

THE MESSENGER

Published by the Swedenborgian Church of North America

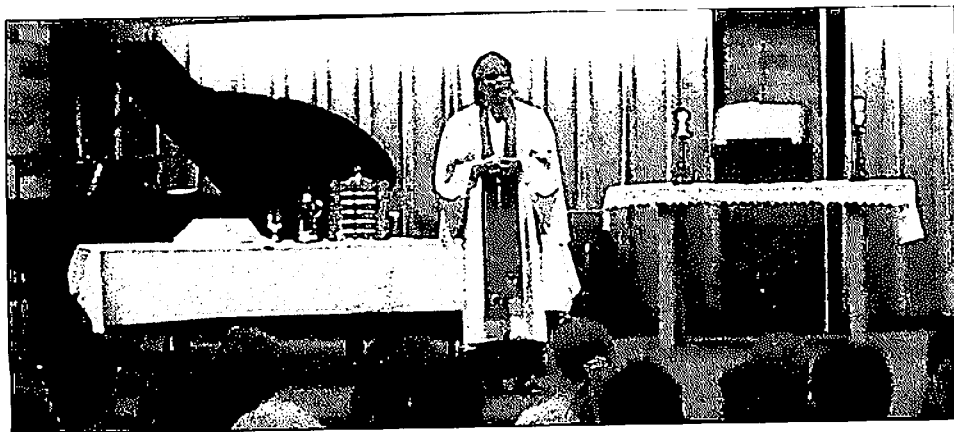
September 2001



Rev. Renee Billings-Machiniak (background, l-r) Revs. Kit Billings & Ron Brugler.



Renee greets COMSU chair Mona Conner following the Sunday service.



Laurie Turley leads Convention Choir, Sylvia Lange accompanying on piano.

CONVENTION SERMON "Who Do You Say That I Am?"

Psalm 34:4-1-; Luke 9:18-20

Renee Billings-Machiniak

"Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and, sorry I could not travel both. And be one traveler long I stood and looked down one as far as I could to where it bent in the undergrowth. Then took the other as just as fair, and having perhaps the better claim, because it was grassy and wanted wear, though as for the passing there had worn them really about the same, And both

that morning equally lay, in leaves no step had trodden black; oh, I kept the first for another day, yet knowing how way leads on to way, I doubted if I should ever come back. I shall be telling this with a sigh, somewhere ages and ages hence, two roads diverged in a wood and I, I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference."

— Robert Frost
The Road Not Taken

There is a dirt road that borders the Almont New Church Assembly property—Tubsprings Road—and every time I walk down this road something wonderful happens. During the Women's Retreat there this past May, I was strolling down this road contemplating the theme of this year's convention, "A Swedenborgian Odyssey." Those of you here who know and love Almont are familiar with the point in the road where there is a clear intersection that offers four directions to the traveler. I found myself wandering unknowingly right to the center of this intersection, where I paused and considered which direction I might go.

I put myself in the mind-set of traveling on a spiritual journey and

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2001 CONVENTION ISSUE

September 2001

Guest Editorials by Mark Allen and Lorraine Cuthbertson

Editor's Note: The Virginia Street Church and the Illinois Association hosted the 177th Convention, the first convention ever held in St. Paul. It was absolutely terrific in every way possible, but Messenger readers have heard many reports from the editor on conventions over the years, so we thought you might enjoy instead these delightful fresh impressions from Mark Allen and Lorraine Cuthbertson. Mark Allen is a first-time convention attendee who has also been the editor of the Portland, Maine Swedenborgian Church newsletter, The Appleseed, from which this report was taken. (Rachel Lyn Rumson will be taking over to serve as Appleseed editor.) Lorraine Cuthbertson is president of the Swedenborgian Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario.

CONVENTION 2001: ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

Mark Allen:

I've just returned home after attending my first Swedenborgian Church convention at St. Thomas University in St. Paul, Minnesota. Joining me as a fellow Portland delegate was Rachel Lyn Rumson, and this was for both of us our first national church convention. Rachel and I flew out to St. Paul Thursday, the 28th, and returned on Sunday, the first of July.

One great thing about this experience was finally meeting "them." Over the years I had heard of those other Swedenborgians from around the country, but they seemed rather remote and unknown. Now, I'd had it on good authority from reliable sources such as Carol Fusco, Jay Jordan, and Eli Dale that "they" were really fun and easy-to-know folks, but I'd never had it put to the test. I can report today that my sources were right, "they" are great!

