

THE MESSENGER

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June 2000

Updated Convention Website to Spur Church Growth

Bob Hinrichs

Emanuel Swedenborg chose to communicate and spread his powerful ideas and visions through the best public communication vehicle of his time: the printed word. He understood that the truth and value of the content of his works would cause them to spread and weave their way into the tapestry of human consciousness.

Indeed they have—and our church has done much to preserve and promote them. But the technology of communication has been thoroughly revolutionized since the 18th century. Means are now available to publish and to send, instantly and openly, any imaginable material to which our affections drive us. Some see this technological development as our attempt to approximate the spread of ideas in the spiritual realm!

Of course, we are talking about the Internet. What would Swedenborg have done if he had these capabilities in his day? Being a brilliant technologist, surely he would have taken full advantage of this gift.

IMSU (the Information Management Support Unit) convened at the Central Office the weekend of March 18th, 2000, to determine how our denomination will leverage the power of the Internet to fulfill Swedenborg's commission, and to extend our beloved community. As such, the website is not an IMSU project, but a project for the entire Church and its "orbit": our organizations, our ministers, our members, and the greater communities of people who interact with our church and its beliefs, such as scholars of religion, philosophy, and literature; ministers of other

denominations; spiritual seekers; and many others.

For this reason, the vision of the Swedenborgian Church website is simply an adaptation of our denomination's mission: "The Swedenborg.org website is a platform for 'fostering personal and ordained ministries which facilitate the spiritual well-being of people' by means of the Worldwide Web. It works by providing a useful resource for people who comprise and interact with the Swedenborgian Church."

Focusing on the major challenges currently facing our denomination, three main goals for the website emerged from IMSU's meeting:

1. Broaden public awareness of Swedenborg's work and ideas.

2. Increase participation in our local churches and centers, as well as in our denominational ministries and events.

3. Streamline communication and information-sharing within the Church.

These are ambitious and wide-ranging goals indeed, and IMSU has created a list of content and features that will accomplish them. We have also formed a plan and corresponding documentation for getting the project immediately underway and heading in the right direction. Success, however, will depend upon the full support and participation of us all.

There is not enough room here to describe all the features planned. To view the outline that emerged from our meeting, go to <http://www.swedenborg.org/webproject/docs/imsunotes2000-03-18.html>. When all the planned features of the website have been developed—a process we expect to take several years—it will include:

- Information on Swedenborg: his life and times, his writings, and his extensive influence right up to this day
- Inspirational material helpful to spiritual seekers
- Information from our numerous books and periodicals, and from our Archives
- Helpful pointers for those researching or learning about Swedenborg

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It is entirely appropriate that we as Swedenborgians make the best use we can of the Internet's powers, not just because it will help us to achieve our goals, but also because it is a medium by which the collective human consciousness is striving, before our very eyes, toward a more interconnected and spiritual state.

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President's Report

June 2000



Ron Brugler

It's difficult for me to believe it, but in just a few short weeks members of our denomination will be gathering in Urbana, Ohio for

the 176th Convention of the Swedenborgian Church! This will be an exciting time for us, as old friendships are renewed and new friendships take root. It will also be an important time for us as we share together the hopes and dreams that we have for our church as we move forward into this new millennium.

Our theme, "Building A City of God," seems so very significant for us at this time. It places before us the fact that we are about "doing" something in this organization. Drawing upon what our teachings tell us about the nature of the church, I want to remind us that we have a three-fold purpose. We are about helping our very lives to be a dwelling place of God. We are about doing what we can to make our local churches and centers true communities of God. We are about working together as a larger entity to reflect God's presence to the world. And as president of this church, I am pleased to share with you that in each of these areas God is helping us to accomplish many things.

This year I have had the pleasure of visiting seventeen of our churches and centers. One thing I have observed in each of them is that human lives are being touched by God's love. As one life is touched with that love, it influences others in significant and meaningful ways. And this is true, be it in San Francisco, or Washington D.C., or Ft. Myers, Boston, Pawnee Rock, or Puget Sound. This is growth of the REAL kind. And I thank God that it is so.

I am also pleased that on the national level, the Cabinet and General Council have been able to help us identify clear goals for our work. This is enabling our summer camps, youth retreats, and Transitions program to remain strong

and vibrant. This is leading to new and informative publications and an improved presence on the Internet that will help spread our message to the world. This is seeing Wayfarers Chapel construct the new Visitor's Center that will inform thousands of people each year of our teachings. This is helping our churches and centers to expand their programs and outreach efforts. And it is leading to a renewed presence of our church in the global arena, as relationships deepen with the British Conference and other New Church bodies in Africa and beyond. Yes, this City of God has grown a bit this year, and again I thank God that it is so.

But I must also state that we have our problems, too. One of the most pressing is the looming shortage of ministers that we face. At the present time, at least ten of our churches and centers are without even part-time pastoral leadership, and this number will increase with approaching retirements. Coupled with this is the fact that so few of our members are entering and completing the Lay Leadership Program. In regard to both of these we need to learn why this is the case, and this year I will work with the Council of Ministers toward this end.

Another difficult area involves our seminary and its future. I use the term "difficult" reluctantly, wanting only to convey that we all care deeply about our theological school. The SSR Board and faculty are to be commended for the work they have undertaken in this time of transition. This is a reminder to us that "Building a City of God" is not always easy, and we will truly have grown when we can thank God that this is so!

This brings me to the final point that I want to share with you. Every morning when I awake, I say a prayer of thanks to God for our church. In my mind I travel around North America, asking that God be with our churches and centers, members and ministers. I place before God the questions that I have been asked or the situations that have been brought to my attention. And always, without fail, a feeling comes over me that God is helping to build this city that we call the Swedenborgian Church. With this

feeling present within me, each morning I thank God that it is so!

CHURCHES/CENTERS VISITED:

San Francisco
El Cerrito (five people confirmed)
St. Louis
Bridgewater
Elmwood
San Diego, and the Pacific Coast Association Meeting
Wayfarers Chapel
Pawnee Rock
Edmonton
New York
Stone House Spiritual Growth Center
Ft. Myers
Boston
Cambridge
Temenos
Cleveland
Newtonville

IN ADDITION, ATTENDED:

Almont New Church Assembly
Two joint General Council/SSR meetings
Wayfarers Chapel Board meetings (three)
Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit meetings

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Town & Country
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Patte LeVan, Editor

Editorial Address:

The Messenger

P.O. Box 985

Julian, CA 92036

TEL: (760) 765-2915

FAX: (760) 765-0218

E-MAIL: Messenger@Jinet.com

Business & Subscription Address:

Central Office
11 Highland Ave.
Newtonville, MA 02460

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Love, Wisdom, and Uses in Field Education

Wilma Wake

Lee Woofenden's article, "Training Head, Heart, and Hands for Ministry: A Swedenborgian Vision for SSR," provides many fruitful ideas for discussion about future directions of The Swedenborg School of Religion. I don't want to try to envision the future SSR; I trust the Board of Trustees to work out the model. But, I'd like to take a few of Lee's ideas that apply directly to field education and look at how Swedenborgian spirituality is at the heart of our field education program, and how we can deepen this theological connection.

Lee says that "we have tried the old intellectual, academic model of theological education, and found it wanting." (*Messenger*, April, 2000) I disagree with this point of Lee's; I think in many ways we have yet to try working in partnership with other seminaries to share with them our rich Swedenborgian heritage and experience their larger context. I would call this a spiritual/academic/reflection model of theological education. In this model, field education is part of a much larger context of academic learning within a spiritual context with reflection utilized at all points of the process.

