

# THE MESSENGER

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September 2000

## Building the City of God



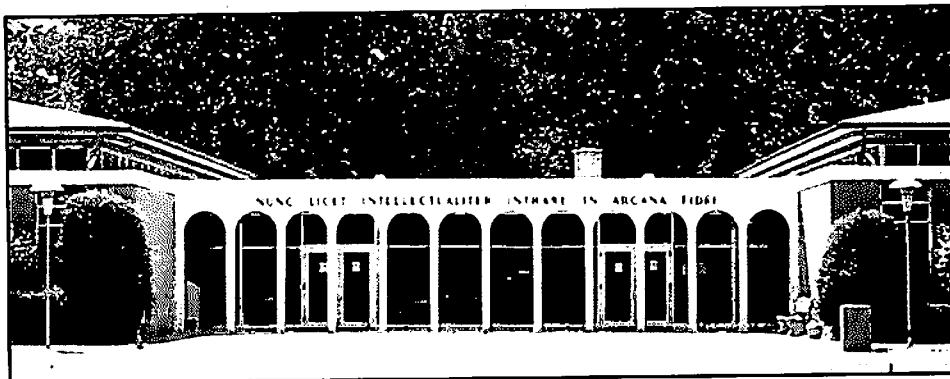
Paul Martin

### Images

We spent time at both the Cabinet and General Council meetings last year talking about the need for vision in our church, for

“where there is no vision, the people perish.” We have a common vision as a Church, and it is of the descent of the Holy City New Jerusalem. We call our denomination the “General Convention of the New Jerusalem,” and many of our societies call themselves the “Church of the New Jerusalem” or the “Church of the Holy City.” Our denomination’s purpose states, in part, that we are “working for the Lord in bringing in the New Age—the descent of the Holy City, New Jerusalem.” New Jerusalem, the only two biblical references being in Revelation, is a focal point, giving our church meaning, identity, inspiration, and vision.

Today, I want to explore several images we have of that vision. First, in the Old Testament, the City of God is understood in very concrete (or stone, wood, and whatever else they used for building materials in those days) terms. The people thought God needed a place to dwell, hence the Ark and later the building of the Temple. Perhaps God did not need a place to dwell so much as the people needed a physical location to help them image God’s presence with them. It was very important where the



176th Convention of the Swedenborgian Church, Urbana University, June 28–July 2, 2000.

Temple was built, because people had to travel to Jerusalem for holy days to worship in the Temple. References to the Holy City in the Bible, until Revelation, generally refer to Jerusalem.

In Revelation, the image of the descent of the Holy City New Jerusalem is clearly (at least to most of us) spiritual, rather than physical. One image of it is that it is a description of heaven, the spiritual world. Another image, embraced by Swedenborgians, is that it is heaven on earth. A third spiritual image is that it is our own inner spiritual life, which is consistent with the correspondence of the Holy Land, an image that predated Jerusalem and the Temple.

Swedenborg also said the Holy City New Jerusalem is the New Church, hence our identification with it. Although this image may seem quite distinct from the others, it is actually very consistent with them. The term “New Church” clearly (at least to most of us) refers to a spiritual state, to the presence of God, and this incorporates all the different images, because God is present in each of them.

We often refer to ourselves as the “New Church,” although we are aware that it actually includes people of many different religions who are open to God’s love and truth and live a life

accordingly. We even pride ourselves on our ecumenism and remember fondly Swedenborg’s statement about the world’s religions being like so many jewels in a king’s crown. David Spangler was at a conference several years ago, and a group was talking about the familiar image of the different spiritual traditions being like different paths all leading up the same mountain. Richard Baker, who at the time was the Roshi at the Zen Center in San Francisco, remarked that it was more like they were many different paths that all end in the forest. David was so struck by the image that he is calling his advanced training “spiritual rangers.”

There are several things I like about the image. One is that the idea is not to reach the mountaintop or arrive at the Holy City. There is not a destination to reach or a goal to attain. Instead, we must learn the skills necessary to navigate through life. We must learn who our allies and helpers are, and where the dangers lie. We must learn how to maintain our good cheer and naturally loving nature when we are threatened or hurt. Only if we are comfortable with our environment can we focus on helping others.

Another aspect to the forest image is

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# Convention Highlights

The first highlight on arriving in Urbana on Monday evening was a delayed encounter with the cold front Kevin Baxter promised was on its way when we registered. There was a brief downpour, after which the humidity returned with a vengeance. Was that it, I wondered? Cold fronts in the Midwest are tricky; they can come and go while you're busy adjusting the blinds, and I was concerned that we might miss it. If you're actually going to conduct a Cold Front Vigil, it's best to go outside and head for high ground and face the east, or northeast, since that's where most cold fronts come from. A small shift may consist of one degree temperature drop and a light breeze, but it can be cause for excitement here in the summer, especially on a Monday night when there's little in the way of entertainment.

The humidity lifted by morning, and several of us who had come in early went canoeing down the Mad River for three hours on Tuesday afternoon. Han Sik Kim, Young Min Kim's Korean friend, came with us. Susan Poole was helping him build an English vocabulary, with the goal of ten new English words a day, and he was making good progress. As we floated down the sun-dappled river in two canoes, following Diane Rienstra in a kayak, Han Sik Kim began singing in Korean. It was a delightful way to launch convention.

We were rewarded with lovely, spring-like weather for the remainder of the week, atypical for Ohio in late June. The weather, and the fortuitous arrival of Emma Destiny (see CATSU, p. 115), and the way everybody pulled together when we learned that our president, Ron Brugler, would not be with us for several days, seemed to set the tone for a thoughtful and rich experience.

In the absence of Ron, vice-president Chris Laitner opened the 2000 Convention session, and the Rev. Paul Zacharias led a prayer for Ron and Val and their family, who were attending Val's father in his final days. (Val's father died on June 30. Val's mother, who had

been very ill for some time, died three weeks later, on July 24.) Ron kept in touch with us through Chris and joined the convention meetings on Saturday. He expressed gratitude for the prayers and support for their family, announced the funeral arrangements for Val's father, then resumed the chair as president midst supportive applause. His updated report will appear in the October *Messenger*.

The bylaws to be read at the beginning of each convention session were again set to music and sung, led by convention music director Laurie Turley. The Rev. John Billings, Chuck Winter, and Ohio Association president and lay leader Betsy Coffman in a stunning purple and gold robe, led the opening worship service and welcomed us to convention. The Rev. Drs. George Dole and Dorothea Harvey, and the Revs. Ernest Martin and Paul Zacharias, were introduced as "Sages of the Church," who presented their viewpoints on the theme, "Building a City of God." These will be published in the October *Messenger* with the exception of Paul Zacharias' talk, which was contained in the article, "Can We Dream" that appeared in the March *Messenger*.

The Rev. David Lomax, a guest from the British Conference, spoke of his vision and of similar issues facing both the British Conference and General Convention. His talk will also be published in the October issue.


On Thursday, the Rev. Paul Martin, chair of the Council of Ministers, read the Cambridge Resolution you will see in the COM report on p. 112. Following the resolution, he made this statement:

"The Council of Ministers recognizes and acknowledges the anger, hurt, pain, and desperation over past actions and misunderstandings. Despite the strong feelings, despite the SSR Board's need for financial responsibility and desire to do all they can for our seminary, despite the Cambridge Society's desire to retain their spiritual home, despite all of Convention's desire to maintain a presence in Harvard Square—despite all these things—the greatest danger this situation poses to our church is that evil will use this circumstance to worm its way into our church, promoting anger and hatred, breaking up long-standing friendships, dividing and destroying our church. You

have heard, in the president's report, Ron's fear that all hell would break loose this week over this issue. (All Council of Ministers please stand.) In passing this motion unanimously, your Council of Ministers is taking a stand to say we will not let this happen. (All General Council members please stand.) The General Council voted unanimously to support and endorse this motion. We ask you all to stand with us now to ensure that instead of all hell breaking loose, all heaven breaks loose!"

Everyone stood. The collective will to heal was palpable. A preliminary meeting of all parties involved took place on Friday night, upstairs in Grimes Center. When the meeting ended, they walked down the stairs holding hands and singing. It seems like a good beginning. And a good place to end for now.

Patte LeVan

Many cameras were clicking away during convention, and we're grateful to the following photographers for their contributions to this issue: Marian Mull, Steve Koke, Collin Bae, Jenn Tafel, Mona Conner (and of course Patte LeVan, but the editor doesn't count!) 

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Patte LeVan, Editor

Editorial Address:

The Messenger TEL: (760) 765-2915  
P.O. Box 985 FAX: (760) 765-0218  
Julian, CA 92036 E-MAIL: Messenger@jinet.com

Business & Subscription Address:

Central Office  
11 Highland Ave.  
Newtonville, MA 02460

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## Building the City of God

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that, instead of expecting our path to clarify everything, we seek the knowledge necessary to live with the mystery. As Swedenborgians, we love that familiar quote about it now being permitted to enter with understanding into the mysteries of faith. We call ours a "rational theology," one that makes sense. We give words to everything, defining even God as Love and Wisdom, or at least the source of it, as if that means we know what God is. We mistake the ability to define terms and quote Swedenborg for regeneration itself. Does the ability to talk about love and wisdom make us loving or wise? Swedenborg said that we perceive God as outside of us when we think *about* love, but inside of us when we think *from* love. We want to know God, but we must also learn to be comfortable with the mystery of God. I can talk about love, and I think I do know more about love now, thanks to all of you who have evoked it in me, than I did when I was five years old, or even fifteen, but I have to admit love is still a great mystery to me, a mystery I look forward to spending the rest of eternity exploring.

### What Is The City?

Which image is true? George Dole quoted *Arcana Coelestia* 6917 last Wednesday, saying that facts are true or false depending upon their use. Swedenborg also wrote about "appearances of truth," reminding us that we don't know what is true, only how it appears to us. The same could be said of images. Some people, unfortunately, take the appearances of truth model too far and imply that since that is all we know, therefore all appearances are equally true. That is, of course, only an appearance of truth. Swedenborg answered the question of what is real by saying that everything is real, but some things are more real than others, depending upon how much good and truth they contain. The same can be said for appearances of truth. Some are more true than others. In any case, it is not important to argue over which is true. We should instead focus on finding the good they contain and figuring out how we can use it to grow. A young boy said, "Why should I go to church? I already

know how to be better than I am." Piling on the truth is not very helpful if we do not use it to be better people.

Our images of the City of God are limited by our experience. Revelation 21 describes it as being built of gold, jewels, and pearls. Our image of the New

**T**he more we can understand our own patterns of thought, our own desires and feelings, the less we distort the love and truth that flow into us from God. In this particular imagery, the City is already here. We are just so preoccupied with our own stuff, our own feelings and insecurities, our own idea of what should be, the business and politics of the church, that we fail to recognize God's presence.

Church is also limited by our experience. We use the images available to us, but we cannot really imagine what the New Church will look like. We base our understanding of it on Swedenborg's writings, but as the Second Coming becomes an increasingly conscious reality, the New Church will be based more on our collective experience of it.

