODATIONS: There are a limited number of rooms available in air-conditioned suites. A suite consists of three double bedrooms, two bathrooms and a common area. Dorm rooms are double, non-air-conditioned; the bathrooms are down the hall. If children wish to sleep in the same room (dorm or suite) as their parents and if they bring their sleeping bags (no linens provided), they may pay for meals only (\$15 per day).

----- (Detach here) -----

Names: _____

Names and ages of children accompanying you: _____

Street Address: _____ City / State _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Arrival: _____ Departure: _____ # of Nights: _____ E-Mail: _____

Adult registration*	@ \$ 60.00	x adults	_____	= \$	_____
Teen registration (13-17)	@ \$ 35.00	x teens	_____	= \$	_____
Child 3-12 registration	@ \$ 20.00	x children	_____	= \$	_____
Registration family maximum	@ \$150.00			= \$	_____
Women's Alliance Luncheon	@ \$ 8.00	x persons	_____	= \$	_____
Suite: room & board double	@ \$ 43.00	x persons	_____	x nights	_____ = \$ _____
Suite: room & board single	@ \$ 47.00	x adult	_____	x nights	_____ = \$ _____
Dorm: room & board single & double	@ \$ 40.00	x children	_____	x nights	_____ = \$ _____
Late fee if mailed after May 15	@ \$ 20.00	x adults	_____		_____ = \$ _____

☐ All charges are in US dollars. All bills must be paid in full at least two weeks before convention. No registration refund after June 1. (You may pay by Visa or MasterCard.)

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Send Form with checks to: Central Office, The Swedenborgian Church, 11 Highland Avenue, Newtonville, MA 02460

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Why Know God?

(Continued from page 54)

spiritual experiences and inspirations must have some relationship with God the Creator. Swedenborg is clear that all religions have originated from the division in the Ancient Church. Therefore there is no reason to argue or mock the belief of other people in other religions. We Swedenborgians can find fragments of the truth in other religious traditions, and we can honor them as truths. God wants us to live together in harmony and peace rather than to fight and kill each other because of any difference.

2. The essence of the Creator is love; the most essential principle of human life should be to experience the power of love in family, community, country, and the whole world. Loving others is not a duty, but the most intrinsic and essential nature of humans, according to Swedenborg. We are created to love one another and God the Divine. And the very first step of practicing this part of our innate nature is to begin with loving people closest to us—family members, relatives, friends, etc.

3. Creation never ends, God's preservation of the created world is an eternal activity, but at the same time the birth of each individual is a new creation of a whole new world because a human mind resembles the whole created world.

The presence of God is the true reality of the world in which we are living now. Everything is renewed and recreated in every second. But the most marvelous thing that God does is to create the mind of each individual and lead them step by step to the point where each one can stand by itself. Humans are such amazing creatures because their bodies resemble the created world, and their minds resemble the Creator, the very God Himself.

Jun-Chol Lee is a fourth year student at SSR.



Nominating Committee Report

President: Rev. Ron Brugler (Canada)

Vice-President: . Chris Laitner (Michigan)

Secretary: Gloria Toot (Ohio)

Treasurer: Polly Baxter (Mid-Atlantic)

General Council: (2 lay, 1 minister)
..... Jim Erickson (Illinois)
..... Margaret Kraus (Kansas)
..... Rev. Lee Woofenden (Mass.)

Communications Support Unit (COMSU) (1)
..... Steve Koke (Pacific Coast)

Education Support Unit (EDSU) (1)
..... Bill Baxter (Mid-Atlantic)

Financial & Physical Resources Support Unit (FPRSU) (1)

Information Management Support Unit (IMSU) (1)
..... Jim Erickson (Illinois)
..... Robert Heinrich
(to fill out an unexpired term) (Pacific Coast)

Ministries Support Unit (MINSU) (2)
..... Rev. Paul Zacharias (Canada)
..... Mark Allen (Maine)

Nominating Committee (1)
(Two to be nominated, one to be elected)
..... Steve Thomas (Canada)
..... Martha Richardson (Maine)

Swedenborg School of Religion (SSR) (2)
..... Rev. Robert McCluskey (New York)
..... Bob Leas (Michigan)
..... Sue Burns
(to fill an unexpired term) (Illinois)

Committee on Admission to the Ministry (CAM) (2—1 lay, 1 minister)
..... Pat Tukos (Illinois)
..... Rev. Marlene Laughlin (Pacific Coast)

—Robert McCluskey, chair
Nominating Committee

(Note: The areas designated in parentheses refer to the nominees' affiliate Associations.)



