

THE MESSENGER

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A Crescendo of Celebrations Completes the Swedenborg Foundation's Sesquicentennial Year

Deborah Forman and Chris Largent

The night of November 14, 2000, witnessed gala celebrations for admirers of Emanuel Swedenborg. At 600 Park Avenue, New York, the Swedish Consul General's official residence, the Honorable Mr. Olle Wästberg and Madame Wästberg hosted a reception to honor the launch of the first volume, *Heaven and Hell*, of the New Century Edition (NCE) of the Works of Emanuel Swedenborg on the occasion of the Swedenborg Foundation's sesquicentennial anniversary.

A crowd of international literary, scholarly, and diplomatic figures was invited, including author and former Swedish ambassador to the Vatican Lars Bergquist, author and composer Anders Hallengren, and Dr. Bernhard Lang of Paderborn University, famous for his acclaimed work *Heaven: A History*, and



(L-R) Dr. Forster Freeman, president of the Swedenborg Foundation Board of Directors and Mrs. and Mr. Olle Wästberg.

contributor of the introduction to *Heaven and Hell*.

NCE series editor Dr. Jonathan Rose spoke about the NCE project and intro-

duced his translation team, highlighting ancient language and Swedenborg scholar Dr. George F. Dole, translator of *Heaven and Hell*. Dr. Dole presented the handsome, oversized *Heaven and Hell*, with its plum cover and gold stamping, to Consul General Wästberg, as well as a complimentary charter subscription for the entire NCE as a gift from the Swedenborg Foundation to the government of Sweden.

On a lighter note, Swedenborg Foundation executive director/publisher Deborah Forman presented "team jerseys" sporting the NCE logo, an 18th-century engraving of a flaming heart, to the NCE translation team. She also introduced Anders Hallengren's performance of his piano composition, "Sesquicentessentia," which he wrote to capture the spirit or quintessence of the Foundation's sesquicentennial.

The primary focus of the reception, however, remained the launch of the 15-year, 26-volume NCE, which is expected to revitalize interest in, and academic study of, Emanuel Swedenborg's visionary theology. Though Swedenborg has influenced thinkers in many fields from his own time to the present, translations of his works have often suffered from inconsistency, literalism, and archaic diction.

In recognition of the Swedenborg Foundation's dedication to bringing



(L-R) Madame Wästberg and Consul General Olle Wästberg, Dr. Bernhard Lang of Paderborn University (writer of the introduction to *Heaven and Hell*); Dr. George F. Dole (translator of *HH*), and Dr. Stuart Shotwell, managing editor of the NCE.

Swedenborg's thought into the present, Herman Baron Gyllenhaal till Häärlingstorp, former press counsellor at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, presented a medal struck in honor of Swedenborg.

Following the reception's close, the assembled guests wended their way to the New York Academy of Sciences, an appropriate venue for premiering a documentary on the life and work of Swedenborg, who was both a scientist and theologian. The executive-in-charge-of-production and co-script-writer Deborah Forman introduced the new film, *Splendors of the Spirit: Swedenborg's Quest for Insight* and its producer and director, Emmy-award winner Penny Price, who expressed the indelible impression left on her by Swedenborg during her immersion in the project and the gratitude she felt for the Swedenborg Foundation's board of directors for their unfailing kindness and helpfulness with the film. The film was well received for its clear and

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I have been working with the folks at Town and Country Press for nearly ten years. They're a family-run press in Plymouth, Indiana, that's been designing, printing, and mailing out *The Messenger* for a decade. Some of their staff I've met, of course, when I was living in Indiana eight years ago, and some, such as our very capable designer, Rita, I know only through numerous phone conversations.

I felt I knew Dwight better than anybody there, because he used to come by the house to pick up and deliver the copy when I lived in LaPorte. We always chatted about family stuff, joked about the weather and life's foibles in general, and more than once he waited patiently through last-minute snafus and delays with the *Messenger* copy. I always felt reassured that everything was in good hands when Dwight walked out the door with the *Messenger* packet tucked under his arm.

When I moved to California, Dwight became an occasional voice on the phone, when he happened to answer if the receptionist was out to lunch, or he was the only one there. It was sometime in 1995 when he answered the phone and I noticed that there wasn't the usual zest and warm interest in his voice. Then he told me his son, Greg, had been hit on his bicycle as he was coming home from work, by a drunk driver, and was in a coma. The prognosis wasn't good, but for a while Dwight held on to slender hope that there would be some improvement in his son's condition, that he could at least come to a point where he recognized family members, and there could be some kind of communication.

I checked in with Dwight periodically as the weeks and months went on, but there was never any change. The young man was moved to a long-term care facility, and I realized at some point that Dwight had accepted that there wasn't going to be any miracle. I had the impression from bits of conversation with him that the family pulled together and moved through the sad years that followed, suffering both alone and with each other,

strengthening one another in the ways that families have done throughout the ages in the wake of tragedy, of necessity arriving at some semblance of a normal life that is forever altered. Of course I was one of those on the outside, not living with it daily, so I no longer mentioned it unless he did; there seemed no point. Dwight gradually got back to a place where he was joking about things in general on the phone.

I hadn't talked with Dwight for some time when he happened to answer the phone the other day. I said it was good to hear his voice, and asked him how he was doing. "Well, I'm better," he said. "Better than what?" I quipped. "Have you been sick?"

"Well," he said thoughtfully, "My son died last week."

"Dwight, I'm so sorry—I didn't know," I said.

"It's ok, I'm all right," he answered. His son had gotten pneumonia, and they knew it was the end and they let him go, "but it was a pretty tough week." I wasn't aware, until he told me then, that his son had a five-year-old daughter who had been born after the accident. His son had never seen his little girl or been able to speak with her, although she visited him regularly with her mother and other family members.

"It's been hard for her," Dwight told me, "but do you know what she said to her mother after he died?...she said, 'Now Daddy will be able to see me.'"

Patte LeVan

Postscript: When I e-mailed Dwight to ask his permission to publish this piece, he and his wife Regina wrote back... "Thank you for thinking about us and our Greg... Greg was and is a truly terrific son. We miss him dearly, but know that he is being well taken care of on the other side. We would consider it an honor for more people to know about him."

On that note of faith, the editor and COMSU wish the Gunters, the staff at Town & Country Press, and *Messenger* readers blessings and light in the New Year.



TEACHER

The teacher comes,
over the meadow She comes.

We sit beside the stream
and wind through the forest trails
upward across the shale
where few living things seem to exist.

This is where Snowhawk soars.
This is Snowhawk's domain.

The teacher comes to the darkness when
the mind is sightless, motionless,
all seems shut down.

The teacher stirs the cold fire:
a spark winks, hope begins to stir,
purpose remembers itself.

Perhaps not remembering
where or how
it was overtaken by darkness,
but it remembers
there was a Path, a Plan, a Way.

The teacher comes, wherever we are,
always waiting with joy to share,
a beacon to light our way,
a hand for us to hold
as we steady ourselves and move on.

Snowhawk soars, and She watches,
with fierce Compassion.

—Janet Ashton Vernon
January 1997

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day of the month of issue.

Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* in the New Century Edition

Reviewed by Wilson Van Dusen

This is a substantial volume of 535 pages. The cover is a handsome wine color, well conceived with some decorations specified by Swedenborg for the original Latin edition of 1758. On opening it one sees section numbers in a bold red-brown. Though the top of the page also has section numbers, most anyone looking up a section number will use the bold colored numbering. The print is fairly large and well spaced so that a large print edition may not be necessary. In the whole makeup of the book one has the sense of a careful job meant to last a century. The hardcover edition is \$49.00 with various discounts available.