National Convention is where the denomination gets together to elect officers and new members of the different support units. Like any organization during business sessions you hear the reports of different committees and vote on any issues that require national level attention. This year a new salary schedule for

Swedenborgian ministers was reviewed, discussed, and finally adopted. Over the years, due to a lack of an up-to-date schedule, our ministers have been under-paid, and this does not help in the cause of building the denomination as a whole. The delegates understood the financial difficulties this schedule might impose, but they also understood that our clergy are an invaluable asset that cannot be abused.

Besides the usual grist of business meetings there are fun things to do. For two days there are offerings of many ninety-minute mini-courses on various topics (music and worship, the new Swedenborgian House of Studies, etc.), and I chose for my first class the Rev. Dr. George Dole's mini-course, The New Century Edition. George talked about the newest translation of Swedenborg from Latin to English and the hard work to make the translation more expressive of Swedenborg's thinking. Older publications of ES's work tended to be more mechanical, direct translations and have resulted in a stiffer, drier content. The New Century Edition should make Swedenborg's works easier to read and comprehensible. It was a great pleasure to realize that we have one of Swedenborg's greatest scholars living less than two hours up the coast in Bath, Maine.

The big social event of convention was on Saturday night, June 30th, when we all took a dinner cruise on the Mississippi River in Minneapolis. The double deck ship was designed to look like the classic flat-bottom side paddle steamer of the 19th century, and we cruised down and back on the river over a three hour period. While we all enjoyed dinner, entertained by a New Orleans jazz band, we passed through two locks, one that dropped us a good fifty feet, and a second that was a mere twenty feet. The weather was perfect that evening with a new moon in the early evening sky.

There's a lot more I could describe, but it would make this article go on and on. One last thing I'd like to mention: we will be one of the hosts for the 2002 convention. Around three hundred fellow Swedenborgians will be coming to Maine to see our state, conduct

business, and have a good time. We have an opportunity to expose the denomination to our church, and in turn be exposed to the very good people who make up the General Convention of the Swedenborgian Church. It will be hard work, but I guarantee it will also be fun.

Lorraine Cuthbertson:

I attended our annual convention in June, the theme of which was "2001, A Swedenborgian Odyssey." During my "odyssey" a number of things took place that I would like to share with you.

First, the experience gave me the chance to see "outside the box"—a box called Kitchener. It gave me a chance to reconnect with my fellow Swedenborgians across North America, and in fact the world. A connection which as acting church president I can draw from now that I can see a bigger picture.

One of the most exciting events was the introduction of the New Century Edition of Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell*. It has been translated from the original Latin by our own Swedenborgian

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"Who Do You Say That I Am?"

(Continued from cover)

stood for a while facing each of the four directions. I turned and saw a very flat, yet beautiful landscape of beginning crops and open farmland. I turned to the next direction, and saw the same thing. I turned to the third position, and again, the same landscape. But, down the fourth road—ah—a big rock! Much like the rock Rev. Jonathan Mitchell referred to several days ago from Isaiah...except I'm pretty sure Isaiah's rock didn't have graffiti on it! Now right next to this rock there stands a big beautiful tree that reminded me of the tree of life. I thought to myself, This is the road that I want to travel!

So, meditating upon our convention theme, I headed down the road toward the rock and the tree. That is when it happened. As clear as the bell that rings from our quaint little Almont country chapel, I heard inside my heart the voice of the Lord ask a question. He whispered, "Who do you say that I am?" It was just after He spoke that a funny little toad hopped by and I then became distracted from this Presence before me (those of you who know me well know that this is like me). The moment faded...but the question has remained strong in my heart over the past few months.

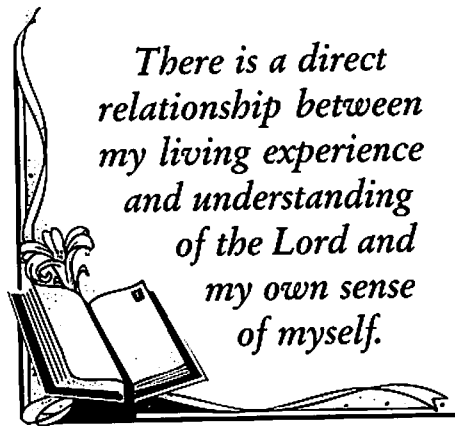
I believe—with all of the changes taking place at this point in our church's history, and for each one of us personally—it is time to look at this question with more intent; to ask ourselves who we believe the Lord to be. Our values and priorities and everything that we do flows from our answer to this question. I invite each one of you here to consider the question and to take it back with you to your people in your local societies. Invite people to talk about it at retreats, association meetings, regional meetings, or perhaps in worship.