I do very much value the Swedenborgian theology Lee brings into his article, although I may envision its application in somewhat different ways. What Lee and I agree on is the importance of Swedenborgian theology undergirding our field education program. Let me look at a basic Swedenborgian principle and suggest how, for me, it points to a field education program well integrated with the academic and spiritual life of the student.

Lee says, "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." (*Messenger*, April, 2000) I think this is a great Swedenborgian statement! Swedenborg taught us the importance of love, wisdom, and uses working together in the life of faith. I think it's extremely important for our field education students to have the opportunity to experience field education in this way. A student ministry experience should bring one's classroom learning into the real world of hands-on ministry as well as touch one's deepest spiritual places.

This past year, I've had the privilege to participate in a course at Andover Newton Theological School: "Leadership Development in the Context of Field Education

Practicum." With a co-leader, I've led a theological reflection practicum of students doing field education at ANTS, Harvard Divinity School, and SSR. We have had deep discussions every week that have involved reflection on what the students are experiencing in their field sites, how it integrates with what they have learned in their classes, and what is happening in their spiritual lives. They come to see every incident of ministry as an opportunity for reflection on God's role in their lives and in their ministry. The smallest incident can be unpacked to lead students to insights and their personal relationship to God, with their theological assumptions about ministry, and wisdom to understand how to continue a faithful ministry. Sharing in a small group that is interdenominational prepares students for ministry in an ecumenical world.

While the students were learning to do theological reflection together in small groups, their supervisors were meeting in small groups to reflect together on the experience of supervision. Those who were first-time supervisors took the year-long course at ANTS on the Ministry of Supervision.

Lay people in each site supported the student by forming a Training Parish Committee that was taught skills in theological reflection by the seminary. SSR has adopted this conceptual model, but given our small size, sharing the process with another seminary enriches it for all of us.

I see this kind of field education experience as one that engages a student's head, hands, and heart. It is within the context of a larger seminary support structure that allows for flexible, creative field education and also provides the supervision and training of the seminary faculty.

I don't know what the ideal model of the future SSR is, or exactly what our field education program of the future will be. But we do know that our theology of love, wisdom, and uses needs to be at the heart of whatever field education program is implemented. I think we have been attempting to do this at SSR, but there is so much more we need to do in moving in this direction! I think one of the things we need to do better is to define the Swedenborgian theological grounding of field education in a way that brings the student's head and heart more fully to the experience. I think we need to look more deeply at our theology to help students understand what in their Swedenborgian heritage inspires their ministry. I can see

I think one of the things we need to do better is to define the Swedenborgian theological grounding of field education in a way that brings the student's head and heart more fully to the experience.

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Updated Convention Website to Spur Church Growth

(Continued from cover)

- Information on the denomination: history, organizational polity, and its various ministries and programs
- Information on the local churches, including ministries, events, services and offerings, and ways to get involved
- Forms to enable people to subscribe to our publications, order books, and make donations to the ministries of our church
- Electronic forums for the ongoing ministries and projects within Convention

Immediate plans for development will begin with finding a hosting company for the site, creating a design that will contain expansion and give the site a professional look, and converting much of the current website to the new model and design. The first major new addition will be a greatly enhanced Church Directory.

As you can see, this is a project that will involve the entire Church. It is entirely appropriate that we as Swedenborgians make the best use we can of the Internet's powers, not just because it will help us to achieve our goals, but also because it is a medium by which the collective human consciousness is striving, before our very eyes, toward a more interconnected and spiritual state.

If you have an idea of how you can assist in this project, please email Bob Hinrichs at hinrichs@islco.com. If you would like to make a financial contribution to the project, please earmark it for "IMSU Internet Development" and send it to: The Swedenborgian Church, 11 Highland Ave., Newtonville, MA 02460.

For more information on this project, including meeting notes, project plans, this article, and other materials relating to the project in progress, go to <http://www.swedenborg.org/webproject>.

Robert Hinrichs is an active member of the San Francisco church and the chief technology officer of one of San Francisco's leading Internet technology companies. He puts together websites, including the one that advertises the San Francisco church. He is a nominee for the Information Management Support Unit.



Fathers Day

When I was five, my biological father committed suicide. It left me feeling as though I'd done something wrong; that if I had been better somehow, maybe he'd have stayed around. My mother remarried shortly thereafter, and this man was my dad until I was nineteen. I called him Dad and used his name all through school. But, when he and my mother divorced, he just walked away. Once again, I wondered what was wrong with me that I couldn't keep a father.

Mother remarried again, and Bob was a wonderful, kind man. I was twenty now and no longer living at home, but I felt a great love and attachment for him. A few years later my mother was diagnosed with cancer and was not given long to live. Shortly before she died, Bob came over to my house alone one day. We talked about a lot of things, and then he told me that he wanted me to know that he'd always be there for me, even after Mother was gone. Then he asked if he could adopt me.

I could hardly believe my ears. Tears streamed down my face. He wanted me—me! This man had no obligation to me, but he was reaching out from his heart, and I accepted. During the adoption proceedings, the judge commented on all the undesirable duties of his profession and then with a tear in his eye, thanked us for brightening his day as he pronounced us father and daughter. I was twenty-five, but I was his little girl.

Three short years later, Bob, too, was diagnosed with cancer and was gone within the year. At first I was hurt and angry at God for taking this father away too. But eventually the love and acceptance that I felt from Dad came through again, and I became, once more, grateful for the years we had.

On Father's Day I always reflect on what I've learned about fatherhood. I've learned that it is not dependent on biology or even on raising a child. Fatherhood is a matter of the heart. Bob's gift from the heart will warm my soul for eternity.

By Sherry Lynn Blake Jensen Miller
from *A 5th Portion of Chicken Soup for the Soul*
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Love, Wisdom, and Uses In Field Education

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deeper work in Swedenborgian theology specifically as it relates to ministry and field work. I think Lee's article is helping us to define what is unique about our theology that we take into ministry.

I think we can do more to inspire students to examine their own spiritual lives in the context of whatever call they feel for ministry. Swedenborg is rich in how to live a regenerating life, yet we Swedenborgians are often shy when sharing with each other how we are doing this. I think there is more we can do to inspire students with living a Swedenborgian spirituality in their everyday lives, be they lay or ordained.

I particularly want to lift up the

community process of sharing our ideas with each other about how our theology can be brought more vividly into the lives of our field education students. Let's please continue the conversation!

The Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake is Director of Field Education at the Swedenborg School of Religion. She is author of Wings and Roots: The New Age and Emanuel Swedenborg in Dialog (J. Appleseed Press) and Crystals, Crosses and Chakras: A Woman's Mystical Emergence.



THE TIME HAS COME . . . for the Congregations of the General Convention to Retake Control of their Theological School:

An Open Letter to Swedenborgians

from Eugene Taylor

Fellow parishioners, ministers of the congregations, officers and delegates to Convention, and friends of the Cambridge Swedenborg Chapel:

I am writing with deep concern for the direction in which our venerable institution, the Swedenborg School of Religion, is now heading. The present direction is marked by few students, a part-time faculty, ever-increasing expenditures, loss of a permanent physical campus, no weekly meetings of the spiritual community, non-Swedenborgian influence over the direction of the School, a vision statement unguided by the ordained ministerial arm of Convention, and a set of policies dismissive of the real needs of the individual congregations. This continuing situation should be a concern of all Swedenborgians.