George Dole is the translator of this volume. Since Dole published a translation of *Heaven and Hell* in 1976 my first question was, Is this that older translation? A quick comparison says no. I compared the same lines in the Rendell

Over and over I could see how an idea that was a little obscure in older translations now became clear.

translation of 1899 and the current 1900 Ager translation in the Swedenborg Foundation standard edition and in the older Dole. This is clearly the closest to contemporary English. As detailed comparisons were made it became apparent to me what a difficult job the translator has, to be faithful to the



author's intent and yet render it in modern clear English. Over and over I could see how an idea that was a little obscure in older translations now became clear. I promptly removed from my library three other translations in favor of this one. Dr. Dole may have set a standard for other translators. This edition has everything the individual on a spiritual search could ask for. Swedenborg frequently elaborated points in HH by references to the *Arcana Coelestia* (now called *Heavenly Secrets*). If you really want to pin down what Swedenborg meant, these references help. There are superscripts in the text that lead to a section of Notes in which three scholars further comment on the text. Over time we gradually accumulate insight on the text and here in Notes are these. There is also a greatly revised index to the text and an index to the Preface, Introduction, and Notes. Also there is an index to scriptural passages and to parallel passages in other works of Swedenborg's theology.

There is a translator's preface which takes us into his intent in this translation. Apparently Swedenborg's original Latin was clear and straightforward. It has been a challenge to make the

translation as clear. There is also a historical introduction by Bernhard Lang. I personally had the greatest difficulty with this. Lang appears to be a philosopher who must view Swedenborg in terms of this and that philosophy and what influenced him. On page 33 he finds a tiny link of Plotinus to Swedenborg at the age of 22. I can supply a far better link. Plotinus was a great Greek mystic centuries before Swedenborg. How did they turn out to be so alike? They simply had the same teacher, namely God. Probably people will differ on the value of Lang's section which was meant to put *Heaven and Hell* in a broad philosophical and historical context.

This edition has everything the individual on a spiritual search could ask for.

Many worked on this volume of *Heaven and Hell*. It shows great care and thoroughness. It was meant to be a first rank scholarly work, and it fully achieves that status. Dr. Dole's translation is particularly to be commended. This is now the best English edition of *Heaven and Hell* in existence.

Wilson Van Dusen is a psychologist, mystic, and Swedenborgian author and scholar. His latest book, *Beauty, Wonder, and the Mystical Mind* is available from the Swedenborg Foundation.

For general ordering information, call the Foundation at 1-800-355-3222.



Library and Archives at Swedenborg School of Religion

John Hawkins

During the spring of 1999 much time was spent preparing the library collection and the SSR portion of the archives for the move from 48 Sargent Street to new quarters at 617 Cambridge Street in Brighton. One of the main reasons for wanting this collection to be readily accessible to SSR during this interim period was our desire to deliver the library and archives in an organized and usable state to its ultimate destination. Now we are all preparing for a major, much more significant move.

Providing services to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and members of the Church continues to be our first priority. In addition to the regular services provided to traditional library users, we are also trying to provide services for many of our new distance learners. Books are made available in a variety of ways through the efforts of the faculty.

Some traditional library tasks have been suspended. We still continue to acquire publications of the Swedenborg Foundation and other works specifically concerned with Swedenborg. However, other attempts to increase the collection have been put on hold. As we prepare for a move, a culling process is underway. All portions of the collection which make it uniquely valuable for students of Swedenborg will be retained. Other books that might duplicate those in the library of a future host institution but would be useful to keep in the library for a House of Studies might also be retained. Thanks to faculty help the culling process is proceeding very well.

The archival collection formerly housed at 48 Sargent Street, Newton, is well known as a source for information about the New Church and prominent Swedenborgians. Scholars interested in a variety of prominent people with connections to Swedenborg have used it as a resource. A doctoral candidate at Columbia University and a fellow of the National Museum of American Art recently made inquiries about

Swedenborg's influence on American landscape painter George Inness (1825-1894). A professor from the University of Kentucky called to verify extant editions of works by Sampson Reed. A doctoral candidate at Boston College came to examine the James John Garth Wilkinson papers for information on William James and psychical research. A minister and historian from Denver, Colorado, visited our archives to research material on Lydia Maria Child, a prominent abolitionist and figure in the women's movement, who had been a member of the New Church in Boston. In addition to requests for historical research, we have had requests for genealogical information from people in such diverse places as London, England, and Hoover, Alabama. It is evident that our archives are well known. They appear to have grown without any defining structure and now need to be organized in a way that will make them more accessible. We need to examine our reasons for having an archive as well as the extent of our commitment to it.

This archival collection had material collected from the school and General Convention, the governing body of the Church. It included financial and administrative records of General Convention; records of national, regional and local New Church associations, societies, boards and committees; Swedenborg School records; and material concerning prominent New Church ministers, individuals, families, groups, and other notable figures in the history of the New Church and Swedenborgian thought. The material spans the mid 1800s to the present.

Institutional material includes reports, minutes, correspondence, ledgers, account books, architectural blueprints, Church bulletins and Church records, (baptisms, confirmations, marriages, deaths). Personal material includes correspondence, diaries, manuscripts, sermons, newspaper clippings, photographs and drawings. Pamphlets related to New Church doctrines are also collected.

At the time of the move from 48

Sargent Street a portion of the archives was sent to Iron Mountain under the auspices of General Convention. The remainder is housed at 617 Cambridge Street under the auspices of SSR.

For more than 150 years the archives have grown due to the foresight of dedicated church members who have donated much of the material now housed. The fact that this material is accessible at all is due to a series of archivists, mostly volunteers, who worked long and hard trying to organize the material and make it available for research. This archival collection will be moved with SSR and will continue to be consulted by church members and other interested scholars. It is time for us to respect the efforts of all those who have made the archives a reality. We turn them over knowing that clear acquisition/collecting policies will be established so that the collection will be as complete as possible. In addition, procedures have to be initiated to preserve and catalog these materials that document the history and growth of the New Church. Scholars are certainly aware of the existence of our archives. We have an obligation to ourselves and to them to make it a useful tool for their research and coincidentally for the further growth of our denomination.

John Hawkins has been a professional librarian for over forty years serving in academic and research libraries in the Boston area. He has an S.M. from Simmons College, and an M.Ed. from Boston State. He has just completed his first year as Librarian/Archivist at SSR.



Sh-h

A Sunday school teacher whispered to her small children, as they were on their way into the church service, "And why is it necessary for us to be quiet in church?"

One bright little girl replied, "Because people are sleeping."

HENRY DAVID THOREAU AND SWEDENBORG

Most readers of *The Messenger* know something about Swedenborg's influence on New England writers such as Sarah Orne Jewett and Robert Frost. During the nineteenth century particularly, the Swedish mystic's ideas were widely discussed throughout the area. We think of Emerson and his circle and the Transcendentalist movement he led. Emerson's religious philosophy incorporated Swedenborgian thinking, and in a series of lectures the sage of Concord included a talk (somewhat critical) on Swedenborg as the representative mystic; it later became a chapter in *Representative Men*, 1850.