Now, every once in a while, someone comes along who reminds us of the reality and the power of the presence of the Risen Lord moving with us and through us. We are given hope and sustained by their stories. Recently, a man came to our church in Royal Oak, Michigan, for the first time and, after sharing worship with us, purchased a copy of *Heaven and Hell*. The next week he returned and urgently asked to have

coffee with me to talk about his thoughts on the book and his personal faith journey. We met and he told me about a most amazing occurrence.

He was born a cultural Jew and raised in New York. At the age of nine, he contracted polio and became very ill. At that time near the end of World War II, ninety-nine percent of the children who had polio died. One night, he felt the presence of the Risen Lord specifically move through his body and heal it completely. He *knew* he was made well by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ and, as it turned out, the doctors confirmed soon after that this boy was clear of the disease. The doctors could not explain it, and to this day, many years later, he searches for the unfolding meaning of this healing.

Now, I bet that this man has a pretty clear sense of the answer to the Lord's



question, "Who do you say that I am?" Indeed, he felt the reality of the Lord's presence in his very bones and blood. With a humble tone to his witness, he confirms Peter's conviction: "You are the Messiah." Most of us here have probably not had this kind of direct encounter. But this is as it should be. Our individual journeys are all supposed to be different and unique. Honoring diversity of experience and open-mindedness is a rich part of our theology in the church. But we do get glimpses every now and then of the Spirit that moves among us so personally. We get what we need to sustain and inspire us on our journey.


For myself, I feel the Lord present as a voice inside that speaks to me. Last May, I was guided by a clear voice inside that spoke the question to my heart. And then as I sat with it, a shift happened. The question, "Who do you

say that I am?" shifted toward myself and became "Who am I?" The two questions worked off each other in my mind, as if they were in a dance, so that I have come to see that the two are clearly intertwined. There is a direct relationship between my living experience and understanding of the Lord and my own sense of myself. The more time I spend praying and living with the Lord's presence, the more I am aware of—and awake to—my own human potential and the various levels of my inner darkness that tend toward secrecy and selfishness. The Lord's light uncovers what needs to be healed. We can put our faith in that.

For most of us, I believe, it is fairly easy to acknowledge the Lord when we are in the midst of the joys of life. But we can, more and more, seek to merge the Lord's Spirit into our darkness and into our times of suffering. This is a shift to bring all of who we are into the Light. Our suffering transforms into mercy, compassion, and deeper understanding when we ask the Lord to be with us in it. The point is, then, no longer the suffering alone; rather, the point is that our suffering leads to a higher kindness and charity. This intentional shift toward the Lord's light is needed more today.

The Rev. Paul Zacharias published an article in *The Messenger* last year suggesting to Convention that, in order for our church to survive and to move successfully through all of the changes taking place today, we must be willing to shift our mind-set and grow—both in a personal sense and as a church collectively. I believe that the shift we need is to move closer to the Lord's presence and to walk with Him by our side—every step of the way. All of life, then, shifts and becomes holy.

Let us pray: O, Lord, we thank You, we thank You, we thank You—for the gift of this time here together with You. As we continue to walk our faith journey down the road less traveled, and as we discover more of who we are, keep us near You; safe under Your Providence and open to Your Spirit. With You by our side, we can serve the higher good and we are truly blessed. O Lord, we thank You, we thank You, we thank You. Amen.

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

CONVENTION 2001: ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

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scholar, the Rev. Dr. George Dole, into a more modern-day understanding. I don't know about you, but I've tried five times to read the previous translation and didn't get past the first 100 pages. I can't put this one down.

I had a chance to chat with a lot of people, some of whom thanked me—thanked me for giving them Ron full time for the next three years. He's done some wonderful things as president of Convention, the most important of which was helping to get our seminary back on its feet.

I casually asked potential visiting ministers if maybe, sometime, you're not too busy, could you come to Kitchener and do a Sunday service? Always the answer was, "Just say when and I'll be there."