Important Church Calendar Dates

Mar. 28-30	CAM Newton	Aug 24-27	MINSU TBA
Apr. 6-9	EDSU Temenos	Sep. 8-9	Wayfarers Chapel Board Palos Verdes, CA
Apr. 28-May 1	General Council/ SSR/CAM Joint Meeting Temenos	Sep 20-21	FPRSU Almont
May 5-6	Wayfarers Chapel Board Palos Verdes, CA	Sep 22-24	Cabinet Almont
May 17-19	COMSU Temenos	Sep. 26-28	SSR Board Newton
Jun. 25-Jul. 2	Convention 2000 Urbana U. Ohio	Oct 19-22	General Council Temenos

STAMPS: For Love, Money and Fun



*Trevor
Woofenden*

Collecting stamps is not actually one of my passions, but entertainment is, so I tend to find entertain-

ment value in just about everything. Even something as mundane as running our denomination's "Stamps for Missions" program, which basically involves opening up envelopes and dumping used stamps into plastic shopping bags.

Here are a few tidbits that have entertained me. Hope you enjoy them, too.

First is the variety of countries. Did you know that Central Office has received mail from not only the U.S. and Canada, but also France, New Zealand, Germany, Japan, Rumania, Korea, Guyana, and the Czech Republic? The Swedenborg Library in Boston mailed in several stamps from Lithuania. The Rev. Eric Allison, the church growth consultant, regularly sends in stamps from Mauritius (where he worked for a year or so in the '90s), The Czech Republic, Australia, and South Africa.

Noted Swedenborgian author Wilson Van Dusen has heard from folks in Thailand, Ireland, Japan, Italy, Egypt, New Zealand, and Sweden. Ella Holloway of Bethesda, Maryland corresponds with people from Singapore, Turkey, Germany, Russia, Hong Kong, Thailand, Kenya, and the Vatican. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Hill of Aiken, South Carolina have received communiques from Austria and Thailand. Janet Vernon of Long Beach, California gets mail from Germany and Australia. Adrienne Frank (bless her departed soul!) wrote constantly back and forth with her friends and relatives in Germany. Ruth Wagoner, who evidently works for the State Depart-

ment in Washington DC, quite frequently sends envelopes stuffed full of stamps from one country: Malawi. Never heard of it? I had to look it up. It's a small, narrow country, roughly the size (and even more roughly, the shape) of Tennessee, that's nestled around two sides of east central Africa's long, narrow Lake Nyasa, between Mozambique, Zambia, and Tanzania. Its capital is Lilongwe, located in the center of three "states." It is populated nearly exclusively by very poor, agricultural, Bantu-speaking black Africans who celebrate their 1964 independence day only two day after ours in the U.S., on July 6th. And its stamps are really beautiful.

Many people must be cleaning out their attics, too, because there have been a mighty lot of stamps from the 1940s, '50s, and '60s. Anyone remember when a letter cost two cents? How about six cents for air mail? And remember all those one-color stamps depicting important events of the '40s?

How the stamps arrive is more fun trivia. Both Doris Frances of Corpus Christi, Texas, and Mrs. H.S. Smailer of Wynnewood, Pennsylvania have sent their contributions in old check boxes wrapped in brown shopping bag paper, taped heavily at the ends to prevent breakage. Others have used boxes, too: some large, some small, usually heavy on the tape. One huge, unmarked box from California contained roughly two shopping bags of stamps! Others' packets have arrived bulging at the seams in recycled envelopes with just one small

piece of tape holding the flap down. Two of this kind the Post Office had

to put into an official letter-size plastic bag explaining that they "may have lost some or all of their contents." Ruth Wagoner's frequent offerings are always in those blue and red air mail envelopes that seal on the end. A few people routinely put the stamps in an inner envelope. Some even use a baggie. Some envelopes come packed to overflowing,

others with only a dozen or two in them. Surprisingly, in many envelopes the stamps are all face up!

Who sends in stamps is also live entertainment. Church groups first: Besides our Central Office and the Swedenborg Library, I've also received regular packages from *The Messenger*, *Our Daily Bread*, the Swedenborg Chapel in Cleveland, the Bridgewater, Mass. New Church, the New Church of Southwest Florida, and lots and lots and lots (thank you *very* much!) from the LaPorte, Indiana New Church. They must have the entire congregation saving stamps!

Individual stats provide subtle entertainment as well. Roughly 90% of submissions are from women, mostly women over 50. There are only seven men who have ever sent in stamps to date. (Come on, men!) And very few people of either gender under 40. (Get with the "Stamps for Missions" Program now, young people!) And about 75% of the bulk amassed is from regular contributors, who make up just over 20% of the donors. (YAY, the regulars!)

What somehow or other gets included along with the stamps is the most entertaining part. Regularly, return address stickers that are *not* the person who sent them somehow end up being included. I've gotten a few clippings: One from a minister of an article about child pornography and the insidiousness of evil spirits from a Swedenborgian perspective. A clipping from Ann Landers with the address of the Department of the Treasury's Financial

What somehow or other gets included along with the stamps is the most entertaining part.