Little has been said, however, about the influence on Thoreau, Emerson's friend and fellow townsman. Now regarded as America's foremost nature writer as well as eminent social critic, Thoreau did not once mention Swedenborg in his *Journal*, published in fourteen volumes in 1906. But there are two references in his first book, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, 1849, which bear examination. The first occurs in the third chapter, "Sunday," where he says: "I trust that some [people] may be as near and dear to Buddha, or Christ, or Swedenborg who are without the pale of their churches." Thoreau felt that someone who was not a devotee (that is, outside the "pale") could more objectively appreciate the significance of these figures' lives and truly love them ("for love is the main thing"). That he included Swedenborg in this list is high praise indeed. (His inclusion of Christ, God as divine human, was deliberate and stemmed from his strongly held Transcendental belief of there being a marked divinity in all of us.) Ever the eclectic, he included Swedenborg in another list in the last chapter, "Friday": "Veias, Manu, Zoroaster, Socrates, Christ, Shakespeare, Swedenborg." He called them "some of our astronomers," those who had seen into the "immaterial starry system," of which the physical firmament was "but the outward and visible type." This latter notion, in which physical fact corresponds to spiritual truth, is in itself very Swedenborgian in tone, and we are reminded, too, of Frost's idealistic counsel in one of his poems—"take something like a star / To stay our minds on." Thoreau hoped to gain information concerning "that OTHER world," that purer realm on whose verge we live and from which intimations of its existence are "wafted over" to us. Swedenborg and the other "astronomers" could lead us in seeing beyond the here and now to these spiritual things.

Thoreau's second book, and last published in his lifetime, the classic *Walden*, 1854, contains no direct reference to Swedenborg. But if, as Emerson states in *Representative Men*, Swedenborg comprehended the "flowing of nature"—that is, the kinship of constituent parts and its repetition of forms—then Thoreau provides concrete evidence in his book. It is nowhere better expressed than in the penultimate chapter, "Spring," wherein he observes the patterns which thawing

earth assumes in flowing down a cutbank. He finds that feathers, ice crystals, along with thawing clay—and man is "but a mass of thawing clay"—all exhibit a leaf design. All are related.

The final sentence of the last chapter, "Conclusion," seems to point to a more direct influence, or at least a parallel consideration by the two thinkers of a book in the Bible. Thoreau speaks of the "morning star" described by John of Patmos in Revelation, the book Swedenborg analyzed in *Apocalypse*

Revealed and Apocalypse Explained. The biblical image occurs as—"And I will give him the morning star" (2:28). This is in reference to Christ's having said five verses previously that He "will give unto every one of you according to your works" (cf. Swedenborg's statement on works—"the life of religion is to do good"). There is also a pertinent second citation in Revelation when Christ speaks of Himself as "the bright and morning star" (22:16).

Now, many Christian ministers tend to find Revelation a challenge and are wont to bypass it in their sermons, except possibly in linking its striking pictures with contemporary disasters and wars. Swedenborg, on the other hand, saw the whole book as an enlightening metaphor—the course of conflict between good and evil in human life, in the individual and the race, and the Lord's "kingdom" with its morning-star light of truth and goodness finally prevailing. Swedenborgians ever think of Revelation as the "charter" of their church; our own church in Rosthern, Saskatchewan, typically has a quotation from it inscribed above the altar—"Behold, I make all things new" (21:5).

Thoreau, in keeping with the Swedenborgians, liked to allude to Revelation in *Walden*. It is a morning work—to awaken people to a dawning world, as the title-page epigraph about crowing like chanticleer makes obvious. That his two morning references (chanticleer and star) occur at the outset and the close of *Walden* has some similarity to Revelation, whose morning-star image appears at the beginning and the end. In both books the cycle is complete—the world, a better one, come round again. Revelation speaks of "Alpha and Omega ...which is, and which was, and which is to come." It speaks of "he that liveth and was dead; and behold...[is] alive for evermore" and of a "new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" (Revelation 1:8, 1:18, 21:1). The "Spring" chapter of *Walden* speaks of the pond which "was dead and is alive again...and lo'...already calm and full of hope." The "Conclusion" speaks of the artist of the sacred, mythical city of Kouroo creating a perfect work: "His singleness of purpose and resolution, and his elevated piety, endowed him, without his knowledge, with perennial youth." He, in effect, was creating "a world of full and fair proportions; in which, though the old cities and dynasties had passed away, fairer and more glorious ones had taken their places."

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The Swedenborgian Odyssey

June 24 - July 1, 2001
St. Paul, Minnesota

The Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church and the Illinois Association are extremely excited to be able to invite YOU to the 177th Convention of the Swedenborgian Church.

Mark your calendars now, you won't want to miss it! Many exciting events are being planned and the mini-courses will knock your socks off! You will be going on an odyssey past, present, and future!

Friday evening a grand ballroom big band dance reception will be held to honor our ordinands (bring your dancing shoes!), a dinner buffet cruise on the fabulous Mississippi River Saturday evening (complete with entertainment). And, oh yes! the MEGA MALL!

This is the first time that St. Paul has hosted a convention and we are looking forward to showing you our lovely city.

Watch for more information in the next *Messenger*. MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!

Jeannette Hille, Co-chair
Convention Planning Committee
The Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church
St. Paul, Minnesota

Pre-Convention Conference this Year

There will be a Pre-Convention Conference in St. Paul led by Lorraine Sando and others. Watch for information in forthcoming *Messengers*!



HENRY DAVID THOREAU AND SWEDENBORG

(Continued from page 5)

While an extended comparison between Revelation and *Walden* need not be made, the course of the two books is, in a very general sense, a prolonged scrutiny of things followed by an exultant conclusion. Thoreau spoke for a *spiritual* awakening with all things made new again. Just so, in general terms, did Swedenborg's analysis of Revelation describe humankind's spiritual development, goodness winning over evil, and humanity's being restored to a morning world. The process is an attaining of "perennial youth," if you will. And in specific terms, he described a New Jerusalem, lit by the Lord's bright presence, being realized as people learn and grow. It is another world of "full and fair proportions ... fairer and more glorious" still. The final sentences of *Walden* seem to speak, optimistically, to this specific vision: "Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star."

Victor Carl Friesen is a writer and a member of the Swedenborgian Church in Rosthern, Saskatchewan.

The Communications Support Unit is sponsoring a unique scholarship opportunity for a writer 18 years or older who is interested in writing for the Swedenborgian Church to attend "WRITING FROM WITHIN," a three-day workshop at Temenos Retreat Center. All expenses paid, including round trip travel to West Chester, Pennsylvania. The workshop takes place April 27-29, 2001.

If you are interested in writing for our denomination in any capacity—*Messenger* articles, pamphlets, books, sermons, we encourage you to apply for this three-day weekend intensive to learn the Metcalf-Simon Method of Proprioceptive Writing with expert Mary Bok, in the peaceful setting that Temenos provides.

WRITER'S SCHOLARSHIP OFFERED BY COMSU

Write to:

COMSU, c/o Patte LeVan,
Editor, *The Messenger*
P.O. Box 985
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Or send email to Patte LeVan at messenger@jinet.com.

In several brief paragraphs tell us:

A. why you want to take the workshop

B. what you are interested in writing for our denomination

C. what specific subjects, if any, you feel you may have useful expertise or background in (psychology, health, creativity, experiential subjects, mystical subjects, etc.) that you can relate to Swedenborgian spirituality

D. what topics or themes you would most like to see J. Appleseed and *The Messenger* address in future publications.

The deadline for our receipt of your entry is March 10, 2001.

We thank you in advance for your interest in writing, and we invite your input and suggestions about publication in our Church.



Why I'm a Swedenborgian

Erik Lange

One of the reasons I have maintained my Swedenborgian roots all my life isn't because I was born into this church and never experienced anything else. As a Swedenborgian, I appreciate the concept of "freedom of choice" and take pride in our ability to question theology. These are main staying points for me.

I have experienced, and appreciate other religions, including non-Christian. Some have wonderful traditions, others are appealing because of their "production-like" worship services.

But I have found in discussion with some Christian groups that there is a large following of those who like to be told what to think. This may be an easy way to conceptualize religion, but one doesn't need to "think"—which I feel slows down the learning process.

Another thing I have experienced is those who read the Bible only in a literal way, taking the view that *everything* in the Bible actually happened, and that there can be no secondary meaning for what is written. This is where people

start seeing problems between the Bible and science.