In brief, I am primarily concerned about three things:

1) I am deeply concerned about the proposed intellectual direction of the ministerial program. Recently, through a series of articles in *The Messenger* the president and others have made known their ideas for the future direction of SSR. An at-a-distance ministerial training program is contemplated, a move to California is proposed, and a strong alliance with New Age teachings of transpersonal psychology is also advocated. There is no effort to recruit scholars in Swedenborgian studies for the future faculty of the caliber of a George Dole, a William Woofenden, or a Robert Kirven. With the exception of a few very distinguished examples among the younger ministers, there is no effort to train Swedenborgian ministers to the

TO THE EDITOR

intellectual caliber of SSR faculty in the past. There appears to be no comprehension of the historic nature of SSR as an intellectual force in New England, and no attempt to attract scholars in Swedenborgian studies from elsewhere. In fact, this deficit has been exacerbated by a total dismantling, engineered by the present administration, of the finest library devoted to Swedenborgian thought in New England, and a loss of access to area scholars of invaluable Swedenborgian archives. Instead, courses in Asian religions are being taught in the curriculum by faculty with no formal training in the language or texts of these traditions, and the perception of Swedenborgianism as a cult is being reinforced by the constant comparison of Swedenborg's ideas to the New Age.

2) I am deeply concerned over the weakening and eventual elimination of oversight that Convention formerly had over the School's operation. I think all would agree that the church is defined by its members and that the backbone of membership in the General Convention is the congregations, followed in importance by the Council of Ministers. The General Convention itself is made up of delegates to the Convention from the congregations, guided by elected officials, while SSR is charged with training ministers to meet the needs of the congregations.

Instead, however, the Trustees of SSR have declared themselves an independent body, they have created a non-marketable M.A. degree program in Swedenborgian Studies when they should have strengthened the School's curriculum to offer the M. Div.—the traditional degree of ordained ministers. They have done this by dissolving the previous Board of Managers, which gave Convention oversight, and the Board of

Directors, which handled the instruction and finances. Now, we have a group of Trustees, not all of whom are Swedenborgians, and a current president and a president-elect who also are not Swedenborgians, all advocating a mail-order church devoted to New Age teachings that intends to continue its deficits in a climate of ever-increasing, and I should say self-righteous, indifference toward the congregations.

3) I am deeply concerned over the financial management of the School's assets. Over the past decade we have seen chronic deficits over \$150,000 per year, a situation that would not be tolerated from executive management in a private corporation. On top of this, during the interval from 1990–1998, a period for which we have comparable expense figures for the School, total expenses amounted to \$3,978,000. The 1999 *Journal* lists nine ministers who were ordained over that same interval for an average expense per minister listed of \$442,000. We cherish every blessed one of those who have been ordained. We only ask, "at whose expense?" and, "to whom do we turn for a prudent accounting?"

In addition, we have seen the slow deterioration of the property in Newton until recently, when we have seen the complete liquidation of the physical campus altogether. We have also witnessed a most unenlightened stewardship of the Cambridge Swedenborg Chapel, with complete disregard for the spiritual combat SSR had made toward preserving the physical plant for the sake of both our missions, irrespective of whether SSR does or does not choose to make use of the property. Instead, enlightened stewardship has been replaced with a fanciful belief that the Cambridge Society has been a sufficient cause of SSR's financial woes which can be cured by selling the Cambridge property for commercial development rather than retaining it for continued use as a church by an active Swedenborgian congregation.

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The Antidote: Take Back Our Theological School

TO THE EDITOR

The antidote to these problems, I believe, is simple. I believe it is now time for the congregations, through their delegates, officers, and ministers in the General Convention, to retake control of their theological school. To accomplish this, I strongly urge the reinstatement of the two reciprocal bodies, the Board of Managers and the Board of Directors. This can be done by a simple vote on the Convention floor to emend the by-laws of SSR by substitution, reinstating the by-laws of 1985. I would also like to call for a detailed financial accounting of SSR's operations over the past fifteen years, done by an independent accounting firm that would report back to the Convention officers, who would then report back to the congregations. Only in this way can the air be cleared and the proper historical relation of SSR to Convention and the congregations be restored.

*Respectfully submitted,
Eugene Taylor, Ph.D*

*Vice-president of the Church Council
Cambridge Society of the New Jerusalem*

Response to Open Letter

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the issues raised by Eugene Taylor in his "Open Letter to Swedenborgians." A year ago, when a similar letter was distributed during convention about SSR and Cambridge, the Trustees decided not to enter into negative rhetoric and refute the misinformation that was being spread. We tried the high road. But much of the misinformation still haunts us as we continue to try to work out negotiations with Cambridge. We are getting nowhere after a year of court mandated mediation. In March I went to Boston from Kansas to attend a Screening Conference that had been requested by the Massachusetts

Courts. The purpose of the conference was to try to keep the lawsuit, which Cambridge brought against the School, from going to trial. Representatives from the Cambridge Society did not even attend. They sent their lawyer, but he was given no authority to negotiate. The Harvard lawyer was there because Cambridge also brought suit against Harvard. The facilitator sat in disbelief asking where the plaintiffs were. We could not even set up a time for further mediation. The high road has led us to a dead end.

It is hard to know where to start with the many inaccuracies and misleading statements in the "Open Letter." I will address the ones that bother me the most.

1. The Board of Trustees and faculty have been working for over two years to form the new vision for the School. Last October a first draft was published in *The Messenger*. Individual trustees called every church and center in the US and Canada asking for input in this vision. The president of the Cambridge Society, Lars Wiberg, stated that he thought the vision statement was very good. We talked to 80% of the ministers directly; five serve on our Board. We know there are problems with the current mode of operation of the School, and that is what we are trying to change with everyone's help; but how is this "a vision statement unguided by the ordained ministerial arm of Convention"?

2. The Board of Trustees recently appropriated over \$60,000 for next year to house, organize, and catalogue the Swedenborgian library and archives. We have hired a top-notch librarian to oversee the process. This is all done at the expense of the School, and we accept our responsibility and financial obligation to keep this collection for the good of Convention. This is hardly a "dis-mantling of the finest library . . ." and a "loss of access to area scholars."

3. Our Board of Trustees is made up of representatives from churches and centers throughout the US and Canada. We have one "non-Swedenborgian" trustee

who also is Dean of the Auburn Theological Seminary in New York. He is well respected in the ecumenical community, and his insight to the Board has been invaluable. Half of the trustees are elected by the Corporation members, and half are elected by Convention delegates. The president of Convention and the president of the School also serve as trustees. This is hardly a "weakening and eventual elimination of oversight that Convention formerly had."

4. We have had 12 graduates enter the ordained ministry since 1995. During that time, two lay leaders were also trained and consecrated, one Certificate in Swedenborgian Studies was awarded, and seven of the 12 ordained graduates chose to pursue and receive the MA in Swedenborgian Studies. Yes, I will agree, it costs a lot to prepare a few. That is one of the pitfalls that a small organization has to face when trying to offer the full curriculum to prepare ministers for service and meet the various other needs of our members. That is why the trustees are currently looking at ways to affiliate with a larger institution to share expenses and offer a more diverse curriculum. It is time to reach out from our base instead of pulling in on ourselves. We have so much to offer the greater ecumenical world. And, again my opinion, this is what Emanuel Swedenborg intended. I think he would rebel against judging anyone's abilities to lead our school, or serve on the Board of Trustees, based on whether that person is "Swedenborgian."