Management Service. I hope someone isn't desperately searching their tax file for that address! A third clipping about an apple orchard planted by Johnny Appleseed being sold to developers in Leominster, Mass. (Chapman's "hometown"). Plus a cutout on how to play a

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STAMPS:

For Love, Money and Fun

(Continued from page 57)

card game called Hearts Uno.

Then there are the notes. Every once in a while I get a pink post-it saying something like: "Are you still the right person to send these to? I've been sending them for years and just want to know." A quick postcard (hope they send the stamp back!) takes care of that. I get regular inquiries about old stamp albums, First Day of Issue covers, etc. If you have a collection of any real value that you'd like to donate, please mark them "Stamps for Missions" and send them directly to the Central Office for appraisal and sale. I don't really deal with the valuable stuff.

Closely related, though, is the "old letters" question: I've got some really old letters in my attic. Do you want me to send you the whole envelope or just the stamps?" Stamp dealers who buy in bulk love seeing a wide variety of new and old, popular and rare stamps in what we bring in, so (unless they are very rare) treat stamps on old letters just like stamps on new letters: 1/4" margin and put them right into your pre-addressed "Stamps for Missions" envelope.

The Rev. Paul Zacharias included a short letter in which he suggested "having a box available at annual Convention sessions where Convention-goers could bring stamps. If everyone saved their stamps for a year and brought them along to convention, it would require a *large* box!" You go, Paul!

There are, of course, occasional chatty notes asking after my family. There's the classic variations on "Hi. How are ya?" And then there's the one I got married because of.

Ah yes. I remember that one.

After years, decades even, of being incommunicado, I find a note enclosed from a regular contributor whom I used to have a bit of a crush on in my early years. She says she's just wondering how I'm doing. Turns out she's had a bit of a crush on me, too! And Nancy Little and I just celebrated our first wedding anniversary last October. So thank you very much, "Stamps for Missions" program, for bringing us together.

And finally, the non-paper stuff I receive by accident is the most intriguing I have: A rather kitchy, small, round, swirly gold earring that I puzzled over for days (did it just fall off while tearing off stamps?); A two-inch strip of light blue tatting (that's very neat and evenly done, by the way); and my personal favorite: a small 3x5 ziplock plastic bag with three paper clips inside. These items occupy a place of honor in my office.

Now *that's* entertainment!

So send in those stamps, everyone! This job is FUN!

What the "Stamps for Missions" Program Is and How It Works

Started by the Rev. Leslie Marshal sometime in the thirties as a fundraiser for Convention's outreach committee, the Board of Missions, the "Stamps for Missions" program is simple: send in your used postage stamps; when there are enough collected, they get sold to a philately dealer; all the money goes to Convention's missionary efforts.

Please remember the following guidelines:

1. Try to leave no more than a 1/4" margin of paper around the stamp. Dealers buy the stamps by the pound and pay less if there's a lot of excess paper.

2. The stamps are soaked off the paper, so carefully cutting around the postmark is a waste of time,

too, and forces me to spend way too much time going through them, stamp by stamp, tearing off the extra.

3. Be sure, also, that you don't send any of the *back* of the envelope, for the same reason.

4. Discard any stamps that are torn, have tape on them, or are damaged in any way, as well. They are basically useless.

5. Put your carefully removed stamps in an envelope (or box) addressed to:

Stamps for Missions
P.O. Box 463

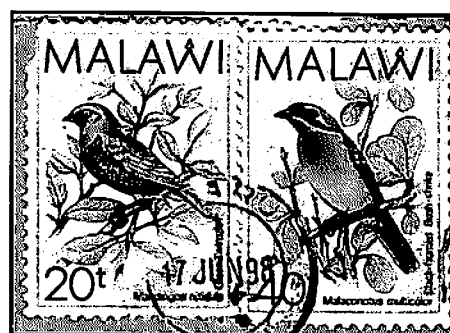
Haydenville, MA 01039 USA

Keep this envelope at your desk, mail table, or wherever you usually open your mail so that you just put stamps in conveniently by habit every day.

6. When it's full (or whenever you're ready), take it to the post office for postage, and mail it.

We'll do the rest, and you can feel good about doing a small piece to help make the world a better place. Thank you.

Trevor Woofenden is a trained and certified New Games Leader and Cooperative Play Specialist, professional stiltwalker and entertainer who does over 250 shows a year. He has been entertaining throughout the U.S. and Canada since 1973.



Angel Talk

Renee Billings

Every time we have a thought or affection that is loving and true, we receive "A-Mail" or "Angel Mail." God is talking with us daily through the angels of light in the heavenly realm. They whisper to us through our affections, and we are suddenly moved to feel what is beautiful, holy and just. They can come close to us when we choose to focus on love; "when we enter the state of love or heavenly affection, we enter an angelic state." (Swedenborg, *Arcana Coelestia*, 3827).