As an example, if Genesis I is taken only in its literal sense, problems arise with scientific, geologic and anthropological findings. Some who believe only in a literal interpretation of the Bible say that the earth is only 6,000 years old and others say that dinosaur bones were put on the earth by the devil to turn us away from God. I even saw a story on CNN where a man said he could prove that there were dinosaurs on Noah's ark.

For me, questioning theology, feeling a freedom of choice, and understanding inner meanings of the Bible help me put the pieces of our worldly puzzle together.

To further this point, let me continue with evolution/creation. I have always had difficulties with a "literal only" interpretation of the "creation" story in Genesis, and feel that science and religion can both explain how the world began.

Darwin's "Theory of Evolution" was created after Swedenborg's time, so Swedenborg didn't write anything about it, but he did leave us with many volumes

of thought-provoking information.

Recently, after searching the Internet for information on articles written about Swedenborg and Evolution, I came upon an article written by Lloyd H. Edmiston in 1923 titled, "The Creation of Man: A Divinely Ordered Evolutionary Process." You can read the full article online through the Swedenborg School of Religion's website (at: <http://www.ssr.edu/StudiaSwedenboriana/vol-82/theCreationofMan-aDivinelyOrderedEvolutionaryProcess.html>).

Mr. Edmiston's article explains that earth's evolution wasn't just a chance encounter of matter. He states that evolution occurred in a Divine and orderly process

allowing God to be present in every living thing.

He gives two reasons why God wouldn't just instantaneously create the world. First is the fact that if there was proof of miraculous creation, one would have no choice but to believe in God. This would remove our freedom of choice. Secondly, this Divine process sets up the law of correspondences where lower or earthly things are created to image spiritual things.

I was elated to find this article which brought science and religion together as I had always imagined. And if I hadn't questioned what I had heard about creation/evolution, I never would have spent time looking for answers and learning.

You may have found, as I have, that freedom and the ability to question allows us to learn throughout our lives. It is when we don't have that freedom or don't use our abilities, that growth and understanding slows.

Erik Lange is a member of the Virginia Street church in St. Paul, Minnesota, and is a professional classical musician who plays violin in the Bloomington Symphony.

Reprinted from the Sept./Oct. 2000 Virginia Street church newsletter, *Correspondences*.



For me, questioning theology, feeling a freedom of choice, and understanding inner meanings of the Bible help me put the pieces of our worldly puzzle together.

Who is Emanuel Swedenborg:

Ted LeVan

Influences on young Swedenborg

The following is Part II of a series on Swedenborg's life summarized by the Rev. Ted LeVan, a Chapel minister, for the Wayfarers Chapel News, Vol. 2, No. 3, 2000. Since January is the month of Swedenborg's birth, we thought it would be interesting for new members and readers to know about some interesting aspects that shaped his early life.

Emanuel Swedenborg was born in Stockholm on January 29, 1688, the third of nine children of Jesper and Sarah (Behm) Svedberg. His father was a prominent member of the Swedish clergy, court chaplain, professor of theology in the University of Upsala, and later Bishop of Skara.

Swedenborg's father, Jesper Svedberg, was a very narrow-minded person with strong views on how the boat must not be rocked. He abhorred Rene

Descartes' notion that we should question everything in an open-minded pursuit of truth. He believed in rigid rules, and Cartesian thinking was an anathema to his orderly world. He was horrified when his students presented arguments before King Karl XI on whether the King's power is conferred by the grace of God or created by man. Jesper Svedberg felt the subject should not be discussed at all, and that it was impudent of them to do so before the King.

If Emanuel had been born just ten years earlier, his good friend, teacher, and next-door neighbor, Olof Rudbeck, could very well have influenced him even more. But Rudbeck died when Emanuel was 14 and he was probably not quite ready to rebel against his father's views. This is fortunate, for even though Rudbeck's

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Solomon's Temple

George Dole

It all began by seeing the closing chapters of the book of Revelation as a kind of distillation of the whole biblical story, with elements from the creation story, the tribal narratives, the monarchy, and the gospels, with echoes of the apocalyptic prophets—a fitting symbol of a heavenly character incorporating the experiences and learning of a lifetime. The new Jerusalem was a transformation of the old—incomprehensible apart from it. There was only one puzzle. Why was there no temple in the holy city? The temple had played such a major part in the story.

I was thoroughly familiar (whether by heredity or by environment) with the understanding of the temple as an image of heavenly character, with Solomon representing attainment of a celestial level of character. This made the disappearance of the temple all the more puzzling.

If we read the biblical narrative with care, though, we start to pick up hints that not everyone agreed about the importance of the temple. Isaiah certainly did not: “What is the point of your sacrifices to me, says the Lord” (Isaiah 1:11). Jeremiah certainly did not: “do not trust in lying words, saying, ‘the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord’” (Jeremiah 7:4). David’s first proposal to build a temple was answered by the Lord’s statements that he had been dwelling in a tabernacle through all their journey and had never asked for a house of cedar (II Samuel 7:6-7).

What really turned the tide for me was comparing the stories of the building of the tabernacle and the building of the temple. In chapters 25 through 31 of Exodus we find the Lord giving detailed instructions for the construction of the tabernacle and its furnishings, and in chapters 35 through 39 we are told that everything was done exactly as commanded. The commands and their execution follow virtually word for word, so closely that in the *Arcana*, Swedenborg does not comment at all on the latter series but simply refers the

reader back to the parallel chapter that he has already explained. This is picked up in the epistle to the Hebrews, incidentally, where the symbolic (correspondential?) nature of Scripture is illustrated by referring to the priesthood as “an example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was told when he was about to make the tabernacle, for it says, ‘I see that you make everything according to the pattern shown to you on the mountain’” (Hebrews 8:5; see Exodus 25:40).

Compare this to the story of the building of the temple. The quickest way to highlight the contrast is simply to pull out some characteristic phraseology from first Kings. “Now I [that is, Solomon] intend to build a house to the name of the Lord my God” (5:5). “In the fourth year of Solomon’s

*This is where the voice
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myself.*

reign, . . . he began to build the house of the Lord” (6:1). “And the house that King Solomon built for the Lord . . .” (6:2). “So Solomon built the house, and finished it” (6:14). Skipping over any number of instances of “and he made,” we find Solomon saying, “the lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. I have surely built you a house to dwell in” (8:12-13). Through all the account of the building of the temple, the Lord speaks just once, and that speech starts, “as for this house that you are building . . .” (6:12). Only after the temple is completed and dedicated do we read that the lord has hallowed

it—if Solomon and the people will remain obedient to covenant law (9:3-8).

All this persuades me that correspondentially understood the temple is the ideal that I construct in the early years of maturity. It is based on the tabernacle, on the character formed by the Lord in the crucible of adolescence, but it is my own elaboration of that model. It is the best I can come up with, and I need it, but the fact remains that it is my own creation.

As we age, we do sometimes discover that we have misread our own gifts and our own calling. Perhaps because of some inspiring role model, we have tried to be eagles when we were created to be swans. Today’s seminaries abound with people turning to ministry after what have sometimes been quite successful secular careers, people for whom the higher call was drowned out by the pressure of circumstance or by some variation of earthly ambition.

This is where the voice of the prophet has sounded, where we have started to ask, “What have I been making all these sacrifices for? Who has been demanding this of me?” the answer, if we listen, comes loud and clear: *I have been laying these demands on myself.* All the Lord has been asking is that I do justly and love mercy and walk humbly with my God. That Lord has been content to travel along with me in a tabernacle, with no need of the grandiose dwelling I have in mind. They have been my dreams of glory.