Our image of the City descending to earth is important because it unites heaven and earth, the spiritual and the natural, the human and the Divine. David Spangler calls what he teaches "Incarnational Spirituality." For him, and for us as Swedenborgians, the task is not to transcend time and space, or rise above our physical world, but rather to enter fully into the world in a transcendent state in order to transform it by relating to it in a loving way. By doing this, regeneration and use, we simultaneously build the inner and outer Kingdom of God.

### Who Builds The City?

Some people prefer the image of a garden or forest, because they are

natural and God-made. Other people prefer the city image, because cities are made by people. Who builds the city—God? Or do we? One of the exciting aspects of our theology is that the answer is clearly that we do it together. We are co-creators of the City of God. It seems to me God does very little, perhaps nothing, on his/her own, and anyway, how would we know it? Neither can we act on our own, despite the appearance that we act "as if" we do. No one can even exist in whom God is not. God acts through angels, through people, and through creation. We are not observers or bystanders, but participants, co-creators with God and with each other.

### Who Is In The City?

We call ourselves the "Church of the New Jerusalem" or the "Church of the Holy City," but few rational people would say that only members of our church are in the City or in the true New Church. We have often talked about establishing more rigid membership criteria for our church, assuring us that we all agree with our interpretation of the Bible and Swedenborg's writings. Personally, I do not think we need to worry about excluding people (it's not as if the hordes are breaking our doors down trying to get in, anyway). I think we should just go about the business of building the city, trying to love and understand each other, and those who want to work and relate with us will join us, while other people will simply not be interested in the concept, the work, or the relationships. There is a disturbing trend in most denominations, including our own I believe, that more and more energy, time, and money is going into maintenance and church growth instead of into promoting social change. It is as if we have narrowed our focus to building the Church instead of building the City of God. We are focusing on building our small Swedenborgian corner of the city, and it keeps getting smaller while the City itself is expanding rapidly.

We can be both a church specific and a church universal. For a devoted Christian who can no longer accept a literal view, we can offer a new way to understand and practice Christianity.

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## Building the City of God

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For a Christian who wants to open to other religious traditions, we can offer a perspective that includes and embraces, gives meaning and perspective, to all religions and paths. George Dole wrote, in "Christian Theology and the Holographic Model" (included in his book *Sorting Things Out*), "Swedenborg takes Christianity to be that central vantage point from which the whole pattern can be most clearly seen. It should, in this view, be the religion which most clearly sees and most deeply appreciates the possibilities of salvation provided by God in all other religions."

For a person who rejects all specific religious paths, we can offer a view of God as the source of all Love and Wisdom, and the universality of the spiritual growth process. This large perspective and openness does not dilute our church, it makes it richer and more powerful.

We can look for the use and the good in all forms of worship and styles of ministry. We do not have to decide which is better or more "New Church." It is enough to know that different people find different forms meaningful and helpful in facilitating their regeneration. We have to remember that our task is not to sell a specific map, model, or image, it is to help people use their understanding to grow spiritually. The doctrines are guides to inner experience, not a substitute for them. When we talk about the essentials of the church, we need to distinguish between essential to agreeing with Swedenborg, or our interpretation of him, and essential to spiritual growth. They are not necessarily the same.

### When Is The City?

Regardless of how we choose to envision the Kingdom of God—garden, forest, or city, heaven, heaven on earth, or the inner spiritual life—one of the most unique and important things about our church is how we answer the question of when it is going to come. Western religions appear to be constructed around waiting for God. The Israelites were, and still are, waiting for the Messiah. Christians are waiting for Christ's return. We have a different perspective. When we say the Kingdom of God is at



Brendan Dzeba and Ethan Turley get a big hug from the new Rev. Jun-chol Lee following Sunday Service.

hand, we do not mean it is coming soon. We mean it is already here, the Second Coming is already happening, God is here now, using us to build the City. This puts some responsibility on us. We cannot sit back and wait for God to do it.

Another aspect to this is the question of to what extent we need to *build* the City, which still keeps it in the future, and to what extent we need to simply recognize its existence. Perhaps we do not need to climb to the moun-taintop in search of the Holy Grail, travel to Great Tartary to find the Lost Word, or journey to the farthest reaches of the spiritual universe to retrieve the DeadSu Scrolls. The best definition of enlightenment I have ever heard is that it is seeing things as they are. Most of us see what we hope or fear. We bend and shape our perceptions around our psyches. This is what makes us perceive only an appearance of the truth. If we could see things as they are, we would be seeing truth itself, not completely possible, but something worth striving for. The more we can understand our own patterns of thought, our own desires and feelings, the less we distort the love and truth that flow into us from God. In this particular imagery, the City is already here. We are just so preoccupied with our own stuff, our own feelings and insecurities, our own idea of what should be, the business and politics of the church, that we fail to recognize God's presence.

Jack Nicholson, in a recent movie, asks, "What if this is as good as it gets?" Swedenborg, in his book, *The Last Judgment*, says that in the end times things will look just like they do now. Robert Hunter, one of the "gratefulest" modern lyricists, in a song about a man

on his deathbed, writes, "See here how everything lead up to this day, and it's just like any other day that's ever been. Sun goin' up and then the sun it goin' down. Shine through my window, and my friends they come around." Things are not going to be so much different in the future. Things will not only look the same, but we will spend most of our time doing the same things—walking, talking, cooking, eating, washing dishes, sleeping, sitting through Convention meetings, etc. Perhaps what will be different will be our awareness of God's presence in those everyday things. The man on his deathbed may appreciate the beauty of the sunrise and the sunset more than we do, may appreciate the love of his friends who come to see him more than we do.

I hope, as our week of meetings draws to a close, that we have been aware of God's presence here. I hope that we have not been so focused on the issues and the logistics that we have missed God moving through and around us. Have we seen how God was trying to move us toward reconciliation, toward healing, toward cooperation? Have we felt God's presence when we greeted each other, when we talked to each other in meetings, when we respected those with different opinions than our own, when we hugged and supported each other?

What if this is as good as it gets? How good do we want it to be? This is it! We are sitting here passing time with good friends we love, soaking in the beautiful music, listening to me rattle on, sharing our stories, our joy and pain, sharing our laughter and tears, spending our meeting times trying to figure out how our church can be of greater use in helping to cultivate, experience, and appreciate the presence of God.

We are *building* the City with God. We are *living* in the City together. We *are* the City of God, and we would make it even more godly if we could remember that. Let us strive to treat each other, and all people, as fellow citizens of the Kingdom of God.

Amen.

*The Rev. Paul Martin is director of the Swedenborgian Spiritual Growth Center (Stone House Book Room) in Kirkland, Washington.* ☒

# PSR President Answers Questions Concerning Potential SSR/PSR Affiliation

Jane Siebert

The Board of Trustees of the Swedenborg School of Religion has voted unanimously to pursue an affiliation with the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. This decision was made after careful review and comparison of the pros and cons of the three primary options: Urbana University, Andover Newton Theological School, and the Pacific School of Religion. This decision fits well with the new vision of the School which was formulated with input from all churches and centers in the US and Canada.

Our top commitments are:

- Preparing high-quality leaders for our churches and centers.
- Reaching out and expanding our Swedenborgian identity.
- Maintaining the Swedenborgian Library and Archives while improving its accessibility.
- Preparing course work for distance education to broaden our outreach and meet unfulfilled needs of dispersed learning.

The Board studied the alternatives and concluded that it is essential to have a central location to maintain our identity, provide the community necessary for ministerial and lay leader preparation, be a site of scholarly study and attract students.

The Rev. Dr. Bill McKinney, president of the Pacific School of Religion, attended a pre-convention meeting June 28 at Urbana University with the Council of Ministers, General Council, Trustees of the Swedenborg School of Religion, and other interested members. Bill took time away from his vacation in Cape Cod to assure everyone of the Pacific School of Religion's interest in the Swedenborg School of Religion's potential affiliation with PSR. The PSR Board of Trustees and faculty have both voted unanimously to pursue this partnership.

"Swedenborgian theology has had a far-reaching effect in diverse ecumenical circles," Bill said. "Don't underestimate your influence. Your challenge is to make the writings relevant and accessible in today's world."

McKinney outlined ideas for a potential partnership. Swedenborgian students would enroll in the Pacific School of Religion and take their core courses from the PSR faculty in conjunction with the other 200 plus PSR students from various denominations. Our own Swedenborgian professors would teach the course work specific to our theology. These

classes would be open to all students enrolled in PSR and the greater GTU (Graduate Theological Union, 1300 students).

By enrolling in PSR, our students would have access to financial aid and reduced cost on campus housing.

We could partner with their recruiting office, accounting resources, and admissions.

PSR has space complete with book racks that we could lease for our library. They have contributed their library to the Hewlett Library of the GTU. Bill assured us that we could use the space on a long-term basis. There is no pressure to combine our library with the GTU. We may choose to negotiate with the Hewlett Library ways to take advantage of their online library resources and make our collection more available to the world by cross-cataloguing. We would retain control of our valuable collection.

As Bill explained to the group, this affiliation allows us to control our own destiny. We will have the flexibility to set up diploma or certificate programs. We can revamp our lay leader program and provide distance education courses to ministerial candidates studying at other seminaries. Affiliation with the Graduate Theological Union enables us to prepare our next generation of intellectual leadership.

*An affiliation team from SSR will meet with the PSR affiliation team in San Francisco August 17, 2000, to begin the planning of the potential partnership.*

*Jane Siebert is chair of the Swedenborg School of Religion Board of Trustees, member of the denomination's Investment Committee, and secretary of the Swedenborgian Church in Pretty Prairie, Kansas.* ☩



(l-r) Bill McKinney (center) with Jane Siebert and John Maine.



Current SSR Board of Trustees: (l-r, back) Richard Hatheway, Alan Thomsen, Jane Siebert, Jonathan Mitchell, Diana Kirven Stickney, John Titus, Mary Kay Klein. (front) Rachel Rivers, Barbara Tourangeau, Sue Burns, Robert McCluskey.

# Next Steps for SSR

George Dole

The Trustees of the Swedenborg School of Religion are entering into negotiations with the Pacific School of Religion to see whether the interests of the School and the denomination would be best served by affiliation; and it is entirely possible (but by no means certain) that a decision will be made before the next session of Convention. I am sure that every effort will be made to keep the Church informed and to take seriously whatever questions are raised so that our membership will have no cause to feel disenfranchised.

For a time, my own anxiety level was high, primarily because of the portrayal of the move as "exciting" and the strong emphasis on its promise. This sounded like a sales pitch, and as far as I am concerned, the only sane response to a sales pitch is sales resistance.

On the Wednesday morning of convention, a number of us met with the president of PSR, Bill McKinney, and I began to move beyond my initial anxiety. There are some real difficulties

to be faced, and I think they will be faced squarely and early, not minimized or postponed until the last minute in order to maintain enthusiasm. I am reassured by Jane Siebert's openness to the idea of setting clear and measurable goals for the proposed affiliation and taking them seriously, a subject to which I'll return shortly.