In my own life, I have felt and seen the presence of the Lord's messengers of love and peace when I have been in deep distress or someone I love has needed particular care and prayer. Only on a few occasions have my spiritual eyes been opened to witness the transcendent beauty and glory of the Lord's gentle helpers. I have seen and I have felt their presence, yet I cannot come close to explaining with words the full measure of the experiences.

My mother is the one who coined the phrase "A-Mail," referring to the reception of higher angelic thoughts given to us just when we need them the most. We are familiar with the reception of "e-mail" on our computer systems—and now we can add a new term to our everyday vocabulary. We can say, "A-Mail coming in! Thank you, Lord for sending me just the right angelic thought to help my day."

Attributing our higher thoughts to the Lord's realm and living in gratitude is an important part of growing spiritually. It gets us off of ourselves and into a humble rhythm that builds onto and affects all areas of our lives.

The sign of an angel is love. We can be at peace with the knowledge that we are always loved and never alone. They stay close, always eager to help, whether we believe in them or not. They are our link to the Lord and it is our choices for the good that put the Lord's will for us into action through them. So the next time you think of a good idea or solution for your life, shout out, "A-Mail comin' in!" and give your angels a wink of gratitude.

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

Reprinted from the Church of the Holy City January/February 2000 newsletter.



The Healing Tree

Rose Fry

Winter can sap the life out of anyone. The forlorn landscape causes hearts to contract, shrinking inward until it's safe to come out again. Broken branches, shriveled foliage, rasping dry winds, all discourage any hope of life, either in plants or in our own dispirited hearts.

One parish in Richmond, Virginia, devised a plan to counteract the drying and shrinking of hearts, to bring life back into broken relationships. Members of St. Edwards the Confessor developed a Lenten program designed to help parishioners rebuild and renew families as they prepared for Easter.

On Ash Wednesday, Liturgy Director Luci Majikas, along with a crew of volunteers, erected a bare tree in the sanctuary. The tree served as a reminder of both the barrenness of the landscape and the barrenness of souls who do nothing to repair abandoned, desolate relationships. It stood, alone and wintry at the front corner, each week an unbidden call to forgive, reach out, make amends.

Parishioners, then, were called to do one thing to "bring life" back to the tree. Actions such as making a phone call to an estranged relative, or wiping out a small debt, became "buds"—written on small cards and attached to the bare branches. Small children were encouraged to clean their rooms without being told or do what their parents ask the first time and then draw a symbol on the "leaf" cards. As Lent progressed toward Easter, the tree gradually bloomed with hundreds of dangling "leaves."

This simple program engaged people of all ages into action, which brought tremendous change to the lives of those who participated, young and old alike. Families took an extra moment after mass, filling out their "leaf" in the pews and then coming forward to place it on the healing tree. One card simply stated, "My wife and I gave up a twenty-five year hurt."

A retired mother took the risk of writing to her estranged adopted daughter, after ten years of no contact. To her joy, her daughter responded immediately. The mother flew to California and brought the whole family, grandchildren and all, back to Virginia. At Mass the following Sunday, she showed her daughter the tree that had sparked this new life for them.

Another family had arrived from Syracuse, New York, for a wedding grumbling and anxious about seeing "those people" again. Father Ron Ruth, the pastor, noticed their awkwardness with each other, a not uncommon occurrence when extended

families come together for an event. He mentioned the tree to them,

Each new leaf on the tree was another sign of courage, for those still struggling, to take a chance.

mentioned how challenging and courageous it is to let go of a hurt held onto for a long time and they listened. That night some of them stayed up all night talking, working out issues, having good conversations. They told Father Ron at the

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The Healing Tree *(Continued from page 59)*

wedding the next day, "We'll follow up on it back home."

Fr. Ron explained that the program merely helped people focus. He said that the Healing Tree, as it was called, gave a permission of sorts to those needing to make a change. It gave them a chance to role-play forgiveness by talking about it each Sunday. Each new leaf on the tree was another sign of courage for those still struggling to take a chance. And each new leaf brought life and closeness back to families who had somehow lost that connection.

In addition, Fr. Ron said that the ideas of a joy-based forgiveness tie into the ancient tradition of Lent to *act*: praying, fasting, alms giving, not its opposite: giving up something, not doing. "But if you're giving up a hurt, instead of chocolate, it brings you to a new level—reaching out to God and each other in a new way."

The tree itself resonated with its own power, according to Luci Majikas. "There was a grace around it that you couldn't avoid." The tree, a dogwood felled by the Christmas ice storm of 1998, carried a great load of symbolism. At the end of Lent, with vestiges of its cross-like blooms amongst the paper "buds," the tree was then burned in the Easter fire, becoming First Light for the parish.