5. An outside firm audits our books yearly, and a full report is given to the Board of Trustees and to the Corporation. Much work has been done to trim expenses. There is just not enough income from our endowment to meet the expenses. We could raise the tuition, but that would just transfer the burden onto the denomination through the augmentation funding given to students. That is one of the major reasons the Board decided to sell 48 Sargent Street and, reluctantly, the Chapel. The Board of Trustees has been trying to work out an equitable arrangement with the Cambridge Society for over 10 years, but it cannot do it alone.

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TO THE EDITOR

(Continued from page 86)

I have tried to be as forth-right as possible with the information presented. This response represents our view.

Jane Siebert

*Chair, SSR Board of Trustees;
member, Investment Committee
of General Convention;
secretary, Pretty Prairie New
Jerusalem Church*

More Fun with Stamps

Open Letter to Trevor Woofenden

Dear Trevor,

I really enjoyed reading your entertaining and informative article, "Stamps for Love, Money, and Fun," about the Stamps for Missions program (April 2000 *Messenger*). At the New York New Church, we reprinted your article as a hand-out distributed on Easter Sunday along with our liturgy, and made an announcement to remind folks to save stamps from their Easter mail. Your creative way of writing about the adventures of running this program has really helped us to promote it. Many thanks for your work over the years on "Stamps for Missions," (and congratulations to you and Nancy Little on the recent marriage it has brought you)!

With all best regards,
Mona Conner,
New York



Thank You

The Messenger and the Communications Support Unit wish to thank these individuals and groups for subscriptions and donations to *The Messenger* from January 1, 1999 through May 1, 2000. We are most grateful for your enthusiastic support. We hope no contributor has been omitted from this list, but if your name is not here and should be, please let us know.

Isbell A. Behrer
Fairview, North Carolina

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Bay Village, Ohio

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Long Beach, California

Gloryann & J.C. Webb
Amenia, New York

Craig Weigel
LaPorte, Indiana

Ray & Olive Wong
San Francisco, California

Dorothy Young
S. Easton, Massachusetts

Spring Transitions Retreat

Michelle Huffman and Kurt Fekete

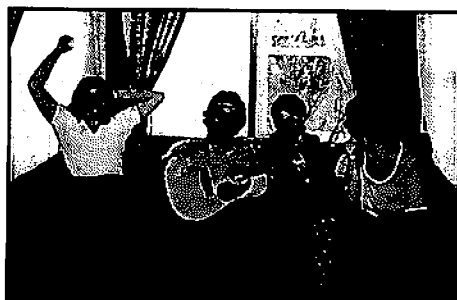
The spring Transitions retreat was held March 31 to April 2, 2000, at Almont New Church Assembly in Almont, Michigan. The retreat was facilitated by the Rev. Kit Billings and attended by 25 people, including many new faces. Through open discussions, group breakouts, lectures and creative activities, we explored our topic: "Swedenborg's Theological Psychology," the marriage of psychology and spirituality in regeneration. We discovered how to recognize input from heavenly and hellish sources and better understand how they influence and control our lives. We learned that acknowledging our emotions and examining our own psychology plays a critical part in the realization of our heavenly manifestation. Other activities included a campfire and singalong, work projects, games, and lots of outdoors time.

This was our first retreat since our special planning session in the fall, where we redefined our purpose, organizational structure, and future path. We also redefined our mission, which is as follows: Our

Mission is to explore, discuss and learn about our theology and spiritual paths, to foster the development of leaguers as they move into adulthood, and to support people of all ages in times of change and life transitions.



Group on Pfister porch: (left to right) first row: Heather Fick, Kelly Hamilton; Second row: Missy Sommer, Michelle Huffman, Arianne Halle, Peter Little; Third row: Jesse Bellen, Jason Leusing, Beth Oelker, Amy Little; Fourth row: Jenn Tafel, Betsy Lau, Jon Huffman, Kit Billings, Sage Currie, Jeff Oelker, Chris Hamilton, J.B. Boza, Katie Shelley, and Brian Zook.



On the couch in Pfister Lounge: (left to right) Heather Fick, Chris Hamilton, Amy Little, and Sage Currie.

**Next Fall:
Transitions
Retreat will be
at Temenos
Retreat Center
on Halloween
Weekend.**



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28

7:00-8:30 am
Breakfast
9:00-10:30 am
General Council - meets
with COM
10:30 am
Break - coffee for 50 served
outside of meeting rooms
10:45-12:00 pm
General Council
12:00-1:00 pm
Lunch
1:30-2:30 pm
General Council
3:00-4:00 pm
Business Session #1
Required items for opening
COM Report
4:00 pm
Break
4:15-5:15 pm
Sunday School Association
5:00-6:30 pm
Dinner
7:00-7:30 pm
Opening Worship
Celebration
7:30-7:45 pm
Welcomes-UU President,
Mayor, etc.
8:00-9:00 pm
Theme Presentation:
Panel Speakers: the Revs.
Erni Martin, George Dole,
Dorothea Harvey, Paul
Zacharias
9:00 pm
President's Reception

THURSDAY, JUNE 29

7:00-8:00 am
Breakfast
8:45-9:00 am
Opening Worship
9:00-9:45 am
Group Discussions on the
Theme Presentation
9:45-10:15 am
Feedback on group
discussions
10:15-10:30 am
Break
10:30-11:45 am
Business Session #2
President's Report
Vice President's Report
Secretary's Report
Treasurer's Report
General Council Report
Announcements
12:00-1:00 pm
Lunch

12:00-2:00 pm
Women's Alliance Luncheon
2:15-3:30 pm
Mini-courses
3:30 pm
Break
3:45-5:15 pm
Business Session #3
Report of Nominating
Committee
Nominations from the
Floor
Council of Minister's
Report
David Lomax - British
Conference
Support Unit Reports
Presentation by UU 30 to 40
minutes
Announcements
5:30-6:30 pm
Dinner
6:30 pm
Rehearsal: SSR Graduation
7:30 pm
SSR Graduation
9:00 pm
SSR Reception

FRIDAY, JUNE 30

7:00-8:00 am
Breakfast
8:30-9:00 am
Communion Service
9:00-10:15 am
Mini-courses
10:15-10:30 am
Break
10:30-11:45 am
Business Session #4
Credentials Committee
Report
Elections
Bylaw Change
National Council of
Churches Report
Swedenborg Foundation
Report
J Appleseed & Company
Report
Hospitality Committee
Report
Elections (if necessary)
Announcements
12:00-1:00 pm
Lunch
1:30-2:45 pm
Business Session #5
Presentation by Bill Jones
Elections (if necessary)
Various Reports

(Continued on page 89)

(Continued from page 88)

2:45-3:15 pm
Women's Alliance Presentation
3:15-3:30 pm
Break
3:30-5:00 pm
SSR Corporation Meeting
5:30-6:30 pm
Dinner
7:30-9:00 pm
UU Play - Anniversary Celebration
9:00 pm
UU Reception

SATURDAY, JULY 1

7:00-8:00 am
Breakfast
8:30-9:00 am
Worship Service (SCYL)
10:15-10:30 am
Break
9:00-11:45 am
Business Session #5
Elections (if necessary)
Youth League Report
Sunday School Association Report
National Church Trustees Report
Social Action and Concerns Committee Report
Unfinished Business
New Business
12:00-1:00 pm
Lunch (sign up for box lunches??)
Afternoon-On Site Activities and Field Trips
1:30-5:00 pm
General Council (with mid-afternoon break)
5:00-6:00 pm
Dinner
7:30 pm
Ordination Service
9:00 pm
Reception
10:00 pm
Rockin' in The Hub DEADSU (drop everything and dance support unit)