I also gained a new sense of what I would call the shape of the proposal. Bill laid considerable stress on PSR's dedication to academic rigor. He felt that this was congenial to our theology, that we were people willing to enter intelligently into the mysteries of faith, to coin a phrase.

Now, it wasn't all that long ago that we were pretty sure the reason for our decline was that we were "too intellectual." I can recall being skeptical about this diagnosis because I was pretty intellectual myself back then, and I was feeling rather lonely.

But the fact remains that we really do have a big-league theology. That is not at issue. What is at issue is our own desire and ability to move in that direction now, and to compete in the big leagues. As someone recently reminded me, that was what Swedenborg himself chose to do, and even he did not meet with the success he hoped for.

If we take this course, then, what would be some of the "clear and measurable goals"? Obviously, we intend an increase in the number of students, and if Bill McKinney is right, we should expect an increase in their caliber. Obviously, too, we should expect a decrease in the number of empty pulpits, and perhaps even increases in the number of active centers and in overall membership. To be accountable, we need to quantify these goals, to say how many and when, and to say it publicly. We need to say what will convince us that we need to change course, and if that point arrives, we need to make the change. Otherwise, we will find ourselves resorting to our impressive skills of rationalization.

But Swedenborg himself, as we are fond of saying, didn't found a church.

That was our idea. Implicit in Bill McKinney's vision is that Swedenborg would be taken more seriously in the scholarly world, that he would come out of the academic closet.

This too is quantifiable. There would be more articles in respected journals, more references to Swedenborg in textbooks, more books on Swedenborg published by major presses, more academic theses on Swedenborg. There would be courses on Swedenborg at other seminaries, perhaps, or Swedenborgians on their faculties. Certainly at PSR itself, there would be non-Swedenborgians taking "our" courses. Again, accountability means taking such features out of the realm of cloudy generalizations and putting numbers to them, giving their airy nothing a local habitation and a name.

How does this relate to parish ministry? It seems to point toward a kind of return to the minister as scholar and teacher, and to the church as a learning environment. In *Has the Church a Future* (Westminster Press, 1980, p. 98), Douglas John Hall wrote, "... we have to think about theology. Indeed we have to go to the heart of our belief. We cannot ask how Christianity relates to the other religions of mankind without raising questions of content." In other words, we have to come to life intellectually, and students drawn to an exciting educational experience are not likely to be drawn to quiet little churches. They become used to being where the action is.

Our resources are limited, both as to money and as to personnel. We can't have everything, and if we pretend that we can, we set ourselves up for inevitable disillusionment. If we invest ourselves intensively in our theology, I suspect its merits will make up for many of our own inadequacies, but this investment will preclude others, some of which may be very dear to us. My plea is that we make this decision as well as we can, bringing to it our fullest measure of devotion, intelligence, and especially accountability.

*The Rev. Dr. George F. Dole is an author, part-time professor at SSR, and pastor of the Swedenborgian Church in Bath, Maine.*



*The Rev. Drs. George Dole and Rachel Rivers share a merry moment following the ordination service at the United Methodist Church in downtown Urbana.*

# SSR FIRST DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSE TO BEGIN THIS FALL



George H. Sinclair, Jr.

As the Interim President of the Swedenborg School of Religion, I am pleased to call your attention to SSR's first venture into distance education, using

the Internet. Beginning this fall, we will offer the course, **Introduction to Swedenborgian Concepts**, online. Two of General Convention's outstanding theologians, the Rev. Dr. George F. Dole and the Rev. Dr. J. Theodore Klein, SSR professors, will teach the course. Anyone with access to the Internet can participate in this course from anywhere in the world!

I am very excited about this powerful new way for SSR to support all of the ministries of the denomination. I see SSR's new course as an excellent way for any individual with a serious interest in Swedenborgian theology, and a strong desire to serve the Church, to begin his or her studies—without the expense or inconvenience of relocating. Also, it is an exciting opportunity for members of a single congregation to join together in a local study group. Each congregation can now gain strength through direct contact with Swedenborg's writings, under the guidance of SSR's experienced and learned professors.

Please see the course description printed below, and also feel free to contact us here at SSR for any further information you need. We look forward to hearing from you!

George H. Sinclair, Jr.

## INTRODUCTION TO SWEDENBORGIAN CONCEPTS

Have you ever asked yourself questions like these:  
How can each of us make a difference for good in the world around us?  
How can we contribute to the health

and growth of our church and other communities we serve?

Would you like to explore how the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg can guide us toward answers to these and other important questions? Would you like to enter into dialogue with others on how to relate Swedenborgian theology to ministry and other forms of service?

The faculty of the Swedenborg School of Religion is delighted to offer our **Introduction to Swedenborgian Concepts** online, so that people who live far from the school can now study with us. The course is designed to familiarize serious students with the basic concepts of Swedenborg's theological writings and is primarily intended for those considering professional ministry or lay leadership. The principal text for the course is *The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine*. Using this text, we will follow Swedenborg's own lead, both in choice and sequence of topics, from examining such fundamental terms as "good" and "truth," through matters of human freedom and process, the church, and Scripture, to the central issue of the nature of the Lord.

The **Introduction to Swedenborgian Concepts** is a year-long graduate course for full academic credit, applicable to SSR's Ordination, Lay Leadership, Certificate, or M.A. programs. Students will follow the schedule of SSR's academic year. Each semester comprises thirteen weekly assignments, with specific questions to be answered as the basis for online discussion with other students and the faculty. In addition to the weekly writing assignments, there will be midterm and final examinations each semester. These open-book examinations will be one hour long. (We rely on the honor system for adherence to the time limitation.) Each student's grade will be based on his or her weekly work and on examination grades, equally weighted.

Students are responsible for obtaining the primary text in an edition which includes Swedenborg's extensive references to *Arcana Coelestia*. We recommend the *Miscellaneous*

*Theological Works* volume of the Swedenborg Foundation's Standard Edition. (Please contact the Foundation at 800-355-3222 or e-mail [info@swedenborg.com](mailto:info@swedenborg.com).) Students will also need to have access, either online or in hard copy, to Swedenborg's complete *Arcana Coelestia*. Other required readings will be supplied by SSR. The student will also need online and e-mail capability. Further details will be supplied with the registration packet.

Tuition for the course is \$450 per semester, due at the time of registration. A student withdrawing within the first two weeks of the course will receive a full refund; otherwise the tuition is not refundable. Registration for the second semester is open only to students who have successfully completed the first semester.

We urge students to contact the school no later than September 18, 2000, so that they may receive their study guides before the first class meeting. ☩

## Coming Soon from SSR...

- New and updated correspondence courses
- Programs taught by the faculty in your church center
- Swedenborgian spirituality courses for students outside the SSR geographical area
- See the October Messenger or contact SSR for details



## New Priorities

Dear Editor  
and Fellow  
Swedenborgians:

# TO THE EDITOR

The single largest issue we have at this time (in my opinion) is the direction of SSR and its relationship to General Convention. Is it turning out the ministers we want? Does it cost too much to educate the few who graduate (and stay in the ministry), parish vs (what shall I call it) special interest ministry? Surveys come out asking us what we want in a minister. Opinion/rebuttal featured in the same issue. Maybe we are going about all this in the wrong way. The back of *The Messenger* states that Swedenborg never intended a church denomination to be founded or named after him. Maybe this is the reason for our failure to grow or even keep the same numbers of 40 or 50 years ago.

Calgary has never had a full time minister, and yet people continue to meet here and hold services, keeping the teachings of Swedenborg alive in Southern Alberta. Saskatoon and Rosthern Saskatchewan have no minister, especially since the funding was cut to a point where the Rev. David Sonmor could no longer be employed by Western Canada Conference. Saskatoon continues to meet and Rosthern as well, with the aid of people who have been enlightened by Swedenborg's writings. Edmonton, Alberta—the church built by my father (along with many dedicated people in the late 1950s) is continuing to operate sans minister.

I have the feeling that we are placing too much emphasis on SSR, and maybe it has outlived its usefulness for us. Perhaps we would be a lot better off offering Swedenborgian studies at universities around North America (Canada included here, people), so that Swedenborg's writings can again gain the prominence they had when they so influenced the many writers and artists we love to quote in an effort to validate our religion.

"All religion relates to life, and the life of religion is to do good." Perhaps our

structure has become "the tail wagging the dog." We spend a lot of money on committee meetings, support unit meetings, legal fees,

property rental, travel, meals, benefits, etc—this is General Convention as well as SSR. We have thrown millions of dollars into "dream weaving" without having a destination in mind. We allow our teachings to be perverted with infighting, and we forget that a body or building is just a covering for the soul within. I am not supporting the fight of SSR with the Cambridge church. We just have to keep in mind that the building is a small "c," not a capital "c." Nor is SSR so important that they can take away something important to the people there because of a funding problem, however brought about.

Let's think about this. Maybe we need to disband our churches. Perhaps we need to "infiltrate" our beliefs into other churches by becoming part of them. Maybe what needs to be supported are book rooms all across North America to readily make available to people Swedenborg's writings and books containing Swedenborgian theology. I think we need to lessen the dilution of these books in current book rooms. The Information Management Support Unit and the Swedenborg Foundation might possibly become the most powerful tools we have to spread our message, apart from being physically present in other churches.

My church organization has been a very important influence in my life. I have been active in it on a local as well as national level for many years. My father and uncle are/were ministers, and I have been a worship leader for a long time. The old is sometimes hard to throw off, and you wonder how you can survive without all the things you have gathered around you. But with new beginnings come new priorities. As most readers will know, I have recently married, and will once again be making my home in the U.S. Now I am at the point of dispersing many of the things I held important in the past. I find that with a

priority change, so is there a resulting change in what I hold most valuable. Maybe we all need to do a little housekeeping in our church lives. Let us set new priorities, and let us find the direction we need to follow to keep alive the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg, and not the edifices we have created.

Sharon (Reddekopp) Williams  
Airdrie, Alberta

## SCENES FROM AROUND CONVENTION



Johnny Appleseed children's play, directed by Corina Fain. (l-r) Sola Thorhallsson, Deryk Fain, Ethan Turley as Johnny.



Corina Fain, Betsy Coffman's daughter, was much appreciated for her work with the children this year.



How many Swedenborgians fit in Jenn Tafel's Hootie? (l-r) Susannah Currie, Kit Billings, Dean Currie.



# GRADUATION and ORDINATION



**Robert McCluskey**

Between the feelings of relief from a job well done, and the anticipation of the road that lies ahead, there is this moment.

Here you stand, Janus-faced in your journey, with a unique

vantage point that will not come again. Spiritual idealism at its height, having been formed and shaped, it has yet to apply itself to the circumstances of life. Much of what you have learned will have to be re-learned, adapted to your unique situations. Much of what you have learned will not be useable for some time, we know not when.