As the Jubilee Year begins, the St. Edward parish community plans to work again at reconciliation during Lent, this time reaching for 2000 good deeds to adorn their Jubilee Tree.

Rose Fry is the music and liturgy assistant at St. Edward the Confessor Catholic Church in Richmond, Virginia.

How to "Grow" Your Own Tree

- Develop a theme for your tree—forgiveness, encouragement, praise, kindness, etc.
- Brainstorm to create a list of ways to bring life to your "kindness" or "praise" tree.
- Decide how and what will be attached to your tree:
 - Will you send the leaves home with each family?
 - Will you ask the faith formation classes to create leaves for the program?
 - Will you provide a basket of leaves for members to grab on their way in to church?
 - Will you provide a discreet way for shy or handicapped people to attach their leaves?
- Create a "station" at the entrance of your church where the program is explained and illustrated.
- Write a straightforward text, explaining the theme and how the program works.
- Design a flyer to include with your bulletin.
- Ask your pastor to speak from the pulpit about the program.
- Continue to provide new leaves to members.
- Continue to mention the program from the pulpit.
- Watch your tree bloom with the efforts of your whole parish to bring God's word alive. ☩

Hell Is not God's Punishment

(Continued from page 50)

the hereafter of everlasting bliss? And if I act or believe wrongly, will I be repaid with everlasting torment? One of the valuable secrets of life is that goodness is its own reward, and that evil is its own punishment. The 19th Psalm speaks of the precepts of God and says that "in keeping them there is great reward."

In the Gospels we find phrases like "great is your reward in heaven," and interestingly it is said that we should do right "hoping for nothing." And then it is added, "your reward shall be great." (Luke 6:35). Acting in a loving way has within it great reward. According to Swedenborg one of the greatest joys we can know is the joy in doing good without any hope of reward for ourselves. That joy is typical of heavenly life.

One who chooses a selfish life is already miserable even if not conscious of the misery (see Revelation 3 verse 17). If one persists in such choice after death, there is a self-centered life, and it is hell. Swedenborg says emphatically that there is no one literally "burning" in hell fire. Theologians today are saying that the fire is symbolic. While agreeing with that, I differ from those who say that hell is "separation from God." Yes, those in hell choose to turn away from the acknowledgement of God and the kind of life He offers. But it is impossible to be separated from God. The Psalm says that if we go to heaven God is there, and if we make our bed in hell, behold God is there! (139:8). God's love and mercy are still with us, even if we choose the foolishness of hell. ☩

And Another Voice Heard From...

A good clean-living pagan died and went to heaven. St. Peter met him at the door. "You can't come in," he said.

The pagan asked why.

"You're pagan, sorry. But hell isn't so bad. Your friends are there and they say it's cool."

The pagan is depressed but goes anyway because he was, well, pagan. So he goes to hell and is greeted by people picnicking and having a great time in a beautiful green field. A man in a white robe comes to him and presents himself as Satan.

"Wow" thinks the pagan, "Hell ain't so bad."

Suddenly, the sky gets black and fire spews from the ground. A screaming, flaming man falls from the sky and is swallowed by a crack in the earth.

After he disappears, everything returns to normal.

"What was that?" the pagan asks Satan.

Satan replies, "That was a Christian. They wouldn't have hell any other way."

—email joke from Kelly, the editor's daughter.

Children of the Light Praised

Dear Friends in *Messenger*,

I would like to share with the readers of *The Messenger* some of my joyful feelings after reading the book that I brought from Great Britain where I spent a very nice ten days in September 1999 while invited to the Ministers Seminar in Purley Chase. The name of the book is *Children of the Light—the Startling and Inspiring Truth about Children's Near-Death Experiences and How They Illumine the Beyond*, by Brad Steiger and Sherry Hansen Steiger (Penguin Books).

Many of you certainly read the well-known book written by Dr. Raymond Moody, *Life After Life*, a book about

TO THE EDITOR

near-death experiences. I recently found a new edition of it in one bookstore and was surprised to learn that many of my friends did not know that book, although they had heard about it. After reading it they found it inspiring.

Children of the Light is also on the topic of near-death experiences, this time of children. The book is full of very vivid and detailed real stories which resemble the contents of Swedenborg's books, mainly his *Heaven and Hell*.

I can see that these narrations from many children who survived their own physical death support very much our New Church teaching about the spiritual

world. People may be very well prepared for reading Swedenborg's books by reading this book (or similar ones, for example *Tunnel to Eternity—Swedenborgians look beyond the Near-Death Experience*, by Leon Rhodes, published by the Swedenborg Foundation).

I would also like to thank you for printing my request for help by a contributions of \$3 toward buying and running a computer for missionary purposes.