I know some of us have been feeling as though the next three years are going to be next to impossible and maybe even that our church could be in jeopardy, but I believe now we have the support we need. All we have to do is ask. Some visiting ministers want to do workshops, others want to help us establish programs for our youth. We have the

second largest congregation in the entire North American denomination, and we have the strength to not only survive this challenge but to grow in spite of it.

We congratulated our last three graduates from the Swedenborg School of Religion and poignantly celebrated the retirement of some of its faculty. We listened to a report on the wonderful progress and successes of the new Swedenborgian House of Studies now located within the Pacific School of Religion. We conducted business, and we made history by voting in all elected officials with only one vote!

We laughed, we shared communion, we loved, and we cried. And speaking of crying, we ordained two new ministers, Sarah Buteux and our beloved John Maine. I couldn't have been more proud if I'd been his mother.

Convention is over for another year, but the Odyssey will continue. I encourage all of you to take some time to reflect on your Swedenborgian Odyssey and know that you are not alone in it.

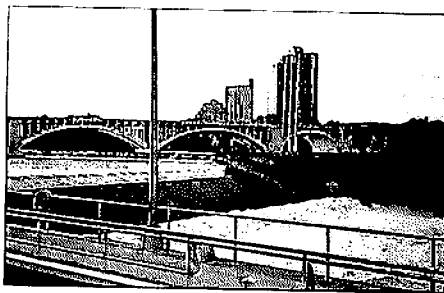
Ron returns to us after convention in June 2004 and we have volunteered to host that year. I encourage all of you, especially those of you who have never attended convention before, to start saving your pennies and join with us by attending Convention 2004. 

CONVENTION SCENES



John Maine next to Fran & Ian McIntosh with the Kitchener gang at the Friday night dance. Catherine and Josh Maine kneeling (r), Pat and Paul Zacharias at right, standing.

(Right) The Cambridge crowd at the Friday night dance. (Back row, l-r): Denyse Daurat, Betty Guin, Ray Guin, Joe Tucker, Sarah Buteux, Andrew Dole, (Middle Row): Amy Tucker, Michelle Giargiari (Front row): Jackie Langeson, Herb Ziegler, F. Bob Tafel.



Mississippi River spillway, as seen from the riverboat.



Convention Odyssey

Smiling faces, hand shakes and hugs
Eating good food till
your clothes start to tug
Greetings from friends, old and new
Exchanging ideas and points of view
Wisdom from preachers of
Gods spoken truth
Programs given by the church youth
Displays of accomplishment
held with pride
Flickering candles
next to the Bible open wide
Looking at schedules to check
what to do
Sitting in lectures
to words that ring true
Choir voices reaching angelic notes
Business meetings casting new votes
Laughter-filled rooms
that can clearly be heard
Hymns in the morning
that compare to a bird
Riverboat dinner
with a Dixieland group
Dancing and singing
until we all felt pooped!
Hope for the future
and talk of next year
Saying goodbyes
to all those we hold dear
Pictures and memories
of fun and new friends
Excitement and sharing
and then it must end
We leave with some
sadness but next year it's Maine
Lobster and beaches
and first evening rain
Once again we recapture the glow,
we are a unified blend
We continue to gather and
grow in God's love without end.

* * *

—Lynda Tanner
Member of Church of the Holy City,
Royal Oak, Michigan

How Our Swedenborgian Theology Uniquely Speaks to the Post-Modern World

Editor's Note: Due to lack of space, three of the five theme speakers' presentations will be published in the October issue: the Revs. Jonathan Mitchell, Andy Stinson, and keynote speaker Keith Tussing.

Susannah Currie

Our theme this year revolves around the concept of Odyssey. I recently went on an Odyssey, with the support of MINSU, to New Orleans to a gathering entitled the "Pastoral Summit." It was a gathering of Protestant and Catholic churches from all over the country, where 'the best and the brightest' were chosen to speak and share what was working well within their congregations. I was impressed by many of the ideas that were shared, and touched by the evidence of dedication, energy, creativity, community spirit, and following the Lord's leading.

However, what made the most impact on me, and what I'd like to share with you today, was one presenter's historical overview of Christianity, putting into our minds the concepts of the pre-modern, modern, and post-modern eras and what those worldviews mean in terms of our perception of our churches and our willingness to expand our awareness of ourselves, recognize our weaknesses, and prepare to open to greater good.