They have served me reasonably well, though. Given the extent to which I have been of supreme importance to myself, it has been absolutely essential that I have ideals to invest my ego in. The Lord has used that investment to lead me to the point where I can actually survive the destruction of my temple, the unthinkable failure of my will for myself that clears the way for acceptance of the Lord’s will for me. John saw no temple in the holy city, and that, truly, is a cause for rejoicing.

The Rev. Dr. George F. Dole is a noted Swedenborgian author, translator, and a part-time professor of Bible, Language and Theology at the Swedenborg School of Religion. His latest translation is the New Century Edition of Heaven and Hell. (See p. 3.)



Never Underestimate the Power of Your Actions

One day, just after I'd started my freshman year in high school, I saw a kid from my class walking home from school. His name was Kyle. It looked as if he was carrying all of his books. I thought to myself, Why would anyone bring home all his books on a Friday? He must really be a nerd.

I had quite a weekend planned—parties and a football game with my friends—so I shrugged my shoulders and went on. As I was

walking, I saw a bunch of kids running toward him. They ran at him, knocking all his books out of his arms and tripping him so he landed in the dirt. His glasses went flying, and

I saw them land in the grass about ten feet from him. He looked up, and I saw this terrible sadness in his eyes. My heart went out to him. So I jogged over to him. As he crawled around looking for his glasses, I saw he was struggling to hold back tears. I handed him his glasses and said, "Those guys are jerks."

He looked at me and said, "Hey, thanks!" There was a big smile on his face. It was one of those smiles that

showed real gratitude. I helped him pick up his books and asked him where he lived. As it turned out, he lived near me, so I asked him why I had never seen him before. He said he had gone to private school before now.

I would have never hung out with a private school kid before. We talked all the way home, and I carried his books. He turned out to be a pretty cool kid. I asked him if he wanted to play football

on Saturday with me and my friends. He said yes.

We hung out together all weekend and the more I got to know Kyle, the more I liked him. And my friends thought the

same of him. Monday morning came, and there was Kyle with the huge stack of books again. I stopped him and said, "Damn, boy, you are gonna really build some serious muscles with this pile of books every day." He just laughed and handed me half the books.

Over the next four years, Kyle and I became best friends. When we were seniors, we began to think about college. Kyle decided on Georgetown, and I was

*With one small
gesture you can
change a person's life.
For better or for worse.*

going to Duke. I knew that we would always be friends, that the miles would never be a problem. He was going to be a doctor, and I was going for business on a football scholarship. Kyle was valedictorian of our class. I teased him all the time about being a nerd. He had to prepare a speech for graduation. I was so glad it wasn't me having to get up there and speak.

Graduation day, I saw Kyle. He looked great. He was one of those guys that really found himself during high school. He filled out and actually looked good in glasses. He had more dates than I did and all the girls loved him! Boy, sometimes I was jealous. Today was one of those times. I could see that he was nervous about his speech. So I smacked him on the back and said, "Hey, big guy, you'll be great!"

He looked at me with one of those looks (the really grateful one) and smiled. "Thanks," he said. As he started his speech, he cleared his throat, and began, "Graduation is a time to thank those who helped you make it through those tough years. Your parents, your teachers, your siblings, maybe a coach...but mostly your friends. I am here to tell all of you that being a friend to someone is the best gift you can give them. I am going to tell you a story."

I just looked at my friend with disbelief as he told the story of the first day we met. He had planned to kill himself over the weekend. He talked of how he had cleaned out his locker so his Mom wouldn't have to do it later and was carrying his stuff home. He looked hard at me and gave me a little smile. "Thankfully, I was saved. My friend saved me from doing the unspeakable."

I heard the gasp go through the crowd as this handsome, popular boy told us all about his weakest moment. I saw his Mom and Dad looking at me and smiling that same grateful smile. Not until that moment did I realize its depth.

Never underestimate the power of your actions. With one small gesture you can change a person's life. For better or for worse. God puts us all in each other's lives to impact one another in some way. Look for God in others.

Anonymous contributor. Reprinted from the *Friends of Peace Pilgrim* newsletter, Fall/Winter 2001.



Who is Emanuel Swedenborg: *(Continued from page 7)*

strong Cartesian views would have been good for Swedenborg, and he gave Emanuel a good start in botany and anatomy. Rudbeck had a most unfortunate theory that would have been damaging to a young impressionable student. Rudbeck had traced Swedish ancestry back to Atlantis and stated that therefore the Swedish people were the superior people and everyone else was inferior. We do not find a trace of this kind of thinking in Emanuel's writings, but it lets us know that young Emanuel knew at an early age how to distinguish good ideas from bad.

When Emanuel's father was moved to another post, Emanuel moved in with his older sister Anna and her husband Erik Benzeliuss, who had a wonderful influence on Emanuel. Not only did Benzeliuss have an excellent library, but he was also a

Cartesian (a follower of Rene Descartes). Emanuel had such a close relationship with his brother-in-law that he referred to him as his 'second father.' This set up a terrible conflict for Emanuel, with his father and his second father on opposite sides of this very important issue, namely, *freedom of inquiry*. But at least it helped Emanuel keep an open mind on the issue.

Besides his two fathers, Swedenborg was strongly influenced by one other person, Christopher Polhem. Polhem, an engineer, had become Sweden's most famous inventor, and here came Swedenborg with a notebook full of inventions and ideas that he had picked up in England, Holland, and France. He quickly became Polhem's assistant.

(In a future issue: the highlights of Swedenborg's middle adult years.)

MICHIGAN

Historical Marker at Almont Chapel

On April 20, 2000, the Michigan Historical Commission granted permission to erect a historical marker for the Almont Society of the New Church. It was erected at the Chapel on July 29, 2000, and reads as follows:

Almont Society of the New Church

Scottish immigrants from Glasgow settled in Berlin Township in 1841. Ten years later, twenty-four of them founded the Almont Society of the New Church. They followed the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), a Swedish mathematician, philosopher and scientist whose Christian theological writings form the basis of the New Church.

In 1875, members donated labor, materials and money to build this chapel, designed by church member William Morton.

Michigan Historical Center, MI Dept. of State, Registered Local Site #1223
Property of the State of Michigan, 2000



Faith and Healing is the topic of the SCYL Survivor Winter Retreat taking place December 27-30 at Almont. Among the questions that will be discussed are, How does our physical health correspond to our spiritual well-being? Can prayer have healing power? Do sickness and disease have spiritual implications?



Mary Crenshaw, longtime Royal Oak (Detroit, Church of the Holy City) member, is in the process of moving to Redwood City, California, near her daughter, Terri, and family. Mary served on the Board of Trustees for many years, as president for the local and national Women's Alliance groups, as a member Emeritus of the SSR Board of Trustees, and has been active on the Michigan Association level as well.

In March of 1999, she was the honored guest speaker at her alma mater,

Parish News

FROM ALL OVER

Tennessee State University College of Engineering and Technology. She holds a Masters of Social Work degree from Wayne State University in Detroit, and has worked as a supervisor and director in several social service agencies in the Detroit area in addition to being a committed volunteer worker in numerous community organizations.



INDIANA

Karling Kitchen—Loaves & Fishes Ministry:

This month, the LaPorte New Church is opening their Fellowship Hall in a new way. On the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month they will be serving meals from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. to anyone in the community who is in need.



OHIO

The Rev. Jun-chol Lee was installed as pastor of the Swedenborg Chapel in Cleveland November 19, 2000, by the Rev. Ron Brugler, Convention president. A potluck luncheon followed the worship service.

Note: We received news on Dec. 13 that Jun-chol's father died in Korea Dec. 8. Due to immigration complications, Jun-chol was unable to go home for the funeral. Cards and calls welcome, c/o the Cleveland church..