Sincerely,

Rev. Pavel Heger
75652 Zasova 193
Czech Republic
0602 937 533

The Rev. Pavel Heger was graduated from the Swedenborg School of Religion and ordained in 1994. He has a missionary ministry in the Czech Republic. ☩

The New Church Young Adult Connection

Want to know what's new for young adults? Want to read some great articles? Need some daily inspiration? Come check out the web page for the New Church Young Adult Connection! (Older adults will like it too!)

www.newchurch.org/youngadults

Also, we would like any address changes and email addresses of the young adults so we can keep them updated on what is going on. Please send them along.

Thanks!

The New Church Young Adult Connection
Joanne Kiel
PO Box 743
Bryn Athyn, PA 19009

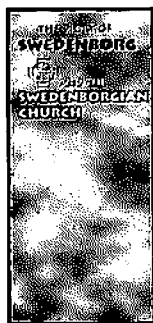
Email: jekiel@newchurch.edu or
youngadults@newchurch.edu



From J. Appleseed & Co.:

Popular Pamphlets Updated

Two pamphlets, "It's About Living: Swedenborgian Thought In Practice," and "The Story of Swedenborg and the Swedenborgian Church" have been updated and reissued by J. Appleseed & Co., under the auspices of the Communications Support Unit.



"It's About Living," by John L. Hitchcock, Ph.D., was first released in 1996 and was so popular that it was decided to upgrade its design—a new cover—and reissue it when the press run was exhausted. John Hitchcock is a physicist-astronomer who has been working in the field of science and spirituality for many years. He is the author of *Atoms, Snowflakes & God: The Convergence of Science and Religion*, *The Web of the Universe: Jung, the New Physics, and Human Spirituality*, and *Healing Our Worldview: The Unity of Science and Spirituality*, published this year by the Swedenborg Foundation (see review, p. 64).



"The Story of Swedenborg and the Swedenborgian Church," originally authored by Vicki Dixon in 1977, is in its fifth edition, edited by the Rev. Dr. James Lawrence, director of J. Appleseed. It is still the pamphlet most in demand from Convention's ministry. It has been updated in the third section (the church in the modern world) and the directory of our denomination's centers at the back. Both pamphlets are available in reasonable quantities free from Central Office (you pay for the shipping). ☩

Traveling Companion *(Continued from page 53)*

love, you feel God's presence, and you recognize that God is so abidingly present in all the little details of our living. An Emmaus experience is that quickening, that sudden reception of goodness, that breakthrough from mundane consciousness that there is a beautiful force alive and—and it is right here, in this moment, within one's very soul. It is in these times that we realize it was the Master who quietly slipped into the room and is giving from his essence the spiritual food of heavenly consciousness.

What are some of your Emmaus experiences? I have little ones all the time. Not very many days ago I was in a corner convenience store, and the clerk who handled my transaction was a middle-eastern woman in traditional garb. Nothing happened, except that her bearing and manner were so kind, and yet so unassuming—that my thoughts suddenly turned towards God, and I felt God's subtle presence—like a background hum that one can go day on end without noticing. It was so quietly beautiful, but very much a consciousness-raising experience at the same time—I saw suddenly a vision of the kind of soul that the Lord is attempting to build through us—that it immediately made me feel a wonderful though quiet joy, and I recognized it as the presence of the Lord, right there buying cough drops with me.

But of course, Emmaus experiences don't have to be small. They can be big, too. They can be whoppers. National Public Radio carried the story recently of the 25th anniversary of town meetings begun in Durham, North Carolina to integrate the schools there. A book has been published called *The Best of Enemies*, chronicling a rather impressive tale of how two people who hated one another became friends in a higher cause. At the time the courts mandated integration Durham decided to put together a set of meetings to try and negotiate

how they might go about the difficult task. Two leaders for each main faction were selected. Ann Atwater was selected to represent the black community. She was a low-income woman who had become very visible as a civil rights crusader in Durham, and she had a very confrontational style. C.P. Ellis was selected to represent the white community. He was a low-income worker who was president of the local Ku Klux Klan, and he was regarded as hot-tempered and fierce. He brought a machine gun to the first meeting, just in case. Ann Atwater recalls that she had never felt such venom and hate for any person in her life.

Real good set-up here. The first few meetings were little more than shouting matches, each side hurling epithets and making no progress at all. Ellis was aggressive and belligerent, and Atwater says that she felt that people were looking to her to counter anything he said with something stronger. But someone finally, after a few fruitless town meetings, reminded everybody that if the town couldn't come up with an acceptable strategy, the federal courts would dictate one. So Ann and C.P. decided to try something constructive: they would make a tour together of all the schools and analyze the various conditions throughout the town of Durham.

Gradually, visit after visit, their conversations became increasingly civilized. They would walk alongside one another, pointing out things, comparing notes. Ann came to the startling realization that the poorest white school had many of the same drawbacks as the black schools. C.P. could see that the conditions in the black schools were not conducive to learning, and they resembled some of the aspects of the poorest white schools that bothered him.