Briefly and simply described, the Christian pre-modern era was the time before the reformation when the priest was the sole authority on the worldview—he held the answers to the eternal human questions; Who am I? Why am I here? What is a human being? Who is God?

The Christian modern era began with the reformation and enlightenment when the developing sciences brought to the human mind some very physical answers to these same questions that were answered by a new authority, the scientist.

We live today in the 'post-modern' era. We have reached an incredibly high degree of scientific and

technological inquiry and have discovered that beyond the scientific answers lie more questions, ones that we are now returning to religious sources to explore. We have now, as Emanuel Swedenborg so aptly put it, 'permission to enter into the mysteries of faith with reason.'

But you might be asking yourself, didn't Swedenborg live at the very dawn of the modern era? What was he doing talking about the dynamics of the 'post-modern' era? Quite simply, because he was a prophet. As the prophets of old, he spoke about what was to come to pass, to shine a light on a path, to give a

We have journeyed from the pre-modern era, where the will of the heart leaned on the authority of the priest, to the modern era, where the understanding of the mind leaned on the authority of the scientist, to the post-modern era. In this both/and era, the will with the rational, the intentions but also the understanding, the love and the wisdom, the heart as well as the head, are working together to explore in all directions the ways we can connect with the Divine.

vision and a goal that would lead us through the modern era of purely scientific answers into today's new worldview.

So our Swedenborgian theology is a prophesy of the worldview for the post-modern era. It is a theology for today. And around us, people everywhere are asking the eternal questions in a way that evidences this.

Who am I? I am a physical being, with a spiritual dimension.

Why am I here? There seem to be things I must do and accomplish in the world, but also ways in which I am called

to develop internally, to be a better person. What is a human being? We seem to be unique with different abilities and choices to make, and creatures of community who are interdependent and live together in the world.

Who is God? I have a feeling about the Divine as well as intuitions of understanding.

Did you notice the conjunctions in those answers? *With, but also, and, as well as*. The post-modern era is the *both/and* era. We have journeyed from the pre-modern era, where the will of the heart leaned on the authority of the priest, to the modern era, where the understanding of the mind leaned on the authority of the scientist, to the post-modern era. In this both/and era, the will *with* the rational, the intentions *but also* the understanding, the love *and* the wisdom, the heart *as well as* the head are working together to explore in all directions the ways we can connect with the Divine.

With this in mind, I'd now share with you some of the characteristics that were shared with me about 'post-modern' people and what they are looking for in a church. See if you find yourself resonating with this worldview. And I'll give a few examples from my own experience where I see this to be true.

Post-modern people prefer:

- Collaboration between clergy and laity—*committees as the authority*
- Openness to new forms of worship—*blend of old and new in worship*
- Involvement in the community and the environment—*service to others as growth for us*
- Hospitality towards all, whether they stay or not—*church's job is to 'be there'*
- Ecumenism dialoging and interacting with other faith traditions—*interfaith worship*

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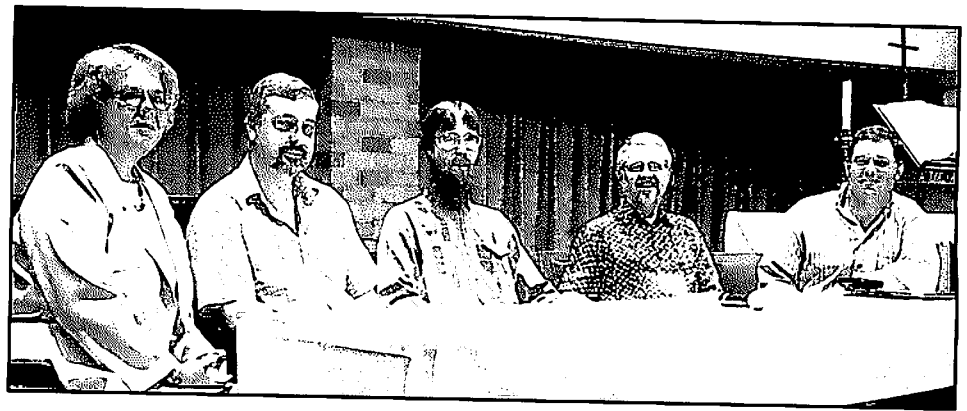
How Our Swedenborgian Theology Uniquely Speaks to the Post-Modern World

(Continued from page 101)

- Intimacy that is authentic and honest as well as safe and caring—*small group sharing*
- Inclusion and invitation to newcomers to become leaders—*old mentoring new Ladies Aid*
- Passion and creativity respected and encouraged—*risk-taking affirmed—Show & Tell*
- Inquiry allowing free expression of the faith journeys of all—*questions asked in worship*
- Fellow journeying where the community spirit is built on many growing relationships.