SUNDAY, JULY 2

7:00-8:00 am
Breakfast
9:00-10:30 am
Worship



Editor's Note: the following is a report from a regular attendee at the annual weekend retreat sponsored in Orange, California, by the Pacific Coast Association. This year it took place the last week-end in February, from Friday through Sunday. Dr. Perry Martin, who leads the yearly retreats as well as a number of workshops at Temenos, is a Swedenborgian and psychotherapist with a private practice in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

Coming Home to Yourself: Body, Mind, and Spirit

Mariah Gerowitz

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And to know the place for the first time*
—T.S. Eliot*

The above lines from T.S. Eliot's "Little Gidding" have been running through my mind since I returned from the weekend in Orange with Perry Martin. It was quoted by Perry as an introduction to our inner work that we launch during this time together, and to me it describes what happens in these retreats better than I can. We do, indeed, again arrive where we started and really know the place for the first time.

I began coming to these wonderful weekends at the beautiful, peaceful, (and *quiet*) Center for Spiritual Development about twelve years ago and have attended yearly since. The retreat is sponsored by the Swedenborgian Church's Pacific Coast Association, but it is open to anyone who wishes to attend. It is a high point to which I look forward all year long. We come together, dear old friends and new, and I always come away feeling more love and compassion for them and for myself, more humility as I become aware of their courage and strength, more appreciation for the beauty and love, and more understanding and acceptance of the terror and grief in the lives we are given. I am more able to 'Laugh all my laughter and cry all my tears...' All this comes through the skill,

courage, and compassionate wisdom of Perry, who leads us down our many pathways using music, poetry, art, drama, and yes, "Look Ma, I'm dancin'!" We share and learn new ways of dealing with the sorrows of the present and of healing the trauma of the past.

I was especially blessed this year with the joy of bringing my wise and beautiful daughter to the group. She is planning to come again next year. She is not the only younger person to attend and I'm sure there will be others.

Perry read another of my favorite poems later in the week, and I think it sums up well what happens here:

*maggie and molly and milly and may
went down to the beach
(to play one day)
and maggie discovered
a shell that sang so sweetly
she couldn't remember her troubles,
and milly befriended a stranded star
whose rays five languid fingers were;
and molly was chased
by a horrible thing
which raced sideways
while blowing bubbles; and
may came home with
a smooth round stone
as small as a world and as big as alone
for whatever we lose
(like a you or a me)
it's always ourselves we find in the sea.*
—e.e. cummings*

*From *The New Oxford Book of American Verse*, chosen and edited by Richard Ellman, Oxford University Press, New York.



A Dove at the Window: Living Dreams and Spiritual Experiences

With passages from the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg

Edited by Vera P. Glenn
ISBN 0-9659164-2-1d
230 pages, paperback, \$12.95
Fountain Publishing

Why we chose to publish *A Dove at the Window*

Karin A. Childs

Though I had always been fascinated by stories of near-death experiences and angelic visitations, after my eight-year-old daughter died in 1991, I became positively hungry for such stories. I sought them out almost desperately, finding in them both comfort and an outlet for tears. Why this hunger? As a lifetime Swedenborgian, I needed no convincing that there is an afterlife. I needed no reassurance that my daughter was fine and well and very happy. What did I need?

You know what I found in these stories? Reassurance that the Lord and the angels cared about my pain. Reassurance that there was a loving connection between the spiritual and natural worlds. At a time of great crisis, intellectual knowledge often isn't enough. Evil spirits induce all kinds of doubt, and one's beliefs are sorely tested. I believed in the afterlife, but did I believe that the Lord was there for me as I suffered the wrenching pain of losing my young daughter? Did I believe that people's spirits could dwell near each other between the worlds, when I saw no evidence with my eyes?

As I read stories of comfort and reassurance other people had received through dreams and spiritual experiences, I became more open to recognizing the comfort that my Heavenly Father was sending to me. I came to recognize evidence of my daughter's continuing love for us. My reading of familiar passages in Swedenborg's writings was warmed and confirmed by examples I had read about and was beginning to see in my own life.

For me, this brought new beauty to the passages of the writings.

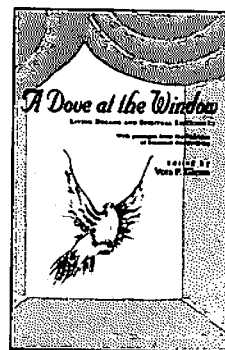
When my husband Jon and I became aware of Vera Glenn's project, in which she was seeking out the stories of New Church people about "living dreams and spiritual experiences," we were just putting together the effort that we have called Fountain Publishing. We were excited to learn of Vera's project which, at the time, she was contemplating publishing herself.

After some discussion, Jon and I clearly saw how perfect a project this was for Fountain Publishing, because our young company was born from a wish to emphasize the beauty of Swedenborg's writings through artistic and affectional means. Vera was taking people's touching accounts of God-given communication between the spiritual and natural worlds and coupling them with beautiful passages from the writings. The combination added a power to both the stories and the quoted passages which was warm, compelling, and uplifting.

Presentations by Vera on the subject of "living dreams and spiritual experiences," as well as reactions from readers both in the New Church and outside of it, have proved that the subject matter contained in *A Dove at the Window* can reach the heart in a unique and lovely way. As the Rev. Grant R. Schnarr (author of *Return to the Promised Land* and *Spiritual Recovery*) testifies on the back cover, this book is indeed "a beautiful book for the soul."

Vera Glenn is also author of the recently published Swedenborg Foundation title, *Heaven in a Wildflower*.

A Dove at the Window can be purchased on Amazon.com, special ordered from your local bookstore, or ordered directly from Fountain Publishing. Send \$12.95 plus \$2.13 S&H to:
Fountain Publishing, P.O. Box 80011
Rochester, MI 48308-0011
(www.fountainpublishing.com)



Edited By
Vera P. Glenn

Reviewed by
Claudia C.
Gladish

Vera Glenn told us, "The idea for this book first saw the

public light of day in the pages of *Theta Alpha Journal*, and most of the people who contributed were *Journal* readers." I had been looking forward to reading this book because I'm interested in spiritual dreams and experiences. The tag line on the cover states that the book is a collection of "living dreams and spiritual experiences." I have had many such experiences, yet there's been a squeamish response by some in the New Church when I and others sought to share.

Looking forward to reading the dreams and experiences, I noted that there were seven sections to this book: after the death of a spouse, after the death of a child, after the death of family members, after the death of friends, the miracle of death, guardian angels, and spiritual communication.

I noted that Vera's editorial comments were full of doctrinal interpretation. As I read, I began to understand the editor's framework of doctrine as support and explanation of the dreams and experiences. I was struck with the selection of doctrinal quotes on the left-hand pages that correlated so well with the stories on the right side. This format offers reassurance to those who might be squeamish about the subject.

At first the extent of editorialized Swedenborgian beliefs reminded me of many memorial services that have peeved my grieving heart, where half the reading and reflection material is doctrinal in nature and comes across as a sermon. Now that I'm old, I've re-thought this practice.