They began to agree on a lot of things. They slowly started feeling a solidarity toward the goal of having every school work well for its students, no matter where they came from or in

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Healing Our Worldview;

(Continued from page 64)

seem at first like irreconcilable opposites. We are likely to feel that we have to accept one or the other. But either one will lead to one-sided ideas and more problems. The side we develop will seem brilliant, falling together beautifully. Its opposite will fade into disrepute or be forgotten. In the war between classical physics, on the one hand, and spiritual belief, miracles, and God, on the other, we have the most dramatic example of this. Science and religion seem to fend each other off.

Quantum physics presents very frustrating small models of oppositeness—a photon, a particle of light familiar to classical physics, for example turns out to be a particle in some experiments, a wave in others. Yet neither one can be understood as a form of the other. It can also be in two places at once. Or two photons can fly off in opposite directions at the speed of light, and manipulating one will cause the other to instantly react without any way for the two to communicate with each other without passing information faster than light, a firm impossibility in ordinary physics.

Something that John does not mention is Bell's theorem, a fascinating argument for the idea that reality is not local. That is, it turns out that no model of an underlying local reality can

explain what happens in quantum physics. Hence, John Bell concluded, this deep reality is nonlocal; it involves things arbitrarily distant. It suggests that everything out to the farthest reaches of the universe may instantly "know" what is happening everywhere and instantly influence it.

Healing Our Worldview becomes in its later chapters a discussion of the inner path to wholeness, aided now by the scientific reality we are still struggling to understand and which reflects the same logic that defines the spiritual journey. There are no final answers here, and John says that there really are none, no final end points. There is instead a journey of immense beauty that leads endlessly onward and clarifies the presence of God more and more. Just as we have had to reject the purely mechanical universe, we find that we must also take a similar course in our own lives, rejecting purely intellectual searches. We are so made that love, a vital interest and involvement, teaches as ideas or intellect alone will not. For the passionate explorer, the truth opens up. As John puts it, "The universe sets problems for us that only love can solve."

Stephen Koke is chair of the Communications Support Unit and author of *Hidden Millennium*, published by the Swedenborg Foundation, 1998. ☒

Confirmations

Bush, Hight, Jaspari, Kidder, Sendak—Tanya Bush, Carl Hight, Marie Elana Jaspari, Sharon Kidder, and Jacqueline Sendak were confirmed February 6, 2000, into the membership of the Swedenborgian Church and the life of the El Cerrito Hillside Community Church in El Cerrito, California, the Rev. Ronald Brugler officiating.

Heuvel, McAlister, McDermott, Sanders—Gary Heuvel, Fiona McAlister, Jean McDermott, and Tracey and Darryl Sanders were confirmed into the membership of the Swedenborgian Church and the life of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario, February 13, 2000, the Rev. Ronald Brugler officiating.

Steinhiser—Lori Steinhiser was confirmed into the Swedenborgian faith and life of the LaPorte New Church in LaPorte, Indiana January 31, 2000, the Rev. Carl Yenetchi officiating.

Training Head, Heart, and Hands

(Continued from page 51)

teaching practical, life-centered, and far more memorable.

There are also courses specific to the practice of ministry that most lay people would not be interested in taking: church administration, pastoral care, public speaking, and so on. These courses might be limited to enrolled seminary students. Yet offering them in locations where the theory is being practiced would give many opportunities to make the theory practical. While learning principles of church administration, the students could be serving as junior members of the local church leadership teams. While studying pastoral care, the students could be doing home and hospital visits. While taking speech training, the students could be delivering sermons and offering classes and discussion groups of their own.

Instead of being consigned to dusty and forgotten memory files, the

Deaths

Cluett—Hector Cluett, 67, member of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario, entered the spiritual world January 4, 2000, following a brief illness. A memorial service was conducted January 11, 2000, conducted by the Rev. Paul Zacharias and lay leader John Maine. Hector is survived by his wife Shirley.

Drouin—Kathleen Drouin, 96, entered the spiritual world January 4, 2000, in Kitchener, Ontario. A graveside service was conducted January 7, 2000, the Rev. Paul Zacharias officiating. Kathleen was the granddaughter of the Rev. F.W. Tuerk, who was the longest-serving minister of the Church of the Good Shepherd, from 1860-1901.

Reed—Vellie M. Reed, 83, longtime member of the Fryeburg New Church in Fryeburg, Maine, entered the spiritual world February 2, 2000, at the Memorial Hospital in North Conway, New Hampshire. A graveside service is planned for later in the spring. Vellie is survived by two sons, two daughters, one brother and two sisters, and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.