Your seminary training was both necessary and good: but not sufficient. You now begin to move away from apparent dichotomies: theory and practice, doctrine and life, reason and experience. You now begin to bring these different elements of ministry into a unity: it will not look like anything that has gone before. The Lord has called you (and so far you have responded) to be part of the "new thing" he is creating. And yet you do not go unprepared; you have had several years to "count the cost." The things you have learned, both explicitly and implicitly, will all have their role to play at some time in the course of your ministry.

Before I go further, permit me to briefly review some of the images and ideas that have stayed with me from previous graduation addresses, and which underlie my remarks this evening. I think first of my own graduation from SSR, and Eugene Taylor's remarks entitled "The Hope of the Great Community," reminding us of the larger movement of which we are but a part: the renewal of human life and human consciousness by the Lord. I think of the title of Dorothea Harvey's address, "Training People To Do a Job That Is Not Humanly Possible." I think of Erni Martin's call to a "practical mysticism" in which we have our heads in the clouds

## Architects, Lanterns, and Sheepdogs

SSR Graduation Address  
to Solomon Young-Min Kim  
and Jun-chol Lee

June 29, 2000

precisely because we also have our feet on the ground. I think of Pat Basu's remark that "life is out to kill you, and it hasn't failed yet!"

Finally, I think of Gertrude Tremblay's poignant question, "How many times are we going to bury the old church?" Many of us are increasingly aware that Swedenborg's influence, his place in human history, is as significant as it is neglected. And so the challenge you now face is to artfully bring the fullness and newness of Swedenborg's theology to bear on the life of the members of your church. This is a challenge, because Swedenborg's theology is rather easy to misconstrue. You will be asked to validate a variety of approaches as "Swedenborgian" or "New Church": new age and other forms of ancient church revivals; 12-step programs; increased internet capabilities; our current shibboleth--contemporary vs. traditional forms of worship and church life. Most of these traditions and practices, teachings and debates, certainly have their place in the march of human history and in the life of the church. But so does the revelation of Swedenborg, which reminds us that these debates and arguments can easily distract us from the simple fact that the old church is dead, and that all things, all forms and practices, are being made new by the Lord.

The purpose of our denomination is to facilitate spiritual growth in the light of Swedenborg's revelation. These two dimensions will be given symbolic form at your ordination, when you receive the Bible in one hand, and a copy of *True Christian Religion* in the other. Anybody can be new, and anybody can be a Christian. But to be a spokesperson for a new Christianity is truly a challenge. It's certainly easier said than done,

which is why it was relatively easy to say yes to this assignment. But you have said yes to a more demanding assignment. God is building the kingdom. God is leading his church, and God calls upon you to serve as architects, lanterns, and sheepdogs.

**SHEEPDOG:** You will be asked to be all things to all people; or at least a lot of things to a lot of people. Be aware and beware: this is a trap in which your ability to represent the Lord in worship will be equated with the peoples' need for you to substitute for the Lord in their interactions with you. There will be a temptation to imitate the Lord, but this only leads to frustration, disappointment, and burn-out. Acting or believing you are is not only blasphemous, it's extremely tiring.

You are not the Lord; as minister, even as pastor, you are not the shepherd. Rather, you are to model what it is to be a servant of the Lord. You are no more and no less able to be that than any of your parishioners. The difference is that you have made an intentional commitment to do this; a conscious, and soon public, decision which will both empower you and challenge you in the days ahead. You are a sheepdog, not a shepherd!

As a sheepdog, you are to be inclusive, making sure everyone is included; no "allies," no "enemies," just people struggling—in their own way, at their own speed—to live with integrity. Keep them together so that God can continue to build his church, both individually and in larger group relations.

Serving God means just that; the freedom of not having to do God's work of regenerating, and the responsibility to do our part, guiding the work of repentance and reformation within the church community.

**LANTERN:** As we are told to place our light on a pedestal, so you have been called to step forward, on behalf of the church, to provide an image/touchstone by which the world/society can see itself in new ways. A model in

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# GRADUATION AND ORDINATION

## Architects, Lanterns, and Sheepdogs (Continued from page 105)

the community and the church, a lantern set on a pedestal. In all of this, I invite you to keep your eye on the simple but profound image of the Divine Humanity of Jesus Christ. This unity of heaven and earth, body and spirit, history and "metaphysics," time and eternity, God and humanity. This is the light that you are to hold high, so that the course of our lives together might be illuminated and enlightened.

Keep your eye on the Divine Human. Not as an abstract theological concept, but as the sum and substance of what is happening at all times, even here and now: the process of regeneration, the glorification of the human race, which is at the heart of all that happens. Keep your eye on the Divine Humanity. Not on the atonement theory, nor the historical Jesus; not on the power of the historic church, nor on the excitement of contemporary "successes" among the evangelicals; not on the esoteric nature of the inner sense, nor on the warmth of this increasingly small group of friends known as Convention. All of these have their place, their role, their function, their use, their importance in your ministry, but none can substitute for your personal response to the new dispensation.

Why is ministry in the name of the Divine Humanity so important? Because "life is out to kill you!" The natural level of life, by its very "nature," is out to kill you; to limit and control the spirit, to strengthen the self at the expense of God and neighbor. Evil and hell are real; injustice and oppression continue to be the experience of far too many people on this planet, in this country, and in our communities. And for the rest of us, there is anxiety and fear, in all their forms. Evil and hell are real: if it were not so, would we have trained you to deal with it? And yet the spirit of God continues to do its thing! To reach out, to forgive, to yield, to renew, to restore to unity and balance and wholeness. If it were not so, would we have taught you to rely on it?

**ARCHITECT:** I mentioned a moment ago that your ministry can be seen as an intentional response to the new dispensation of the Lord. Part of your ministry, part of your intentional response to the new dispensation, is to promote an understanding of Christianity that is fully compatible with the modern world view, which is still in process: Rational revelation. And so I urge you to be part of the transformation and re-creation of what it means to be the church, both individually and collectively. Not simply to pass on the traditions, but to move into forms of ministry and

*Ultimately, following  
the Lord has less to do  
with strategic planning  
and clear vision than  
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that is made available to  
us at the time.*

worship which faithfully reflect the truth of tradition.

You now stand at a unique cross-roads; you are inheritors of a great tradition (the hope of the great community, the vision of the New Church). And you are also pioneers in bringing this vision, this inner sense of spirituality, to concrete form, now and in the future. Just as the Ancient Word was lost to us, so the Hebrew and Christian scriptures were given to us to guide us in new ways. You are now called to proclaim the new meaning which lies within these texts. In this sense, I see you as architects with technical and historical expertise, now called to envision and build something truly new. Architects are experts who balance needs and wants of their clients

with resources and possibilities of workers: you must balance the spiritual needs and wants of people with the resources and possibilities of God.

Architects are also visionaries, and so you are to imagine, and then re-imagine, where God wants to lead you and God's church. You must be able to look ahead, beyond the joy and struggle of the present moment. "To help people be open to the Lord's leading" (not their own, not your leading, but the Lord's) means that you are to proceed one step at a time, open to changing course, or not, only as the spirit moves you. Prudential planning, yes, but you must also stay in touch with the movement of Divine Providence behind all of your planning. Ultimately, following the Lord has less to do with strategic planning and clear vision than with moving into the darkness one step at a time, guided by the light that is made available to us at the time. Something not humanly possible, but easily within the ability of God.

In our reading from Genesis 32, we heard of Jacob's spiritual struggle as he was about to cross over the river Jabbok. Unable to conquer his ambiguously identified opponent, he was also unwilling to let go or give up. And for this he received a new name, which would define his and his descendants' relationship to the Divine. "Israel" means to persevere with God: to hold on and not give up.

Did you know that groups and organizations and institutions also have a proprium, a self-image, that often prevents them from cooperating with God's will? Just as we must build our own spiritual life on the rock of faith, so that the winds and rain of the proprium do not overwhelm us, so I urge you to build your ministry on that same rock, so that the church's proprium will not devastate your work.

My most personal advice: "Hang in there, baby!" Your long, strange trip is just beginning. God is not done with you yet. No matter what happens, good or ill, keep your eye on the prize that first attracted you. Be true to your calling as minister, and the ups and downs of denominational and parish life will be

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## Charge to the Ordinands

Barbara Halle

Thank you for letting me stand up here this joyful night with these very special people. In late March when I first read Ron's email from Boston asking me to consider presenting this year's "Charge to the Ordinands" for Jun-chol Lee and Young-Min Kim, my first heart-pounding reaction should have been, "Wow, what an honor!" But in truth, it was instead more of "Whoa, I think I'm going to be ill!"

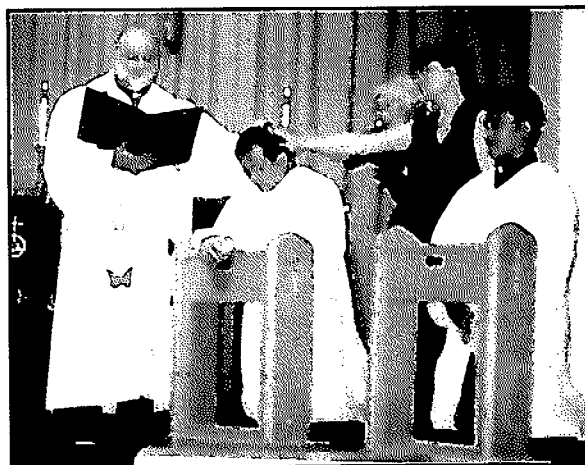
While I did immediately realize that being asked to do this tonight is an honor beyond words, my fear of standing in front of all of you filled me with adrenaline – and dread. At first I thought the reason for this was stage fright. But as I began to try to formulate ideas in my mind about the content of this talk, it became apparent to me what my real problem was. I was being asked to say some "wise" words, something that Jun-chol and Young-Min might carry with them as pearls of wisdom as they begin their new careers.

And therein lies the problem: take just a moment to look at the person on your left and on your right, and in front of you. It is obvious that this church is filled with many highly educated people who have boundless scholarly and experiential knowledge. There are also those of you who have been Swedenborgians for all or most of your lives and so you have that almost innate knowledge. Too, we are lucky to have many ministers here who have vast wisdom and insight gained by serving their churches and our General Convention. And now, we are so fortunate to have two new ministers who have just finished reading and writing and learning volumes of educational and spiritual material to guide them on their journey.

So now do you understand my dilemma? Here I am, a lay person who has been with the only church I've ever known for just about ten years. And I am supposed to impart wise words?! Let me tell you, this is a most humbling experience.

At last summer's convention in Malibu, Pat Tukos and I got to share an apartment with Young-Min and Jun-chol and Philip Bae's family. Of course we all shared the same bathroom too, so that made us all pretty close acquaintances. I have been lucky to have Jun-chol as a long-distance friend for about three years. In the spring of 1997, Jun-chol, in his first year at SSR, came to LaPorte for his first clergy field experience. He was invited to stay with several different families for his six-week stint, and mine was the first. Not knowing what to expect as far as what his food preferences would be, or what he would like to do for entertainment, or if he would even be able to communicate with us much since I'd heard that he didn't speak much English, I was a bit nervous. I definitely need not have been. From our first meeting in my kitchen, my family was instantly taken with him, with his quick smile and easy open manner. As it turned out, ours was the first American family he'd ever known, and we learned a great deal from each other.