(Continued on page 95)

**Honoring the Ones
We Love: Calvin
and Celestine
"Sally" Harnden**

Patricia Swett

The following was presented in our March 16th Sunday morning worship service as our children's talk, with Cal and Sally having been asked to help. As they sat unsuspectingly in two chairs surrounded by the children of the church, the following was read by Patti:

First I want to thank Calvin and Sally for being part of our presentation this morning. Today we are going to be talking about some of the lessons that we have heard about in our Sunday school classes. These things all have an impact on how we live our lives from day to day.

Remember how God wants us all to be good people and to love one another as He has loved us? It makes us feel good inside when we do good things for others. This can be done in many ways as we go about our lives. When we feel good about doing good things for others it also makes God very happy with us. Some of these things may be helping friends with something or just being good to them and letting them know that you are there to be their friend.

We need to remember that we don't always get paid for being good and helping others, but we can have a happy heart just knowing we have made someone else feel better about himself. Can you think of something that you have done to love and help someone that you know? (The kids gathered around offered things they could remember like sharing, giving hugs, and helping with chores.)

We have now reached the point in our discussion that will involve Calvin and Sally. Very appropriately I think, I have titled this "Our Angels."

Calvin and Sally Harnden have been angels to someone most of their lives. Calvin lived on the original Harnden homestead in East Fryeburg (first established in the early 1800s) and helped with the family farm. Sally lived next door with her foster parents. Her foster mom became ill and Sally, at an

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From All Over

early age, had to do the family cooking, household chores, and take care of the other children when they got sick.

With their busy lives at school and at home Calvin and Sally had very little time to do much socializing. So when the time came, they took the commandment "to love thy neighbor" very seriously, and they soon became Mr. and Mrs. Calvin and Sally Harnden! They raised three children, Dean, Nancy, and Susan. Their children were their lives. They were always friends and great parents to their children, grandchildren, and now their great-grandchildren.

Having moved off the farm and into the city, they lived in Portland, Maine, for a while, then returned to East Fryeburg.

Calvin's mother became ill, and Sally spent many years taking care of her. Calvin was on the road as a truck driver, but kept close touch with what was happening at home while he was away. Not only are they friends to the members of their own family, but to all that they may have come in contact with. Sally is always baking and sending care packages to grandchildren or anyone else that she feels may be in need of a kind thought. Last Thanksgiving, Sally, with the help of Calvin doing many of the chores, baked twenty-five pies and many other goodies. These were all given away to neighbors and friends. Together they spend many hours doing work for the Boosters Club at the Fryeburg Academy.

They are both longtime members of the Fryeburg New Church, and there is rarely a community or church project that the Harndens do not help with. Sally has been a volunteer secretary for twenty-three years and through the tenures of at least five different ministers! To understand something of her character, you might want to know that it was taken by Sally as an insult when it was suggested that she should get paid for her services. Sally has also taught the

primary Sunday school class for the same twenty-three years. It is hard to find an adult or child who has been in Sunday school who does not know and love "Mrs. Sally." And then, come

Fryeburg Fair time, they are both there to do their part. Calvin arrives at church between 5:30 and 6:00 in the morning to cut vegetables with 'his ladies.' Sally goes to the booth at the same time each morning to get ready for the breakfast rush. And she keeps right on top of the toast and the hash browns! Later in the day, Calvin is often found in the back of the booth quietly washing the pots and pans. Looking at all of this, I think that we have a pair of angels that together for many years have been doing work for God on earth.

Calvin and Sally, we could not begin to pay you for all that you have done for your church and your community. Please accept this very small token of our appreciation as the Fryeburg New Church family presents to you a five-day bus tour for two to the Amish Country in Pennsylvania. This will include the tour to the Amish farmland and historic Gettysburg as well as the spectacular production of "Noah," and much more. We love you both and thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

(This was met with a standing ovation from the congregation.)

Submitted by the Rev. Ken Turley, pastor of the Fryeburg New Church.

NEW YORK

The New York Swedenborgian Church sponsored a spring lecture series, "Growing the Soul," which began April 25 and continued every Tuesday evening through May 23:

April 25: The Enneagram and Spiritual Regeneration

by Dr. John Brighton

May 2: Transcendental Meditation

by Harry Martinian

(Continued on page 92)

NEW YORK

(Continued from page 91)

May 9: Dreams and the Inner Life:
Swedenborg's Dreams as
Transforming Process
by Allen Flagg

May 16: Infant Massage
by Christine Brighton

May 23: Swedenborg's Contribution to
the New Age
by Rev. Robert McCluskey

The series has been well attended to date.

MASSACHUSETTS

The Massachusetts Association of the New Jerusalem hosted a very successful Visioning and Planning Retreat at Blairhaven, March 25, facilitated by the Rev. Dan Hotchkiss. The attendance of about thirty people, representing all seven churches in the Association, went far beyond their expectations. A planning committee has

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been formed to continue the work begun at the workshop.


A Memorial Day Youth Retreat is planned for May 26-29 at Blairhaven. The topic is "The Law." Discussions will be centered around divine and human laws, when to obey human law, and when civil disobedience and conscientious objection are called for.

The Bridgewater Church hosted the Northeastern University Spring Reading Program throughout the month of April. The program helps children and teens improve their reading abilities.

CLEVELAND

Verda Winter, wedding coordinator at the Cleveland church, has compiled some amusing wedding anecdotes. She

says, "During the past five years we have done many weddings and had a number of interesting experiences: There was the time when the bride arrived at the chapel about an hour and a half late. No one had any idea what had happened. All the guests were there; the groom was going berserk imagining what was going on. Finally she appeared. We later learned that on leaving her grandmother's house, fully dressed for the wedding that rainy day, she slipped and fell on the muddy sidewalk. So she did what any woman would have done—she went shopping!

There was a wedding when all the men wore tux shorts and sandals. Even the groom's mom wore dressy shorts. Then there was the wedding when the groom and bride went out of the chapel with water guns blazing away. Their guests were also armed with water guns of one kind or another. We discovered later that this was a tradition in the groom's family. Any time the family was together, their water guns were there, fully loaded. 

Dealing With the Elephants

Sometimes there are issues so large and intimidating that we treat them like "elephants in the living room." We walk around them, try to ignore them, and hope they will eventually go away. Unfortunately, they rarely do.

In any organization, regardless of size, conflicts are bound to arise. This is especially true when major changes are taking place. General Council has struggled in recent years to balance its budget and equitably allocate resources. The Swedenborg School of Religion (SSR) is in massive change, with difficult decisions ahead concerning location, academic structure, and the funding necessary to make expected changes. Each has its particular concerns and responsibilities. Often caught in between these are the faculty and administration of SSR, and the Committee on Admission into the Ministry (CAM).

When communication breaks down, already existing differences can quickly become "elephants in the living room."

The weekend of April 30-May 1, Temenos Retreat Center hosted the second joint meeting of representatives from General Council, the SSR Board, the faculty and administration of SSR, and CAM, to take on some of these elephants.*


Under the expert guidance of psychotherapist and mediator Lorraine Sando, each group was encouraged to express its hopes and expectations, as well as concerns and frustrations. Through a series of exercises and encounters, the participants worked toward, among other things, a sense of increased mutual understanding, role clarification, realization of complementary goals, a recognition of interdependence, and more open and appropriate communication.

In recognizing the challenges to be faced, one of the most corrosive issues is the ongoing conflict between SSR and the Cambridge Society, which is affecting the church as a whole. Other concerns include the current state of

enrollment at SSR, communication vs. confidentiality issues between the faculty and CAM, and general concerns such as rumors, poor communication, mistrust and indifference, old wounds and angers, inflexibility, and perceived personal agendas.