PORTLAND, MAINE

The Portland church's interim minister, the **Rev. Kitsy Winthrop**, departed this past fall, after spending the agreed-upon year with the congregation. On behalf of the entire congregation, Bill Dugan writes of Kitsy in their October newsletter, *The Appleseed*, "She has brought boundless energy, a big warm smile and a commitment to assist us through this phase of our church life. Stepping into a different denomination has meant learning and preaching new material. Kitsy has made it seem

wonderful. An interim minister has several major roles, encouraging the parts of the church which work while identifying those parts which may benefit from change. Kitsy has glowed when praising us, at

the same time speaking candidly to our needs. Kitsy's departure is not a complete termination. The good news is that she will continue to be with us, if on a less frequent basis. While we will miss the skills and insights Kitsy employs, most of all we will miss the love and passion she brings to her ministry."



In the November issue of *The Appleseed*, Norris Dale gives a rave review to the STAIRS Project CD-ROM containing the works of Swedenborg, which he recently installed on his computer. He says, "I'm ecstatic. I just can't believe the depth and functionality of the program. Not only do you get the complete works of Swedenborg in searchable form, but you can click from one translation to another to get one you like. This one disk replaces a hundred pounds of books at least and puts all of Swedenborg's words at your fingertips in a way that only a veteran of Potts' *Swedenborg Concordance* could appreciate. No, they don't have George Dole's translations yet, but I expect that will come at some point in the future. I haven't plumbed the depths of the instruction manual yet, but what's accessible right at the surface is just plain impressive. At \$25, this has to be the deal of the century.

"The database appears to want a Windows 95 or 98 operating system (Sorry, no Mac version yet, but they say they're working on it). The full hard disk installation takes 154Mb of disk space, but once it's installed, the program does not need to access the CD-ROM. Installation took about ten minutes and zero expertise."

How to get it: Send \$25 to:

The STAIRS Project
Box 717
Bryn Athyn, PA 19009.

Ask for the NewSearch 98 disk.

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

San Francisco

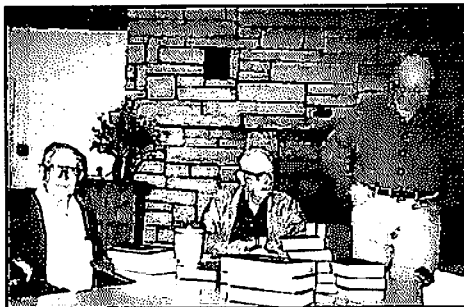
Congratulations to the Rev. Susan Turley, director of the Living Waters HIV Ministry, on passing her "test" in Nashville November 11th. She is now officially an associate CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) supervisor, and can supervise CPE students. After another two years she will go through the formality of accepting full status as a supervisor.

Elmwood, Mass.

The Rev. Andy Stinson was installed as pastor of the Elmwood church November 5, with the Rev. Ron Brugler, denomination president, officiating. Over 100 people attended. Following the event, the Rev. Lee Woofenden, pastor of the Bridgewater church, wrote in *The Correspondent*, "I have just attended a wonderful and inspiring installation service for the Rev. Andy Stinson at our sister church in Elmwood. There have always been questions about why there are two Swedenborgian churches just two miles away from each other. The energy and new life now building in both churches is the best answer to that question! Each church has its own special history, atmosphere, and strengths. It is a blessing and a privilege to work together with our brothers and sisters in Elmwood to bring our church's message to these communities more powerfully than either church could do alone. So it is with the greatest pleasure that I welcome my colleague and good friend Andy as Pastor of the Elmwood church. And our congratulations and prayers are with the congregation in Elmwood as they move forward together in God's light."



Kansas Association Hosts the Sonmors



(L-R) The Revs. Galen Unruh, Eric Zacharias, David Sonmor.

The Kansas Association gathered for their annual Autumn Retreat, November 10 thru 12, at Camp Mennoscab. The highlight of the weekend was the presence of the Rev. David and Shirley Sonmor of North Battlefield, Canada. Thirty-six gathered Sunday morning for Rev. Sonmor's message on spiritual growth, followed by the traditional turkey dinner. Doris Friesen from Montezuma prepared the turkey.

The spiritual team of the Revs. Galen Unruh, Eric Zacharias and David Sonmor led the Saturday discussions. Eric covered the pre-theological works of Swedenborg, Galen led us through *Heaven and Hell*, David gave an overview of *Divine Providence* and Eric concluded the day with *Divine Love and Wisdom*. It was a full day!

In between discussions the campers took advantage of the many trails and paths along the Ninnescab River. Several children were with us this year, and it was a joy to hear their laughter and experience their exuberance for life.

We are delighted to have David and Shirley with us in Kansas for two months. They are staying in Pretty Prairie and giving services for the month of November. In December they are sharing their time with Pawnee Rock.

Jane Siebert, secretary
Pretty Prairie church



Kansas Association Autumn Retreat 2000, Camp Mennoscab.

"Jaded Youth" Rebuts Boxell's *Dogma* Review

Jenn Tafel

This is in response to Tim Boxell's review of the film, *Dogma*, in the October *Messenger*. Okay. I'm here to set the record straight. *Dogma* is a good movie—not great—but still a good flick.

Here's the deal: the movie begins with a disclaimer which states that the movie is supposed to be seen in the theology of the silly and is not a serious look at the theology of the Catholic church dogma (or is it?). Obviously this is an important disclaimer, because it is a clear distinction between those people who get the point of the film and those who do not.

What this movie does accomplish is to take God outside of the constraints that normally bind God.

Examples of the constraints placed on God may include religion itself, congregations' perceptions,

perceptions of people who do not claim a religion or are atheists, the educational system, and the media. Perhaps certain movie goers have issues that God is portrayed by a woman (Alanis Morissette) rather than by say, George Burns. To say the movie is either completely silly or completely theological is to try and fit this movie into a general category where it does not belong. It is a "both/and" situation. The movie is both silly and theological (whoa!).

One can argue that Kevin Smith (writer, director and "Silent Bob") reframes theological points where we have not seen them before and challenges us as an audience. Also, with the clever writing and attention, Smith is promoting and lauding the theological, just not dogmatic theology. One of the main points that Smith makes is that God is in all things both good and bad. God also has a remarkable sense of humor. Take for example, the platypus.

My discussion is about the "prophets" in the film, since the movie is basically told with a prophetic voice. Jay (Jason Lewes) and Silent Bob (Smith) are the two prophets in the film; however, Mr. Boxell simply refers to them as "unlikely allies." Boxell criticizes their use of language and images. In the Bible prophets are not polite. They are bold, somewhat offensive, speak for God, and still manage to make their (valid) points. For example, Jeremiah walks down the street naked. This is bold and some people may take offense. Jeremiah and others used what is known as a "prophetic voice." Otherwise, it would have been known as a "nice voice." Jay and Silent Bob are bold, somewhat offensive, but still manage to

the movie. After God has "spoken," Jay goes on a tirade wondering what happened. God walks over to Jay, puts her finger on his mouth to quiet him and gives him a kiss. The point? God accepts us no matter what.

Jay and Silent Bob's use of language and images conveys their messages to a "jaded youth audience" successfully. Exactly how successful would require time and paperwork that I do not possess. By the way, every youth audience is jaded. This is pretty much "the job" of society's youth. Nonetheless, many people get the point. I wonder if everyone, during Biblical times, got what the prophets were trying to say. Probably not. However, perhaps the "target audience" did.

I believe that Jay and Silent Bob were not outrageous because of their language. Rather that they were outrageous because they

Do all of humanity accept their various religions on blind faith? I doubt it. To believe in blind faith is to say that we do not have individual relationships with the Divine and that religion as a whole is not necessary.

make their points. Actually, Jay is a bit more offensive than Silent Bob, because (if you imagine) he does more speaking than Silent Bob.