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Ordination service: (l-r) the Rev. Ron Brugler, Young-Min Kim, the Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey, Barbara Halle, Jun-chol Lee.



Jun-chol Lee and Young-Min Kim.



The octet offering special music: (l-r) Laurie Turley, convention music director; Patte LeVan, Renee Billings, Eli Dale, Jerry Poole, George Dole, Lee Woofenden, Kit Billings.

# GRADUATION AND ORDINATION

## Charge to the Ordinands *(Continued from page 107)*

He shared with us about his Korean family life, and food, and his boyhood; and he learned first-hand about a traditional American family: the roller coaster ride with two teenage American girls while watching their mom and dad juggle full-time careers and family life, and eating lots of American food. I have very dear memories of his visit with us and of his ministry while at our church in LaPorte.

**Jun-chol and Young-Min, here are my thoughts on ministry:**

**L**et me start with what the word "ministry" means. The dictionary definition that I like best states ministry as being "One that serves as a means." To me, this is a person, action, or organization that makes things happen, the impetus. What I particularly like in the definition is the word "serve." To me it has the feel of selflessness and charity, of asking yourself, "Without looking for a pat on the back, in what ways can I make life better for others?"

Of course, when we are genuinely in that mode of action, life seems naturally to become better for ourselves, also. Funny how that works...

To "serve as a means" also conjures up the image of a messenger. I'm thinking of this as helping to create a closer link between the Lord and an individual. And this seems to me to be the crux of what a minister is called to do—helping people recognize, understand, and remember that God is right there, for the asking, whenever, however, and always just as they need Him. This seems to be on the surface a fairly straightforward goal—but we all know differently, don't we? As the demands of everyday life increase, we somehow need to become more aware of the comfort we can find in acknowledging, and then ultimately trusting in, the Lord. This is where a positive, optimistic, and loving messenger comes in: as the one who serves as the means to help strengthen this connection between God and congregant.

What does a church need in a ministry? First of all, I'd like to say that from experience I know that a church can survive without having an ordained minister. But this can happen only when the congregants minister to each other, sharing one another's burdens and joys with genuine love and kindness. It's all about relationships. It's about building a bond so strong that even if the church as an organization might fail, that inner "church" which remains surrounding these relationships will continue to stand.

To become, as a minister, a part of the building process of these relationships seems to me to be the frosting on the cake. Here's a simple analogy to explain what I mean: Just imagine having on hand the ingredients for this cake (which would be

the diversity of people and resources), then mixing together those ingredients (working, playing, and worshiping together), setting the oven to just the right temperature (feeling the warmth of the love of the Lord and for each other), giving the mixture enough time to rise and to come to completeness, and then voila! you have a cake! Now, it's up to the

minister to choose how appealing the frosting might be: will it be made with just a little preparation and then drizzled on in a random, directionless manner? Or will it look like there's been loving and thoughtful effort behind the scenes to make it tasteful and appealing, yet not needing to be perfect?

Remember that you, as ministers, give the first, and often a long-lasting, impression of the Church. Take heart though, that a few crumbs of imperfection are perfectly acceptable.

Finally, what does it mean to serve as a minister? Thankfully, I also know from experience how blessed we are, as congregations, when we have found ministers who want to serve as our conduit, our loving messenger, from the Lord to us through their ministry. Here are a few qualities that I think are desirable in such a minister:

- One who is strong in conviction, yet listens and understands the value of being able to compromise with grace.
- One who fully admits his humanness by sharing vulnerabilities, yet doesn't use them as excuses.

- One who can recognize that

although not everyone comes to church because of the minister, people might choose not to come to church because of the minister.

- One who realizes that there is a business aspect to running a church and that while this business can be done with the spirit of the Lord ever-present, some of these business demands can sometimes seem downright unspiritual.

- One who knows that a sense of humor can often "serve as a means," and it can also ease many weighty situations.

- One who understands that those congregants who volunteer at church are doing so because they love the camaraderie, they are devoted to the spiritual work of the



*Jun-chol Lee and Young-Min Kim*

**This seems to be the crux of what a minister is called to do—helping people recognize, understand, and remember that God is right there, for the asking, whenever, however, and always just as they need Him.**

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# Give Your Servant a Discerning Heart

Solomon Young-Min Kim

July 1, 2000

Scripture: I Kings 3: 3-14

### WHAT DOES ORDINATION MEAN TO ME?

It was about seven or eight years ago when I attended my first Swedenborgian Convention in Massachusetts. I felt like I was in heaven. That feeling has been with me continuously even today. I can also tell you that we are going to have many business sessions, mini-courses, and sittings, meals, good times, and worship services in the future.

According to Swedenborg's writings, "The love of good, and from it the faith of truth, make a life of heaven" (*The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* 230). Indeed, I found that this convention was where a life of heaven was made by the love and truth of the Lord, so I wanted to be a part of it.

I think we come to our conventions to seek and uncover the love from each of us, and practice our faith, in order to find a new hope and vision in our life by improving our loving relationships with others; we also hope to achieve this by building a city of the Lord. In addition we come for two big events, which are graduation and ordination from SSR. These are the very important and meaningful events for our denomination's future as well as for individuals.

Today, I am ordained in front of you, and I officially become a Swedenborgian minister. This is very meaningful to me because I feel like I am really going to be a minister.

It is a real pleasure, but on the other hand some big questions come to mind. "Can I be a real servant to the Lord? Can I be a good minister to the people?" and "What should I do?"

### WHAT IS MY CALLING?

I honestly do not have a definite answer, but I can guess that God has a purpose by making me his servant. The only thing I can think of is to ask the Lord for help like King Solomon did. This is the Bible story you already know. After Solomon built the temple, he offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. The Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." Solomon answered, "Now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong." (1 Kings 3: 7-9).

But the problem is that I did not have a dream last night. So God didn't ask me anything last night. But I had a dream in me all the time. That dream is that I bring our Swedenborgian teachings



*The graduates and their families and friends.*

to North Korea one day.

Before this, I wanted to deliver our Swedenborgian message to the Korean immigrants here, especially those who are trying to build a new life in this country. And I am going to serve my church faithfully. So I will try to build a city of the Lord, which is a loving and truthful community. I will try to make my church, the Church of The Little Grain, a center of the holy city where the Lord dwells.

Now I am trying to help out to establish a Korean senior citizens center in Brooklyn. Fortunately, Korean senior citizens started their program at our church a month ago. Yet there are still many things to do. I know I cannot do it without the Lord's guidance.

The choice of Solomon is the choice to which the Lord guides every one who sincerely desires to be led by him, the only wise God our Savior. He was humble and listened to the Lord, and the Lord gave him a wise and discerning heart.

I will make the choice that King Solomon took before, and I will deliver to you as much as I can. Thank you. ☪

## "Thy Will, Oh Lord, Not Mine"

Jun-choi Lee

July 1, 2000

Though I know that I have to say something like how sure I am about my call tonight, I would like to begin with sharing a truth in my heart that my call seems still in its process to be fully revealed from God and to be fully accepted by my human heart.

In the four years of seminary life, the most difficult time used to be when I was asked about what my call is. What troubled me greatly in this situation was my awareness that

*(Continued on page 110)*

## "Thy Will, Oh Lord, Not Mine"

(Continued from page 109)

I am a mere human being, who is just a finite being, and God is the eternity and infinity. My struggle was from the confusion that I couldn't see a way to distinguish what is from the infinite divine and what is from my finite human origin. Inspirations and good plans seem possible to be made without divine calling to be a minister. So in the center of all my struggles were those questions, What am I so that I happened to be a minister? And what can I do as a minister? And what kind of God is calling me to do something?

At least one thing was clear to me. What I want to accomplish does not necessarily have to be addressed as the call from God. For almost three years, I struggled and suffered because of the uncertainty and complexity of receiving the call. I was in a seminary, and I wanted to be a minister. But I did not know *why*. Though I had a vision of mine and some plans for my future ministry, I could not claim them as of the call from God to me. Probably what I was looking for and expecting to happen was a sign, something special, which may be able to convince my weak spirit to admit the fact that I, indeed, have received a call from God to do this. All I could do was to pray to God and to read the Word, hoping that God would say something to me.

My *eureka* moment happened when I was reading the story of Moses, not because of his greatness, but because of his weakness. Moses was the first prophet, judge, and the law-giver to the people of Israel. In the Gospels, Moses appears with Jesus in the transfiguration as the representative of the divine law in the midst of humans. It was so good to read that this great guy, Moses, who seemed almost not an ordinary human being, struggled and suffered just like one of us when he was receiving the call from God. I had read this story many times, but at that moment I felt something like a WOW! feeling in my heart.

His struggle and the divine guidance of God for him in the process assured me that I was on the right path. Moses began his process of receiving the call

with two questions:

Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt? (Ex. 3:11)

If they ask me, what is his name? What shall I say to them? (3:13)

The real comfort from reading Moses was that regardless of all his doubts and uncertainty as a human being, Moses accepted the call and set off on his journey back to Egypt. I found that the image of God in this story also is very encouraging. Especially I liked the persistency of God in the divine guidance that God really wants Moses to do the job regardless of all his doubts and unwillingness. As Moses tried hard to convince God to take the call off from his shoulder, so did I. After hearing all the answers for his questions and doubts from God, Moses couldn't find any other option, so finally he said, "Oh my Lord, send, I pray, some other person" (4:13). What an answer! And what an honest heart before God!

Our first tendency, when we receive a call from God, often is an attempt to be ignorant about the revelation because the call is usually not quite favorable for our human taste. However, this call, which is a particular divine will guiding a particular person in a certain direction, never restrains its power to keep inspiring and urging the person to take the job that is revealed. The beauty and mystery of this divine work is that God does not require us to be 100% willing to follow the divinely inspired path at the first step. It is clearly shown with Moses by saying, "Let me go back to Egypt, and see whether they are still alive." (4:18). Moses said this to his father-in-law when he was heading back to Egypt—from his unwillingness to do the assigned work.

This was the beginning of Moses, the great prophet and leader of the Israelites. Based on this, I have said that my call is still in its process. What I am waiting to happen is the full embodiment of the call, not just in my intellectual consciousness, but in my very heart as well. My hope is that my call can reform my weak and doubting heart into a strong and faithful one. To be sure, one thing I would like to share with you tonight concerning the call that I received from God is: To make

every effort to truly be a human who will see the path of light, which is the golden road leading my poor spirit into the city of God, and to do all in my effort to share with all my human companions whatever I acquire from my study, work, life, and cultivation through harmonious and mutually benefiting ways.

Thank you.

*The Rev. Jun-chol Lee has received a call from the Cleveland church (Swedenborg Chapel) to be their minister. He began his ministry there in late August. ☪*

## Charge to the Ordinands

(Continued from page 108)

church, and they feel a strong and committed faith in the good works they provide, and yet this minister also understands and appreciates that this donated time is the volunteer's precious spare time.