It would be a truly amazing world if all problems and conflicts could be easily and neatly resolved in a two day meeting. However, this participant felt that a much greater sense of hope and trust is growing as a result of this process, and a feeling that if those in leadership continue to openly, honestly, and appropriately work with each other in an atmosphere of love and respect, the church as a whole can move forward in great strides.

*Reported by Duane Beougher,
General Council member.*

*Participants were: SSR Board: Jane Siebert, Rachel Rivers, Eric Allison, Barbara Tourangeau. General Council: Margaret Kraus, Polly Baxter, Duane Beougher, Ron Brugler. SSR Faculty: George Dole and Ted Klein. CAM: Paul Martin. 

SWEDENBORG SIGHTINGS

Commonplace Book

Kitsy Winthrop

One should not just live one's life, or spend one's life, or go through one's life but celebrate one's life... Whether the days are filled with bliss or mourning, one can learn to live each day as a special feast day. "As soon as people stop celebrating, they really do not live anymore; they are being lived." Maria Von Trapp wrote those words. They were among the first I placed in my "commonplace book," my "looseleaf bible." Do you keep such a book, filled with wisdom from the minds and souls of others as well as your own discoveries? My book—started by me in 1982—has an angel on the cover. It is never hidden from view; I never know when I might need it fast for a soulfood pick-me-up. It has yet to fail me. Invariably I find just what I need to get back on track when I am feeling scattered, blue, or on the verge of despairing about myself or this beautiful world.

Oh, yes! My "commonplace book" also includes excerpts from Hebrew and Christian scripture. I am even beginning to add some words of wisdom by Emanuel Swedenborg.

The Rev. Kitsy Winthrop is the interim minister at the Portland Swedenborgian Church.

Reprinted from the Portland Church's March Newsletter.



Don Rose

I have just learned of the existence of a nice little book called *Johnny Appleseed, Fact and Fable* by Frieda Gates. It was published in 1998 by Mercury Press Fellowship Community, 241 Hungry Hollow Rd., Chestnut Ridge NY 10977. Swedenborg gets attention on pages 34 and 35.

The Myth Makers, by Rolland Hein, is published by Cornerstone Press, Chicago, 1998. Page 78 speaks of one of George Macdonald's fondest ideas derived in his life from the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg—that "in heaven the angels keep growing younger." Occasionally people wonder if C.S. Lewis was influenced by Swedenborg, and the answer seems to be that MacDonald was mentor to Lewis (see "The MacDonald Connection," *New Church Life* 1991, p. 130.) Cornerstone has come out with a 1999 edition of Hein's *The Harmony Within*. On page 67: "Swedenborg seems to be the fountainhead of some of Macdonald's ideas with some influence probably by Blake and Law." (see also p. 196).

Julian Duckworth of Australia has sent a shiny gold calendar of Themes and Daily Readings from Swedenborg.

The March/April issue of *Poets and Writers Magazine* has a piece on Robert Frost. Frost's mother, Isabelle Moodie, was a "devout follower of Swedenborg, the 17th century mystic, and she believed—like her guru—in the presence of a vast spiritual world that underlies, that cushions and buoys up, the physical world."

The 1999 book, *Complete Idiots Guide to Angels*, by Dr. Jay Stephenson, published by Alpha Books, mentions Swedenborg on page 11 as a "notable philosopher." On page 46 Swedenborg is noted as having angels evolve from the spirit of human beings. Page 267 gives us a section on Swedenborg and does a good job explaining ruling loves and three heavens.

William Dean Howells is said to have been "the most influential literary critic of his day."

This is on page 81 of the March issue of *Harpers* magazine which prints an article by Howell, written in 1920, the year of his death. On page 84, Howells speaks of remembering "as those newly arrived spirits do in the life to come, when their inner memories are explored for the things which have dropped into their outer memories and been comfortably forgotten."

This is certainly from Swedenborg, and I wonder what a reader would think of it who did not know that.

On page 86 he remembers as a child that he met elderly Quakers and also "one old gentleman who visited us was of our small sect and perhaps came for the comfort of the little-friended doctrine which we shared with him."

The little-friended doctrine has got to be from Swedenborg, because on page 81, Howells speaks of "the wise and kind doctrine of Swedenborg which I had been taught from my earliest years..."

Since 1920, the wise and kind doctrine has found more friends, and the Swedenborg Foundation has played a key part in that.

The Rev. Don Rose is assistant pastor of the Bryn Athyn Cathedral in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, and a life member of the Swedenborg Foundation.



Skeletons—Out of the Closet and All in the Family

Connon Barclay

An old friend recently told me about a most extraordinary happening in his life. He was returning to church after a long absence due to a painful and personal trauma. Feeling nervous and embarrassed, he said it would have been easier to simply stay home, but he felt sorely in need of his church environment, and he couldn't avoid attending. He recalled that handling the various emotions was no problem during the service, but feared that the coffee hour fellowship after the service would prove to be difficult.

Settling for a half cup of coffee, he silently headed for a worn old chair, trying to blend unobtrusively into the happy gathering. Suddenly, a neatly dressed lady who appeared to be in her eighties sat next to him in a straight-back chair and addressed him by his first and middle name. "Listen to this," she said. "Keep drinking your coffee and

stare straight ahead." He did as he was told.

Then the lady identified herself as a friend of his parents as well as his grandparents. Without allowing time for him to express his appreciation of her graciousness and apparent gesture of acceptance, her voice crisply took him on a trip around the room—as she identified nearly every person and proceeded to inform him of their personal or family "skeletons." Amazingly, she knew everything, and the brief stories she told seemed to relieve his own personal burden of shame and embarrassment. He said the kind lady didn't hesitate to include several problems in her own past.

"What I learned," he said, "was that we had a very interesting group of church members who had exhibited or been involved in just about every weakness or failure of mankind. Probably not much different from any other honest and open congregation."

He will never forget this great Christian lady departing from his side that unique Sunday saying, "God forgives. We love you, and you are absolutely no different from any of us—so we'd better see you next and every Sunday." And she did.

When we again discussed the lady, he mentioned that she seemed so wise for having only an eighth grade education. I reminded him of what Albert Barnes, an American clergyman, said in the early 1800s: "It does not require great learning to be a Christian and be convinced of the truth of the Bible. It requires only an honest heart and a willingness to obey God."

Connon Barclay's work first appeared in the October 1999 Messenger with his story, "Are We Any Closer Together?" He lives in Holland, Michigan.



THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH - STATISTICS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 1999										
Associations	Churches		Ordained ministers			Authorized Lay Leaders	Members			Number of delegates
	active	inactive	active	inactive	retired		active	inactive	total	
Canada	1	0	1	0	1	1	145	78	223	16
Connecticut	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	2
Illinois	6	0	5	1	0	0	125	77	202	14
Kansas	2	0	0	0	1	0	104	0	104	12
Maine	3	0	3	0	0	0	138	158	296	15
Massachusetts	5	2	9	3	1	0	187	35	222	20
Michigan	2	0	1	0	0	0	71	13	84	9
*Middle Atlantic	3	0	4	0	0	0	110	63	173	13
New York	2	0	1	0	0	0	58	31	89	7
Ohio	3	2	1	0	0	1	61	29	90	8
Pacific Coast	7	0	8	2	4	1	266	11	277	28
*Southeast	2	0	3	0	0	0	61	11	72	8
Western Canada	6	0	0	1	3	0	150	50	200	17
Bayside	1	0	0	0	0	0	16	5	21	3
*Guyana	1	0	0	0	1	0	57	13	70	7
*figures for 12/31/98. 1999 figures not reported in time for publication										
Totals	44	4	36	7	11	3	1551	575	2126	179

MARRIAGES

Reddekopp/Patterson—E. Wayne Reddekopp and Therese Martin Patterson were united in marriage April 2, 2000, in Peachtree City, Georgia. Wayne is the son of the Rev. Erwin and Lisa Reddekopp of Kelowna, B.C. Canada.