Traveling Companion

(Continued from page 62)

which direction they called home. C.P. Ellis quit his membership and affiliation with the KKK, and Ann Atwater strengthened her ties of cooperation with the white community in Durham. And together, these two hatched the blueprint for a plan of integration that was accepted by the courts and probably worked as well as any throughout the south.

I would like to get the book and see if their faith had a greater role in building their relationship than the cursory mention of it on NPR suggested. Because it has some real earmarks of a journey to Emmaus. You know the kind: you're just walking along, doing your stuff, trying to do your best, trying perhaps a little harder and maybe starting to care a little bit more than you did last week or last month. And suddenly, something breaks through. There it is: God. And then it vanishes—until we are sufficiently prepared again.

The Rev. Dr. James F. Lawrence is co-pastor of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church and manager of J. Appleseed Press, our denominational publishing house.

Reprinted from a sermon given at the San Francisco church April 21, 1996, printed in the S.F.C. Newsletter. 

concepts offered in the students' small-group learning sessions with faculty members would be quickly committed to life. The students would be continually using their newfound insights in real ministerial service to the people of our local parishes and spiritual growth centers. This would also add to the life and strength of our church on the local level.

Conversely, by opening up our ministerial training process to church members and to the general public, we would attract more potential ministers and lay leaders into our training program. The resulting growth in our ministry would make us better able to serve the growing parishes and church centers that would result from the new synergy of seminary and parish.

This is a very sketchy blueprint of my Swedenborgian vision for SSR. An article or two does not provide enough space to develop it fully. Besides, I hope the new SSR will be the result of a synergy among

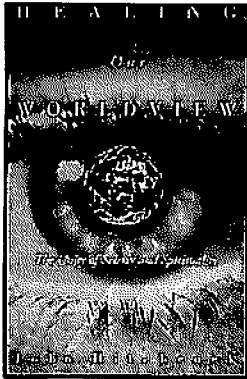
the many wonderful minds, hearts, and hands that form our denomination. Your visions, ideas, and experiences are a vital part of the new SSR!

This new model for our seminary would not fall into place automatically. It would take a lot of thought, a lot of planning, and a lot of hard work for years to come. And as with any new venture, we would run into our share of challenges and difficulties.

Yet if we follow our Swedenborgian faith toward a union of head, heart, and hands in a transformed SSR—one that integrates seminary and parish into a living, organic whole—I firmly believe that we will usher in a new phase of solid growth for our church, both in numbers and in spirit. We will be using the blueprint of our faith as we work with the Lord our God in building the New Jerusalem on this earth.

The Rev. Lee Woofenden is pastor of the Bridgewater, Mass. Swedenborgian Church. 

Healing Our Worldview; The Unity of Science and Spirituality



by John Hitchcock, Ph.D.

Published by the Swedenborg Foundation, 1999

Reviewed by
Stephen Koke

Many books have been written on the strange things that are now happening in physics. The old physics, "classical

physics," described the universe as a huge theater in which tiny particles rush around in obedience to strict laws of motion. There was no room for mind or spirit, except as a product, an "epiphenomenon," of the complex nervous systems that happened to arise from blind interactions and chance circumstances. That in turn had been a reaction against "superstition," a universe filled with willful gods and spirits, taught by ancient myths and popular beliefs. The willful universe wouldn't permit systematic explanation, and science had eventually to break away from the medieval mind and, in effect, exorcise anything of the kind from the universe. With that, however, went religion, pushed out by hard facts and the loss of any sense of the magic of things.

Now at least the magic is back. A deeper look at material reality, initiated by "quantum physics" in the early decades of the century, shows that there is plenty of room in it for mind and spirit. John Hitchcock's book recounts in considerable detail how it all happened and argues that matter is at bottom *not* rational—that is, not predictable nor in obedience to classical ideas that have even formed

the way the western mind thinks. This has been, and still is, hard to accept. My own reading shows that scientists are of several minds about quantum physics. Physicist Nick Herbert (*Quantum Reality; Beyond the New Physics*) describes eight different interpretations of its wildly playful descriptions of things. But although there are disagreements about theory, the math of quantum physics works very well in experimental work and is in common use.

But if the magic is back, what about religion? What makes John's book stand out is that it goes a lot further than most books on this subject by placing the story of modern physics in the company of pioneering non-physicists who found brilliant insights in ancient myth and the operations of the human spirit. It is one of the few books that tries to draw a picture of the driving forces of the new frontier, a frontier spiritual enough to be recognized by our own depths. These fundamental realities were described by such thinkers as Teilhard de Chardin (*The Phenomenon of Man*), Carl Jung, Søren Kierkegaard, and Emanuel Swedenborg.

Wholeness, we read, is what needs to be understood. But wholeness consists of two complementary values or entities, and they will

**Just as we have had to reject the
purely mechanical universe, we
find that we must also take a
similar course in our own lives,
rejecting purely intellectual
searches.**

(Continued on page 62)

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of North America
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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.