- One who recognizes his or her own need for spiritual nourishment and regularly finds the means to fulfill it in order to maintain that heavenly connection.

Young-Min Kim and Jun-chol Lee, there will be many joys and challenges ahead of you. You are ready for them! I'd like to conclude with a portion of an inspirational piece by Max Ehrmann that has been my guidance through the years:

"Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be, and whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace with your soul."

Look to the Lord for your ultimate guidance, and you'll have all the answers you need. Good luck and God speed!

*Barbara Halle is a member of MINSU and the treasurer of the Swedenborgian Church in LaPorte, Indiana. ☪*

# The Swedenborgian Church Election Results

President .....	3-year term (beg. July 2001) ..	Rev. Ron Brugler (Canada)
Vice-president .....	1-year term .....	Chris Laitner (Michigan)
Secretary .....	1-year term .....	Gloria Toot (Ohio)
Treasurer .....	1-year term .....	Larry Conant (Mass.)
General Council .....	3-year term .....	Jim Erickson (Illinois)
.....	.....	Margaret Kraus (Kansas)
.....	.....	Rev. Lee Woofenden (Mass.)
.....	2 year unexpired term .....	Susan Wood (Southeast)
Communications Support Unit (COMSU)	.....	.....
.....	3-year term .....	Steve Koke (Pacific Coast)
Education Support Unit (EDSU)	.....	.....
.....	3-year term .....	Bill Baxter (Mid-Atlantic)
Financial & Physical Resource Unit (FPRSU)	.....	.....
.....	3-year term .....	Barbara Boxwell (Michigan)
Ministries Support Unit (MINSU)	.....	.....
.....	3-year term .....	Rev. Paul Zacharias (Canada)
.....	.....	Mark Allen (Maine)
Information Management Support Unit (IMSU)	.....	.....
.....	3-year term .....	Jim Erickson (Illinois)
.....	1-year unexpired term .....	Bob Hinrichs (Pacific Coast)
Nominating Committee ..	5-year term .....	Steve Thomas (Canada)
SSR Board of Trustees .....	3-year term .....	Rev. Robert McCluskey (New York)
.....	.....	Bob Leas (Illinois)
.....	1-year unexpired term .....	Sue Burns
Committee on Admission to the Ministry (CAM)	.....	.....
.....	1-year term .....	Rev. Marlene Laughlin (Pacific Coast)
.....	.....	Pat Tukos (Illinois)

NOTE: At the close of her treasurer's report, Polly Baxter announced that, due to personal reasons and with great regret, she did not wish to seek reelection as treasurer. This information had been made known to the Executive and Nominating Committees prior to convention, and Larry Conant had accepted the nomination for treasurer. He then resigned from General Council in order to accept the office of treasurer, and an election was held to fill his unexpired term. Barbara Taylor of San Diego; Carl Blenkin of Washington DC; Dick Sommer of Urbana; Polly Baxter of Washington DC; and Susan Wood of Florida were nominated to fill Larry's unexpired term. Susan Wood was elected on the eighth ballot. ☒

## Special Moments and Good Times



*VP Chris Laitner, secretary Gloria Toot and treasurer Polly Baxter in a moment of levity.*



*Annella Smith and daughter Carol in another moment of levity.*



*Admiring a miniature horse at the Johnny Appleseed festival.*



*Left: Friday Communion Service. The Rev. David Lomax (r) was a special guest from the British Conference.*



*Above: Eric Allison bids goodbye to his gnome, which he left deep in the campus woods as a legacy to Urbana U.*



# COUNCIL OF MINISTERS REPORT

The Council of Ministers held nine regular sessions from Sunday, June 25 through Tuesday, June 27, with twenty-eight members and nine guests participating. The meeting included five business sessions and four sessions spent in a workshop with Howard Friend. On Wednesday morning, June 28, there was a joint meeting of the Council of Ministers, General Council, and the SSR Board of Trustees and faculty with Bill McKinney, president of the Pacific School of Religion.

The rich and powerful workshop sessions with Howard Friend challenged us to look at ourselves and the church as we are, build on strengths, and address areas that need to be strengthened. We engaged in visioning a future for the church, considering next steps, and entering into covenants with others and ourselves.

The Council of Ministers heard a variety of reports and took several actions. We agreed on guidelines for the mentoring program for the first three years of ministry. We agreed to recommend that the "5C" Committee (Compensation and Career Concerns for Church and Clergy Committee) update and increase recommended salary figures for clergy, considering clergy salary figures outside the denomination for comparison. Also approved were Procedures and Guidelines for Interim Ministry Employment. We agreed in principle with the MINSU proposal on foreign ministries and ministers. The proposed Council of Ministers Budget for 2001 was approved.

## ELECTION RESULTS:

Secretary ..... Ted Klein  
Executive Committee Member .. Eric Allison  
CAM Member ..... Kit Billings  
Nominating Committee ..... John Billings  
Convention Preacher 2002 .... Paul Zacharias

We approved the following proposed amendment to Convention's bylaws (which still requires approval by General Council and Convention):

If a qualified Interim Minister ordained by another communion is to be

hired by a Convention center, she or he should apply to the chair of the Council of Ministers for inclusion on a Roll of Interim Ministers kept by the secretary of the Council, inclusion to be granted in consultation with the Executive Committee. "Qualification" shall consist of satisfactory completion of the basic training of the Interim Ministry Network or by training generally recognized as equivalent. On completion of the term of employment, the Interim Minister may request to be continued on the Roll of Interim Ministers with the annotation "Inactive." Individuals listed need not apply to the chair of the Council in the event of subsequent employment as an interim minister.

Much care went into the following resolution, which was passed unanimously:

The Council of ministers dearly wishes for a resolution of the Cambridge Chapel situation that will meet the legitimate needs of both the Swedenborg School of Religion and the Cambridge Society. The Council of Ministers offers its services in helping to arrange a meeting no later than this fall with representatives from the Council of Ministers, Convention, the SSR Board, the Cambridge Society, and other affiliated bodies that are interested in working together for such a resolution.

The Council of Ministers presented to Convention three recommended resolutions, two authorized candidacy recommendations, and two ordination recommendations. (All of the recommendations were approved by Convention.)

The Council of Ministers recommended to Convention that, due to their deaths, the names of The Revs. En Bo Chung, Friedemann Horn, and Harold Taylor be transferred to the Roll of Former Ministers.

It was recommended by the Council of Ministers to Convention that John Maine, and Sarah Buteux, be approved for Authorized Candidacy Status.

The Council of Ministers made the following recommendation, which was approved unanimously, to Convention:

## Church Calendar Dates

Sep. 8-9	Wayfarers Chapel Board Palos Verdes, CA
Sep. 14-17	MINSU Washington, DC
Sep. 20-21	FPRSU Almont
Sep. 22-24	Cabinet Almont
Sep. 26-28	SSR Board Newton
Oct. 20-22	General Council Temenos
Oct. 26-27	SSR Board
Nov. 4	Investment Committee Newton

At his own request, supported by the approval of his plan of ministry by the Council of Ministers, and on the recommendation of the Committee on Admission into the Ministry, the Council of Ministers recommends that Young-Min Kim, whose ordination has been requested by the Church of the Little Grain, and who has completed the full course of study at the Swedenborg School of Religion, be ordained into our ministry, and that the service of ordination be held at this session of Convention, his name, after ordination, to be placed on our Roll of Ministers.

The Council of Ministers made the following recommendation, which was approved unanimously, to Convention:

At his own request, supported by the approval of his plan of ministry by the Council of Ministers, and on the recommendation of the Committee on Admission into the Ministry, the Council of Ministers recommends that Jun-chol Lee, whose ordination has been requested by the Cleveland Society, and who has completed the full course of study at the Swedenborg School of Religion, be ordained into our ministry, and that the service of ordination be held at this session of Convention, his name, after ordination, to be placed on our Roll of Ministers.

Rev. Dr. Theodore Klein  
Secretary, Council of Ministers



# Special Moments and Good Times



*DEADSU (Drop Everything and Dance Support Unit) rockin' in the Hub Saturday night. (l-r) Laurie Turley on keyboard, Aaron Poole, drums (sorry, he's behind the drums), Robert McCluskey and Ken Turley, guitar, Amy Reichardt, drum, and Joe Tucker, guitar.*



*Carol Fusco, Jay Jordan, Eli Dale, starting every convention session with song.*



*Rev. Marlene Laughlin and Eli Dale, worship service.*



*Nancy Freestone presents a special gift of collection pouches to be used at convention, from the Pacific Coast Association.*



*Convention applauds unanimous approval of Young-Min Kim's and Jun-chol Lee's ordination recommendation.*



*Singing around the bonfire.*



# "BRUISER! YES!"

Editor's Note: Jim Erickson, an esteemed and respected representative of the Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church in St. Paul, followed his announcement of next year's convention locale with an array of coming attractions that, to say the least, would be, unique to Minnesota. The following alleged correspondence with Minnesota's Governor Jesse Ventura, which Jim read to us on the floor of Convention, is self-explanatory—but to what extent depends on, let us hasten to add, the reader's sense of humor.

April 19, 2000

Governor Jesse Ventura  
State Capitol Building  
St. Paul, MN 55101

Dear Governor Ventura:

On behalf of the Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church of St. Paul, Minnesota, I would like to extend to you an invitation to attend the annual meeting of the Convention of Swedenborgian Churches in the United States and Canada to be held from June 24 to July 1, 2001. The annual meeting will take place at the College of St. Thomas in St. Paul.

As representatives of the Swedenborgian denomination, we feel this is an opportunity to build a relationship with you and to correct the unfortunate impression many Christians and members of other religions got when comments you made during an interview with a representative of *Playboy* magazine were taken out of context. We want to assure you that the members of our church have no bad feelings because of your interview.

In your deliberations about attending our meeting at St. Thomas, please consider the following request: We ask that you attend our evening session on Thursday, June 28, 2001 for a special program. At 7:00 in the evening we would like to hold a special wrestling match between you and the president of our denomination. Our president, Ron, "The Bruiser," Brugler looks forward to meeting you and the opportunity to wrestle you in this evening of entertainment.

We would like to make this more fun by suggesting a "no-holds-barred" cage match. Could you visit us earlier in the day to run through how this will occur? Also, would you advise us where we can obtain the necessary equipment for this event?

We certainly hope you will consider our request. We are convinced this will provide opportunities for us to bring some excitement to those attending our meeting and that the resulting publicity will help you in establishing a new relationship with religious organizations and leaders.

If you need more information, do not hesitate to call me.

Please let us know of your decision as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

James E. Erickson

Virginia Street

Swedenborgian Church



Jim Erickson and Kit Billings,  
pastor of the Virginia Street church.