Williams/Reddekopp—Sharon (Slough) Reddekopp and Alan C. Williams were united in marriage April 20, 2000, in Cleveland, Tennessee. Sharon is the daughter of the Rev. Erwin and Lisa Reddekopp of Kelowna, B.C. Canada.

DEATH

Ball—Cassius C. (Cash) Ball, 85, longtime active member and treasurer of the Los Angeles Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world April 17, 2000, in Ventura, California. He was born in 1915 on Block Island, Rhode Island, where his family had resided since 1661. He flew 36 missions over Europe during WWII, earning the Medal of Honor, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Bronze Star as a member of the 452nd Bomb Group based in England. He worked for 42 years in federal service as an engineer at the Naval ships Missile Systems Engineering Station in Ventura, retiring in 1980. He is held in loving memory by his son Pete Ball of San Francisco; daughters Nancy Ball of Kingston,

Washington, and Alice Good of Durango, Colorado; his wife of 43 years Margaret (Marge Calby) Ball, and three grandchildren. He will be greatly missed by the Los Angeles Society, the Pacific Coast Association and many other members of the Church who knew him over the years.

A memorial service will be conducted at the Baptist church on Block Island in June; a brief memorial service will be held June 4 at Wayfarers Chapel in Palos Verdes.



Oops, Big-Time

The May *Messenger's* front page story was the Rev. Deborah Winter's very moving and sensitive piece, "Grand-mama and Thoughts on Mothers Day." Her byline was supposed to be under her photo, but, unfortunately, it somehow got dropped and we failed to pick it up in proofing. We also neglected to provide a bio line at the end of the article. Our profound apologies to the author and to puzzled new *Messenger* readers who don't know Deborah! She is a Swedenborgian minister who is a full-time children and family therapist at the House Next Door in DeLand, Florida, and is a member of the Committee on Admission to the Ministry.

A Dove at the Window

(Continued from page 90)

Maybe hearing the information again is a comfort. And maybe that's exactly what the doctrinal quotes and editorials offer in *A Dove at the Window*. For those unfamiliar with those doctrines, there is comfort in understanding. For those of us not unfamiliar, there is comfort in the intelligent restating of the known. So I am left comforted with the doctrinal recap and touched by the appropriateness of the quotes from Swedenborg's writings.

The author presented the doctrines about heaven and hell and conjugal love as editorial commentary. Doctrines presented practically and understandably fit my picture of how women are more apt to apply doctrine rather than think it to death. I pondered Vera's purpose in writing and editing this book as I read. Not only is it a fascinating collection of dreams, visitations from loved ones, and experiences from the spiritual world, but it is also a very clear evangelization tool. It opens new space for spiritual experiences to be shared and understood. It offers a new place to be heard.

From the *Theta Alpha Journal*



President's Report

(Continued from page 82)

Cambridge/SSR Mediation Hearing in Boston
Cabinet
General Council
Investment Committee meeting
Three SSR Trustee meetings,
plus three Site Selection meetings
Committee On Admission to the Ministry
Seminar at the New Church College in Manchester, England
Council of Ministers Executive Committee meetings
Ministry Support Unit meetings
Placement Committee Work
Convention Planning meeting

—Rev. Ronald Brugler, president
the Swedenborgian Church.



Important Church Calendar Dates

May 17-19	COMSU Temenos	Sep. 22-24	Cabinet Almont
Jun. 25-Jul. 2	Convention 2000 Urbana U., Ohio	Sep. 26-28	SSR Board Newton
Sep. 8-9	Wayfarers Chapel Board Palos Verdes, CA	Oct. 20-22	General Council Temenos
Sep. 14-17	MINSU Washington, DC	Oct. 26-27	SSR Board
Sep. 20-21	FPRSU Almont	Nov. 4	Investment Committee Newton

Crystals, Crosses and Chakras: *A Woman's Mystical Emergence*

by Wilma Wake

Chrysalis Books, West Chester, Pennsylvania, 2000

Reviewed by Perry S. Martin

I would never reach for a book titled *Crystals, Crosses, and Chakras*. I am not interested in crystal magic, the cross does not speak my language, and I already know more about chakras than I have put into practice. But the subtitle, *A Woman's Mystical Emergence*, places a call into a wavelength I can recognize. Still, if I didn't know Wilma Wake, and if editor Patte LeVan had not asked me for a review, I would not have opened the pages of this compelling story.

Simplicity, honesty, and a direct reporting of the author's experience keep the reader through what may be alien territory. The humanness of the story—a woman moving through life's disappointments with some kind of faith that she will find spiritual meaning in her life—saves the reader from getting bogged down in her traditional religious vocabulary.

Although our theology rests on Swedenborg's reports of his own mystical journeys, the Swedenborgian church for many years has discouraged even the discussion of ordinary persons' mystical experiences. So it is gratifying to read that Dr. Wake found in our church a community that could help her make meaning of the mystical feelings and messages that came to her unbidden. Her keen intellect was able to sort through the New Age offerings and to ground her strange experiences in the understanding that Swedenborg presents.

Swedenborgians tend to denigrate the human body as unimportant, like a glove for the spiritual hand. Wake shows how an understanding of the ancient system of energy, known generally as chakras, which operate in our bodies, correspond to the stages of growth that Swedenborg describes. This recognition is important in a time when research-

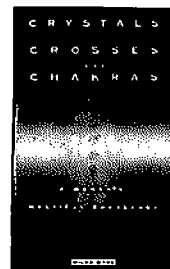
ers are finally showing that our bodies are the containers of our emotions and how those feelings affect our minds and our spiritual, as well as physical, well-being.

Granted that the experiences of spirit are never able to be fully described in words, my wish is that Wake could have moved further away from the traditional language of religion. That voice within her, which she describes so well as "speaking" not through words, but rather through feelings, she addresses as "Lord." Her use of that patriarchal term "Lord" may wall off her story from those present day mystics who consider the God-force not as he, she, it, or they, but as Divine Love and Wisdom which penetrate our earthly lives. Writing of "evils," "sins," and "charity" may lose those very readers who could best resonate to her mystical journey.

There were rich references to ancient and contemporary mystical writings. Some of the most precious tidbits of insight that go far beyond old religious phrases: "I am beginning to understand," she writes, "what it is You are calling me to do. You are calling me to be." The recognition that selfishness is not a defect of character or intent, but rather the consequence of our fear, is an understanding that could change the way we chastise ourselves and judge others, helping us to explore the depths beneath the surface where we are so often content to stay. Too long we Swedenborgians have tried to learn and teach our doctrines through memory or rational thinking, so that we lose the connection with how we make our life choices and wander through our daily tasks. Wilma Wake reminds us that beliefs which come from the heart resonate in our lives.

To order, call: 1-800-355-3222.

Perry S. Martin, Ph.D., is a psychotherapist practicing at Temenos, the Swedenborgian Retreat Center in West Chester, Pennsylvania.



The Swedenborgian Church
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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.