What kind of points do Jay and Silent Bob make? Since Silent Bob (Smith) is the writer and director, one could argue that he makes several lucid points. These points include the fact that God is always with us and that God has a sense of humor. Another point illustrated throughout the movie is that people question their religion. In fact, many people question their religion throughout their spiritual journeys. This is normal and healthy. Do all of humanity accept their various religions on blind faith? I doubt it. To believe in blind faith is to say that we do not have individual relationships with the Divine and that religion as a whole is not necessary.

Jay is rough around the edges and loves the use of expletives—a lot. Once one gets past this it is possible to see his points. Jay's major point is at the end of

were trying to get their message heard, and any means necessary to convey their message was allowable—perhaps this is what can be seen as outrageous. Here is an interesting point to ponder. This movie's director made a movie in the prophetic voice who played a prophet in the movie without a voice. It is the prophetic within the prophetic. Pretty darn cool.

So, maybe you will agree with me when I say that *Dogma* is a good film. Not great—but still worth renting (a couple times). It's pretty cool to see the gauntlets tossed up in dogmatic law's face.

Jenn Tafel is 27, president of the national Women's Alliance, public relations person for Transitions, SCYL coordinator for the Cambridge church and a recent graduate of Urbana University, with a B.A. in Communications. She is currently residing in the Boston area and looking for employment in Public Relations.



Identity Crisis

Dear Editor:

I had a contrary reaction to Jim Erickson's column titled "Help Solve the Swedenborgian Identity Crisis" printed in the October *Messenger*...

Before addressing that concern I must say 'Bravo' to the proclaimed four sages for their contributions to that issue. They touched my heart with their clear and direct insight. The Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey reminds us of the Builder, and the power and potential of drawing nigh to the presence of God. At the San Francisco Society, the Rev. Dr. Rachel Rivers is nurturing a group that is growing together in closer personal relationship with God and with each other. We are using the book of Psalms for inspirational reading. We are turning to the Builder Dorothea Harvey reminded us of in Psalm 127.

I could almost hear Rev. Rachel's father Erni Martin speaking the words he wrote as I read them. They both visited me with "Love in Action." I thank Revs. Rachel and Erni Martin for warming my heart during a time when I was in the chill of a wintery light. I thank God for sending this angelic father and daughter to witness their affirmations of love.

Among the people of God in the Church of the New Jerusalem I sense a truly loving, caring family. Families have conflicts, but our mutual, compassionate, caring concern for each other resolves our conflicts. The skills of communication are learned by practice. The spirit of love that holds us together is received by sharing each other's concerns.

Once again George Dole has stretched my understanding in familiar and unexpected ways at the same time. I had never considered that heaven's benign government is tyranny, anarchy, communism, democracy, aristocracy, and theocracy all at once.

I am also intrigued by the implications of comparing General Convention as a model of the world of spirits in contrast to the General Church as attempting to form a heavenly society on earth.

I have experienced a heartfelt affinity

TO THE EDITOR

with the seekers of truth and their expressions of loving kindness in shared external communities brought together under various New Church appellations. I have also experienced Blake's declaration that "opposition is true friendship." Opposition reveals quality by contrast. And conflicts of ideas and special interests can bring out the personal hells that need to be put away in our relationships with others.

Churches grow by learning how to peacefully disagree. I respect divergent outlooks and pray for a spirit of amend-ment that can recognize a clearer view. In my view, to co-exist in the semblance of a free society without an external compulsion to "tow the line or else" entails the inner compulsion of a compassionate caring concern that allows the dignity of distinctly distinguishable difference. This is one way I relate to what Mr. Dole depicts as the dynamic of the General Convention—as walking through the world of spirits. I thank George Dole for that detour. It seems sort of like a community approach of self-examination among the strictly like-minded in the General Church. Whereas subjective personal discretion rules in an atmosphere of the contrasting views welcomed in the General Convention. Freedom from overt censure does allow what is beneath the surface to come to light.

It is my understanding that at the outset of walking with spiritual consideration, truth leads in external compulsions to form cycles of returnable remains. Doing the right thing repeatedly can move from a remnant form to a betrothal with internal compassion in a process that allows the reality of ever more genuine love to express spontaneously without premeditated forethought.

I can see how a rigidly separated society formed from an external acceptability of usefulness can make a

mold that eventually is filled with genuine love. We can move to the side of truer love and come on through—by putting off the old and putting on the new.

Is it too simplistic to state that one faction forms a degree of agreement in contrasts of individual conscience from a compromise with a united communal input, and the other faction forms a degree of agreement in community conscience from a compromise with contrasting input from individuals?

"Abide in Me and I in you. He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." (John 15:4, 5)

I would say that the individual work within determines the relativity of good and evil uses described in the quote from *Arcana Coelestia* 6917 at the beginning of George Dole's article. The angelic perceives the angelic, and the demonic with us perceives the demonic with others. Contrasts and contrary opposites reveal quality. What is good and true is revealed by what is evil and false. Recognition is one thing and reaction is another. It is the hells that react by accusation, objection, and condemnation of their own. The quality of any perceived good is revealed by its opposite.

Perception of anything depends on a discriminating reaction that distinguishes contrasts and opposites. Think of visual perception that distinguishes forms, and boundaries of color contrasts from differences and opposites of varying kinds and degrees.

This line of thought now brings to mind ideas from *Divine Providence* 24. There must be variety in everything from its largest form to its smallest. When there is a balance in the variety of opposites, then by degrees a relativity emerges. This opposition may either destroy or enhance perceptions of qualities and sensations. The sensitivity of perception is destroyed when the opposites mingle, and opposition enhances sensitivity to qualities when opposites do not mingle.

This describes the risks and advantages of an external world of spirits approach of the General Convention. Now Jim Erickson's column on the

(Continued on page 14)

TO THE EDITOR

(Continued from page 13)

Swedenborgian identity crisis brings a very strong reaction out of this vessel. I would never identify myself as a "Swedenborgian." I am formed in the image of the spirits filling the vessel, but I do not identify with the apparent good or evil allowed to express through this vessel. See *Heaven and Hell* 302.

It is one thing to proclaim to the world the genesis of the profound understanding revealed through the vessel of Swedenborg. However I am opposed to plastering and affixing Swedenborg's name to the outside perimeter walls of sanctuaries used to worship the Lord. Swedenborg's writings point to the Lord and not to himself. He never intended to form a separate, organized denomination bearing his name in any form. Swedenborg's writings prior to *Marital Love* were published anonymously. I feel we disrespect the Lord's dispensation of the New Jerusalem by putting Swedenborg's name on our churches. It is not the New Swedenborg descending as a city who is a bride to the Lord.

I understand that names in the Word of God can represent the Lord. Swedenborg's name is not mentioned in the Word as a representation of the Lord. We are witnessing the Church of the Holy City descending. The Holy Spirit of the Lord is the light of this church, not the spirit of Swedenborg.

In conscience I feel that the General Convention has a balanced and healthy relationship with the writings of Swedenborg. It does appear that The General Church is not facing extinction.

The General Church calls its theological school "The Academy of the New Church." The General Church does not put Swedenborg's name on their houses of prayer and worship. According to Swedenborg there is no chance or accident. Every effect has a spiritual cause. The head of a house sometimes is named on that house. Mail is delivered to the head of the house as well as its residents. I pray to the Lord. I do not enter a house of prayer to pray

to angels. I do not deliver my prayers to Swedenborg.

I realize that this is a subjective view that seems to bother no one else. For this vessel it is a spiritual principle of protection and not an objection to anyone's freedom of choice. It is how we make witness and portrayals to the world.

The body of Christ is the house of the Lord. Those are the ones that I yearn to dwell in forever. From Ps. 91:

I shall protect thee, because thou knows My Name.