May 6, 2000

Mr. James E. Erickson  
Virginia Street  
Swedenborgian Church  
170 Virginia Street  
St. Paul, MN 55102

Dear Mr. Erickson:

Thank you for your letter. I welcome the words of support from you and the members of your church. As you know I have many critics. I look forward to the day when I have a chance to meet them in right circumstances so I can twist them into a bunch of pretzels.

That reminds me, who is this Bruiser Brugler? I looked in my roster of wrestling colleagues and did not find his name there. Is he a member of the WWF? Send me his vital statistics such as measurements of his height, weight, chest, and biceps. Include a picture so I can see my opponent.

I should point out there is a problem for me to meet the schedule you requested. Because of a previous commitment I am unable to be at the site of your annual meeting at 7:00 on Thursday, June 28, 2001. However, I can be there at 7:30 on that day or at any time on any other day. If that works for you and the others let us go ahead with plans for the match. You can contact my office to schedule an appointment so we can discuss this.

I will be happy to have a preliminary run-through when we can schedule it to accommodate my commitments and appointments. I can find a way to supply the equipment. Has Bruiser participated in a cage match before? Why don't you have him call me sometime for an appointment so we can discuss these matters in person?

My publicist had a suggestion that I liked and you also might like. She will invite Garrison Keillor to be there as the ring announcer. She also will try to get some other Twin Cities personalities to be there, such as Al Franken to conduct pre-match interviews, and Prince or Bob Dylan to sing the National Anthem.

There is another idea for you to consider. As you know, there are a number of action figure dolls representing me available on the market. I would like to reissue this series and launch a new advertising campaign to promote sales. This would be more appealing as a refreshed marketing effort if we could include a companion action figure doll representing Bruiser Brugler. Please ask him to consider this or we can take care of it when he contacts me to discuss matters I mentioned above.

In closing I want to extend an invitation on behalf of the state of Minnesota to all those in your congregation to attend Convention in St. Paul June 24–30, 2001.

Sincerely yours,

Jesse Ventura

Governor, State of Minnesota



"Bruiser, are you sure you want to go through with this?"  
"Piece-of-cake, Elizabeth. I have a whole year to train. I'm gonna clean his clock!"



"You're the MAN, Bruiser!" (l-r) Jenn Tafel,  
Andy Stinson, Missy Sommer, Pat Tukos,  
Michelle Huffman, Barb Halle.

# CATSU: NEW SUPPORT UNIT

by Emma Destiny Sommer  
[a Swedenborgian cat]

My name is Emma Destiny Sommer. I became part of the Swedenborgian Church during the Urbana convention. Some people said we needed a new support unit called "CATSU," and I was told that since I'm a cat I should be the chair. I don't know if I like being a chair; mostly I scratch on chairs.

When convention started, I was just a starving, homeless, hungry cat hanging around Urbana University. I refuse to discuss my past. I will only say that I am mama to five little ones.

One day I was hanging around on campus begging for food when I heard staff talking about how they needed lots of groceries, since the Swedenborgians were coming to town. They sounded a little frantic as they said it, like it meant hoards of hungry people. But I figured, with lots of people around, I'd get noticed and petted and fed.

I was right!

Unfortunately, those early arrivers tried feeding me people food from their meals. I was getting quite a tummy ache from it all. I took my case to the Council of Ministers, and, as a result, Jim Lawrence and Wilma Wake formed a sub-committee. Jim drove the committee to a grocery store and bought enough cat food for my entire convention stay. Thanks, Uncle Jim! The young people, looking for a project worthy of their energies, agreed to feed me and to search for my kittens. I had such fun watching them look all over the campus, as I kept my little ones safely hidden from all human beings! I let only Rachel Poole see the children, just for a few moments before we ran into the woods!

Things really got interesting after those minister meetings ended and lots of Swedenborgians showed up. They opened up the auditorium in Grimes Hall and had lots of displays for me to

poke my nose into. It was really fun.

When the meetings started I just walked in and sat down. I kept trying to register as a delegate, but there seemed to be some problem with my species. How narrow-minded! But, not to be deterred, I crawled under the bleachers where I sat through every business meeting. Well, of course, I catnapped through most of them, as I saw many of the people delegates doing.

As my admirers increased, I worked hard to make known my plight. I was a homeless single mom with five children and, once the Swedenborgians left town, I would be starving again. I tried to impress upon everyone my desire to become a member of Convention. One delegate noted that accepting me into Convention would mean five new Sunday school members! I discussed the matter of my future quite vocally with the people at the registration desk, until Pat and Dick Sommer decided to adopt me. At last, I had real parents of my own! True, they are not cats, but



*Feeding of the Cat: (l-r) Aaron Poole, Emma Destiny Sommer, Natalie Wagner, Rachel Poole.*

they have good hearts and seem quite trainable!

They said they would like to name me Emanuel, but since I'm a young female, decided on Emma instead. Then Shannon Fischer said I should be called "Destiny," since it was clearly my destiny to have a loving, Swedenborgian family care for me the rest of my life.

So, I was named Emma Destiny Sommer. Dorothea Harvey and Deborah Winter and Wilma Wake formed a committee to put together a



*Blessing of the Cat: (l-r) Barb Mackey, Wilma Wake, Pat Sommer, Sola Thorhallsson, Shannon Fischer, Dorothea Harvey. (center) Emma Destiny Sommer.*

Blessing of the Cat ceremony. It was so beautiful! So many Swedenborgians showed up to pet me and bless me. I felt I was being welcomed into the Swedenborgian family, a family that so desperately needed a cat!

I was feeling like a real Swedenborgian then, so I thought it appropriate to attend the memorial communion on Friday morning. I walked right in and made myself at home. After the service, I sat at the door as an usher, greeting people who passed by.

Soon, all those hoards of Swedenborgians left town! It was quite desolate. My new mom and dad didn't want me to leave my children too soon, so we had picnic dinners on campus with my Aunt Barb Mackey. Then they thought I had disappeared, and they got really scared for a couple of days. They drove around town asking about me until they tracked me down on a farm where a nice woman had catnapped me. But Mom and Dad explained how I belonged to their church. The nice woman patted me on the head and asked me if I had been saved. I purred. She said it was clear to her that I belonged with the Swedenborgians. So Mom and Dad took me home where I am safe and so very happy.

My children are older now, and they are making their own way in the world. Many people are hunting for them to offer them homes. I am not worried—I trained those kids to be survivors by begging handouts from local Swedenborgians. They'll show up.

(Continued on page 118)

# Appreciation for Service



*Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey honored for her 25 years in the ministry. (Ted Klein at right).*



*Martha Bauer and Susan Wood, (l) presented with flowers in appreciation for their hard work on convention. Bill Coffman and Dick Sommer were also recognized.*



*Dr. Mary Kay Klein receives plaque honoring her 15 years as president of SSR.*



*Polly Baxter honored for her four years as treasurer.*



*Larry Conant receives a jar of Fluffernutter for his service in Central Office. (For the story behind that, you'll have to ask Larry.)*



*Rev. Lee Woofenden, for his work on IMSU.*



*Rev. Jerry Poole honored for his 35 years in the ministry.*



*Han Sik Kim expresses great and effusive appreciation of convention, with his wife interpreting.*



*Linda Tafel, for her work on MINSU.*



*Alan Thomsen, for his work on MINSU.*

# SCYL COORDINATOR NEEDED

## JOB DESCRIPTION:

This administrative position, supervised by the Education Support Unit, (EDSU) is for the coordinator of the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL), to assist the efforts of local youth organizations. It is a quarter-time position, which should average about 10 hours a week.

## JOB DUTIES:

Maintain the national Youth League

- Coordinate the election of SCYL officers
- Oversee the SCYL officers, including the printing of *Clear Blue Sky*
- Attend and facilitate SCYL officer meetings
- Maintain a working knowledge of the SCYL Constitution
- Communicate with local Swedenborgian youth leagues, churches, pastors, and lay leaders
- Facilitate communication and interaction between local leagues
- Assist churches and youth leaders in starting and maintaining local leagues
- Maintain and distribute mailing list
- Serve as liaison to EDSU and Convention

Coordinate retreats

- Provide a director for retreats
- Assist director to plan and implement regional retreats
- Coordinate regional volunteers and staff
- Provide evaluation of retreats
- Provide all publicity production for the retreats, including retreat registrations

Facilitate SCYL at annual convention

- Assist SCYL report on floor of convention

- Provide supervision and guidance during convention
- Assist with SCYL chapel service
- Assist with banner and table display
- Coordinate SCYL functions with the Convention Planning Committee
- Prior to meetings, provide written report to EDSU on League activity
- Oversee SCYL budget

## Minimum Qualifications:

- Must be responsible, committed, focused, articulate, healthy, active adult with a good sense of humor
- Loves, understands, and has good rapport with young people
- Has knowledge and experience with youth and children
- Has demonstrated good organizational skills in administrative management, including budgeting, publishing, and word processing
- Has demonstrated ability to work with other adults as part of a team
- Has excellent communication skills with both youth and adults
- Has earned a high school diploma
- Must not be convicted of any crime other than minor traffic violations

## DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- Two years college or more
- Knowledge of instructional strategies and resources
- Knowledge of the workings of General Convention

- Familiarity with Swedenborgian theology
- Two years experience in a youth related program, preferably Swedenborgian
- Able to attend retreats, camps, and annual convention

Please send or e-mail cover letter, resume, and references to:

Michelle J. Huffman, EDSU Secretary  
11 Howell St., Dover, DE 19901  
e-mail: mjhjr@umich.edu  
Home: 302-698-5165 Work: 302-653-2880



## YOUTH WORKERS

### Conference & Workshop II

September 15-17, 2000 Fryeburg, Maine

Do you work with teens, or do you want to? Are you interested in starting a youth group, and want some great ideas? This fall, the Education Support Unit (EDSU) is sponsoring a Youth Worker's Conference and Work-shop, to be held at beautiful Fryeburg New Church Assembly, in Fryeburg, Maine. The workshop will be an excellent chance to get some new ideas and meet other people who work with youth. Come and enjoy good times, good ideas, beautiful fall scenery, and some serious spiritual recharging.

John Devine, a 12-year youth group facilitator in Ontario, and one of last fall's Youth Workers Conference presenters, will be the major retreat facilitator. Peter Shaw, a professional musician, will also be presenting, and possibly other interested parties.


Presentation/Workshop topics include:

- Having FUN with Kids in Church

**Youth Groups:** an interactive series of two workshops (with actual participation!) designed to develop exciting psychodynamics which lead to specific outcomes and the powerful welcoming aspects of Christian community for the youth of your church.

- **Designing a Program for your Youth Group:** a chance to discuss your needs with John and the group and have a chance to talk about the strengths and challenges of your involvement with Youth ministry, and get some tips on designing a program to take home.

- **Having Fun with Prayer:** a participatory workshop where you will learn some unique ways of getting kids to have fun with prayer. The latest music topping the Christian charts will be presented, and some music and lyrics to take home to your youth.

For more information, please contact Michelle Huffman at 515-790-2209, or mjhjr@umich.edu; or Laurie Turley at 207-935-4500 or lakeemet@landmarknet.net. Some financial assistance is available. 