The City of New Jerusalem descending as a bride for the Lord will expand forever. The wedding invitations are given to individuals from within. This marriage is internal. It is individuals that form heavenly societies. Our vessels can form remains that cycle in circles of closer returns to the Only One. Earthly societies can provide returnable structures of remains, but earthly societies are not the Bridegroom handing out wedding invitations to the marriage of the Lamb and His church.

George Dole put it to the quick. Our task is not to preserve the organization. It is to allow the Builder to sweep our vessels clean and form us into individuals that He can enter as temples. Are we able to stand and breathe together as His image or church?

I pray for those in positions of decision to have the clarity and courage to remember the city descending as a bride. From Psalm 91:

**One who dwells in the shelter of
The Most high,
Who abides in the shadow of the
Almighty, Will say unto the Lord,
"My refuge and my fortress;
my God in whom I trust."
For He shall deliver thee from the
snare of the fowler....
....His faithfulness is a shield and
buckler.**

**Thou shalt not fear the terror of the
night, nor the arrow that flies by day,
nor the pestilence that stalks in
darkness,
nor the destruction that wastes at
noonday.**

Out here sunsets can happen on the water. So at daybreak I'm on the waves moving towards the shore. Where ocean breezes blow, I face eastward to look over the Golden Gate Bridge. I gaze at an appearance of the sun rising over the city of my birth. And that last good morning sunrise was the brightest I've ever seen!

John Scott Springwater
Berkeley, California



Dear Fellow New Church People,

I am in the process of making a New Church daily devotional and study for people in the church and people out of the church. This devotional will be put together by me, but written by the people of the church all over the world.

I am looking for a quote or quotes from the Word (Bible and Writings) and a description or inspiration of what it has taught you about following the Lord and living your life.

I am hoping to have this be a 366-day devotional to have the Lord in your life every day including the leap year.

Please send any of your submissions electronically or by mail to:

Daric Smith
PO Box 575
Bryn Athyn, Pa 19009
Phone: 215-499-7787
E-mail:
dailybread10@hotmail.com
Web: [http://communities.msn.com/
NewchurchDailyDevotional](http://communities.msn.com/NewchurchDailyDevotional)

I am not going to be including the person's name with the submission in the book. Everything will be anonymous.

Thank you,
Daric Smith



A Crescendo of Celebrations

(Continued from page 1)

cohesive presentation of the life, work, and influence of Swedenborg.

On Sunday, November 19th, two additional celebrations were held at the



(L-R) Herman Baron Gyllenhääl Haarlingstorp with the Rev. Olle Hjern, contributor of an essay on Swedenborg's influence in Scandinavian countries to the next volume to be published in the NCE, entitled Emanuel Swedenborg: Essays for the New Century Edition on His Life, Work, and Impact, which will be available in April 2001.

American Academy of Religion's Annual Meeting in Nashville's Opryland Hotel—a launch party for the first volume of the New Century Edition and a screening of *Splendors of the Spirit*.

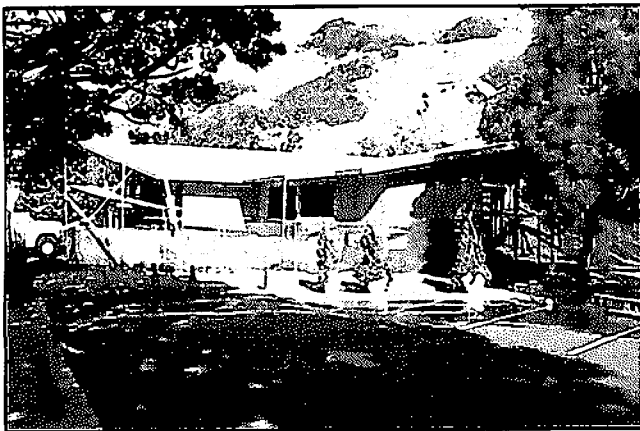
Deborah Forman is the executive director of the Swedenborg Foundation and Chris Largent is the Foundation's new marketing director. ☩

Photos by Herman Baron Gyllenhääl till Harlingstorp.



(L-R) Madame and Consul General Wästberg, Deborah Forman, Dr. Bernhard Lang.

Wayfarers Chapel's Visitors Center a Reality!



Visitors Center in progress. Outside view (top) and inside (bottom).

(Continued from back)

Wayfarers Chapel's new Visitors Center, which began construction in July 2000, is nearing completion and is scheduled to be open for business in mid-to-late January. The 2,064 square foot building will provide a display hall, space for community and Chapel events as well as much-needed

visitors facilities. The dedication of the building and grand opening is scheduled for May 20, 2001, which happens to be the 50th anniversary of the dedication of Wayfarers Chapel in 1951. Convention's president, the Rev. Ron Brugler, will conduct the service, and all Swedenborgians and friends are encouraged to attend! More details in the April 2001

Messenger.



BAPTISMS

Ritchie—Bailey Kalene Ritchie, daughter of Maurice and Konny Ritchie, was baptized into the Christian faith August 20, 2000, at the Pawnee Rock, Kansas New Jerusalem Church, the Rev. Eric Zacharias officiating.

Heffernan—Camren James Heffernan, infant son of Avril and Brian Heffernan, was baptized into the Christian faith November 19, 2000, at the New Jerusalem Church in Bridgewater, Mass., the Rev. Lee Woofenden officiating.

DEATHS

Hachborn—Madelene (Hagen) Hachborn, 90, lifelong member of the Swedenborgian Church, former resident of Kitchener, entered the spiritual world September 30, 2000. A service commemorating her life was held October 5 in Toronto.

Traeder—Alberta (Schneider) Traeder, 98, lifelong Swedenborgian, entered the spiritual world in July, 2000, in California. She was an aunt to John Schneider and Jean MacPhail, members of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario. Her ashes were interred in Kitchener. ☩

Change of Address

Jenn Tafel
48 Highland Street
Sharon, MA 02067
(As of December 1, 2000)

Note: Details of the SSR-Cambridge agreement are still being ironed out and there will hopefully be a report in the February *Messenger*.

Church Calendar Dates

Feb. 25–Mar. 1	Edfest Carefree, Arizona
Mar. 8–11	MINSU Deland, Florida
Apr. 5–8	EDSU Temenos
May 16–17	COMSU Temenos
June 24–July 1	Convention 2001 St. Paul, Minnesota

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, 2001

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



God's Women of Treasure Trio: (back left, clockwise) Charlotte Magee, Geanell Robinson, Lydia Haley.

February 6: God's Women of Treasure Trio—Celebrating Black History Month. Spiritual music and black history. The acclaimed Trio will be coming off their Japan 2000 tour. Reception. Donation \$5.00



The Treblemakers—Woman's Barbershop Chorus.

February 27: The Treblemakers—A Woman's Barbershop Chorus comprised of women from the community. They have been performing together for 28 years. Reception - \$5.00 Donation



Lorraine Sando

March 20: Lorraine Sando, MA, CMFT—Grief Workshop, title *Good Grief! Surviving Loss*. Reception. \$5.00 Donation.

May 6: Sunday, 9am - 2pm—The Thursday Morning Painters Art Show—comprised of community artists who paint on the Chapel grounds. Free and open to the wayfaring public. The grounds are given as community outreach.



Painter Eizo Etow, 78, painting on the Chapel grounds last year with the Thursday Morning Painters Art Show. His watercolors of the South Bay were featured in an art show at the Chapel.

For further program information, call Public Relations Director Mary Sabol (310) 377-1279.

(More Wayfarers Chapel continued on page 15)

The Swedenborgian Church
of North America
The Messenger
11 Highland Ave.
Newtonville, MA 02460

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