## Letter from the Editor:

The Communications Support Unit and *The Messenger* want to thank all those who responded to the September 1999 *Messenger* Fund Appeal. The appeal brought in a total of \$2,695, with \$825 added to *The Messenger's* Endowment Fund.

There is no charge to members for their ten issues, but the cost to the church is

approximately \$30 for each yearly subscription. If you feel that *The Messenger* is worth \$30 a year to you, perhaps you would volunteer to defray some of the publication's costs. Your support and love for your church's *Messenger* are sincerely appreciated, and again, many thanks to those of you who made contributions to *The Messenger* in the past.

Patte LeVan

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ I want my enclosed contribution to be used for:

☐ One-year subscription to *The Messenger* ☐ *The Messenger* Endowment fund

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to *The Messenger* and mail it in the enclosed pre-addressed envelope included in this issue, to: Swedenborgian Church, Central Office, 11 Highland Avenue, Newtonville, Massachusetts 02460.

## Architects, Lanterns, and Sheepdogs

(Continued from page 106)

unable to bring you down. Israel; sheepdog; one who serves by persevering.

Now you will experience both life and death, more. I pray that you will do so in a spirit of genuine thanks, always grateful for the larger life to which you have been called, in which both the living and the dead are eternally present before God. Be sheepdogs, lanterns, and architects. Do what you can to bring people together and keep them together; lift up the light of the Word, and call people to God's presence with them; build a future in which God's love and truth rules within all people, the beloved community.

*The Rev. Robert McCluskey is pastor of the New York New Church and one of four Swedenborgian Church's delegates to the National Council of Churches.* ☩

## CATSU: NEW SUPPORT UNIT

(Continued from page 115)

I should also say in this report that I heard another stray cat showed up at the end of convention begging for food and a home. Word gets around quickly on the "catnip" vine when friendly folks are in town! This cat, now named CAT, was adopted by Pamela Shuttleworth and Anne Connell and also has a happy home now.

So, since I am this chair of a support unit, I think we have important items to consider:

1. Membership. Who would like to join CATSU? Anyone of any age or any species can join by e-mailing Pat Sommer at [psommer@foryou.net](mailto:psommer@foryou.net).
2. Should cats be allowed to attend convention as delegates? What are your feelings on this?
3. What kind of budget do we have? Is there enough to feed whatever stray cats show up at next year's convention?

Thank you for letting me become part of your Swedenborgian family. A family that is now complete with a cat!

Love,  
Emma Destiny Sommer ☩

## ALLIANCE OF NEW CHURCH WOMEN ELECTED OFFICERS 2000—2001

President .....	Jennifer Tafel, Urbana, Ohio
1st Vice President .....	Beverly Titus, Dexter, Michigan
2nd Vice President .....	Sue Burns, Arnold, Missouri
Secretary .....	Phyllis Bosley, Altadena, California
Treasurer .....	Margaret Kraus, Pretty Prairie, Kansas
Asst. Treasurer .....	Jeannette Hille, Plymouth, Minnesota
Mite Box Chair .....	Rev. Susannah Currie, West Chester, Pennsylvania
Religious Chair .....	Rev. Renee Billings, Birmingham, Michigan
Publication Chair .....	Nan Paget, Mill Valley, California
Round Robin Chair .....	Merrilee Phinney, Carver, Massachusetts
Nominating Committee Chair	
(2001) Nan Paget .....	Mill Valley, California
(2002) Martha Richardson .....	Fryeburg, Maine
(2003) Pam Selensky .....	New York, New York
(2004) Sharon (Reddekopp) Williams .....	Airdrie, Alberta
(2005) Rosemary Brown-Moore .....	Cottage Grove, Minnesota



*Incoming president Jenn Tafel presents card and gift to outgoing president Mary Crenshaw.*



*Jeannette Hille  
Nominating Committee Chair  
(2000)*

The Alliance voted to give the 2000 Mite Box contributions to Transitions, the group of young people who come together as a spiritual community of Swedenborgians to discuss theology, share their journeys and to be a spiritual support for each other. They will be gathering at Temenos in October for their fall retreat and have asked the Rev. Susannah Currie to facilitate their theological discussions. ☩

*(l-r) Juliet Cunningham, convention pianist; Renee Billings, Margaret Kraus ham it up with a song at the Women's Alliance luncheon, held at the Douglas Inn in Urbana.*



*Special presentation at convention, history of the Women's Alliance, written by Phyllis Bosley (not in photo). (l-r) Marge Calby, Ruth Wagoner, Nan Paget, Diane Rienstra, Pat Zacharias, Pamela Selensky, Mary Crenshaw, Patte LeVan, Margaret Kraus, Annella Smith.*



## BAPTISMS

**Immediato**—Melayna Jaise Immediato was baptized into the Christian faith May 11, 2000, at the Swedenborgian Church of the Holy City, Wilmington, Delaware, the Rev. Randall Laakko officiating. The parents are Carl and Paula Immediato.

**Osgood**—Rachel Mullaney Osgood, daughter of Timothy and Gretchen (Krim) Osgood, was baptized into the Christian faith June 18, 2000, at the Church of the New Jerusalem in Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Kenneth Turley officiating. Godparents are Alfred and Jolene Snow.

**Scholfield**—Emily Rose Scholfield was born April 1, 2000 and baptized into the Christian faith May 21, 2000, at the Swedenborgian Church of the Holy City, Wilmington, Delaware, the Rev. Randall Laakko officiating. The parents are Everett L. Scholfield and Dr. Kim Rose Scholfield.

## MARRIAGES

**Walker and Emery**—Vicki-Lynn Walker and Lorne Christopher Emery were united in marriage May 27, 2000, at the Fryeburg Congregational Church in Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Kenneth Turley officiating.

**Young and Pugh**—Dorothy Muriel Young, daughter of Dorothy DeB. Young and a member of the Boston Swedenborgian Church, and John Clifford Pugh were united in marriage February 8, 2000, in Scottsdale, Arizona.

## DEATHS

**Cluett**—Hector Cluett entered the spiritual world January 4, 2000, following a brief illness. A memorial service was conducted January 11, 2000, at the Swedenborgian Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario, the Rev. Paul Zacharias and lay leader John Maine officiating.

**Copeland**—Francis R. Copeland, 86, lifelong member of the Bridgewater Swedenborgian Church in Bridgewater, Mass., entered the spiritual world March 23, 2000. A memorial service was conducted March 27 at the Bridgewater church, the Rev. Lee Woofenden officiating. Mr. Copeland is survived by his wife Ruth (Crocker) Copeland; four daughters, Marie Benoit, Diana Leach, Francine Conant, and Deborah Bryant; a sister, Winifred Porter; nine grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

**Drouin**—Kathleen Drouin, 96, longtime member of the Swedenborgian Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario, entered the spiritual world

January 4, 2000. A graveside service was conducted January 7, 2000, the Rev. Paul Zacharias officiating. Kathleen was the granddaughter of the late Rev. F.W. Tuerk, who was the longest-serving minister of the Kitchener church, from 1860-1901.

**Shepherd**—Velma (Unruh) Shepherd, lifelong member of the Pawnee Rock, Kansas Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world May 21, 2000, in Phoenix, Arizona. A memorial service was conducted June 17, 2000, at the Pawnee Rock church, the Rev. Eric Zacharias officiating.

**Targett**—John H. Targett, Jr., age 77, longtime member of the Fryeburg New Church in Fryeburg, Maine, entered the spiritual world June 27, 2000, at the Golden View Health Care Center in Meredith, New Hampshire.

A Masonic service was conducted July 1, 2000, at Fish Street Cemetery in North Fryeburg. ☩



# Thank You

Dear Friends,

*W*al, Ron, Toby and Jessie Brugler thank all of you at Convention and throughout the church for your prayers and support during my father's final days, and for the prayers, cards, phone calls and support offered to us since my mother died on July 24. We also appreciated so many of you at Convention taking the time to come to the funeral home on Sunday, July 2nd. It has been quite a summer for us, and we could not have faced this ordeal without all of you. All of this proved that we are part of a very loving and caring church. God bless you.

*The Bruglers* ☩

## Thanks to All, with Love and Appreciation

*T*o all of you who were present at Convention 2000 in Urbana this year, I offer my thanks. Due to the Rev. Ron Brugler's absence because of sad family matters, it was my duty to preside for three days—a position I'd not anticipated.

My deepest thanks is given to you, the delegates and friends at this convention, whose help and care made things run smoothly. There are no words to express my appreciation for your assistance in everything that went on.

It certainly was the "highlight convention" of my life, but many of my memories will be of the help and information given by those of you who were in attendance.

My thanks to everyone!  
*Chris Laitner, Vice-president* ☩

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.

## Wayfarers Chapel Calendar of Events 2000

*All events, unless otherwise specified, take place on Tuesday evenings from 7-9 p.m.*



*Ted Bosley*

**SEPTEMBER 19:** Lecture—Ted Bosley, director of the Gamble House, author of *Greene and Greene*, will present: Art, Craft and Spirit, the Architecture of Greene and Greene. His exposure to the architecture of the Arts and Crafts movement was at the age of three when he began attending the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, one of the earliest and most iconic buildings of the movement. Reception and book signing. Donation \$10.00. Proceeds from this event to benefit the new Visitors Center. (Construction began on July 10.)

**OCTOBER 19:** An evening with acclaimed author Chuck Hillinger, author of *Chuck Hillinger's America*, *Chuck Hillinger's California* and *Chuck Hillinger's Anacapa Island*. Chuck is a local resident and worked as a *Los Angeles Times* reporter for 45 years. Reception and book signing. Donation \$5.00.



*Rafer Johnson*

**OCTOBER 24:** Rafer Johnson, Olympic gold medalist, author of *Be The Best That You Can Be*. Rafer will share his inspiring life story. He is one of the founders of Special Olympics. Reception and book signing. Free and open to the wayfaring public.

**NOVEMBER—THANKSGIVING:** Collection of clothing, toys, and food for Rainbow Services Shelter for women and children.

**NOVEMBER 14:** Eric Lloyd Wright—Lecture: Three Generations of Wright Architecture. Eric went to work for his grandfather, Frank Lloyd Wright, at the Taliesin Fellowship, where he was an apprentice from 1948 until 1956. He left the fellowship to join his father, Lloyd Wright, in his architectural practice in Los Angeles and, in 1979, after his father's death, formed his own practice. Donation \$10.00. Reception.



*Eric Lloyd Wright*

**NOVEMBER 28:** Dietz Brothers Concert—Local favorites playing everything from classical to steel drums. Donation \$10.00. Reception.

**DECEMBER** - Donations received for Interfaith Shelter (Homeless).

**DECEMBER** - Christmas Concert with the Chapel Musicians under the direction of Chapel music director, Wendy Waring. ☩

*Wayfarers Chapel is an ecumenical ministry of the Swedenborgian Church located in Rancho Palos Verdes, California. For further information call (310) 377-1279.*



The Swedenborgian Church of North America  
*The Messenger*  
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