Now, this isn't to say that we all have made the transition to being 'post-modern' people. Some of you may not have resonated with these words. But be forewarned of the dangers of unthinkingly and unfeelingly clinging to their opposites: reliance on sole authority, insularity, non-participation, self-directedness, denominational isolation, emotional distancing, exclusion, reservation, un-questioning, and self-involvement. They are the symptoms of a spiritual hunger that will not grow you or your church community.

We have the legacy of the blessing of the prophecies of Swedenborg and have access to a worldview that uniquely speaks to the post-modern world. We have a full larder. Our theology uniquely feeds the post-modern world's hunger for a spiritual community and a theological truth that fits their worldview. However, we are the post-modern world and it's not only *out there*, where people are spiritually hungry. We too are hungry, and the funny thing about hunger, it is the time when we are most at risk of thinking there isn't enough food, at risk of panicking and hoarding what we have for fear that we'll be hungry again. And yet by that very action we will perpetuate the spiritual hunger to give and participate and serve and reach beyond ourselves that is our



"A Swedenborgian Odyssey" Theme Panel (l-r): Susannah Currie, Jonathan Mitchell, Lee Woofenden, Keith Tussing, theme speaker, Andy Stinson.

true need and will bring us true fulfillment. If we can see the spiritual hunger in others to receive, we must face that we are suffering from a spiritual hunger to give. It is a call to faithfulness and a call to trust in the Lord's leading. It is a powerful faith that remembers that God provides all we need in the midst of times of hunger. And it is a powerful charity that gives in hunger, knowing that God knows our hunger, our sacrifices, and has provided already.

And this may be the call that we are being given as a church toward making a new step into our group regeneration. For if we're honest in our self-evaluation, we can all see that we have pockets of 'old worldviews,' ways in which we limit ourselves to a perception that 'only the religious authority, or only the scientific authority' has the answer to a particular question, that everything is either morally right or fiscally sound. Ask yourself if you are open to a both/and answer. And ask yourself if you're willing to grow to truly live our practical post-modern theology in your life and the life of your church.

If not, it may seem like swimming upstream towards the New Jerusalem, to remain in a worldview of solely the heart or the head. We think we know the way through our theological understanding or that we have experienced the way through the heavenly community in our churches. And guess what, both are true, and yet not complete and not accessible to the majority of the post-modern population unless we use as the acid test, the test of usefulness, of

Divine activity moving through us into the world. For the Holy Spirit, the Divine Proceeding is both/and, is distinguishably one with our both/and worldview, the operative word here being *one*. Charity and faith in action require that we move into the 21st century and reach out to people outside our denominational ranks, outside our comfort zone and even, dare I say, to truly believe there is only *us* and no longer a *we* and *them*. And we do this through making our theology life-practical and accessible through our printed materials, our church ministries, our community presence, our websites, our worship and our music, and most especially in the lives of each of us.

I hope that by sharing with you these thoughts on the historical 'odyssey of worldview' some light has been shed on our Swedenborgian odyssey thus far and opened up some possibilities for you to consider in your own thinking about the challenges and opportunities we as Swedenborgians face in the 21st century. Let us accept the legacy of the prophecy that Swedenborg left to us and with collaboration, openness, involvement, hospitality, ecumenism, intimacy, inclusion, passion, inquiry, and fellow journeying allow God to work through us and feed us as we set the Lord's table for the new world.

The Rev. Susanah Currie is pastor of the Swedenborgian Church at Temenos and director of the Temenos Retreat Center in West Chester, Pennsylvania.



Our Growing Future

Lee Woofenden

I have an important announcement to make: The Swedenborgian Church isn't weird anymore! Back in the early seventies, I had a school friend named Sheila. Now Sheila was a jock. Field hockey, basketball, baseball, track, volleyball... you name it, Sheila played it. But I think her favorite sport was asking me what church I belonged to. This was a team sport. She would gather up a few of her friends and bring them over to me. "What did you say was the name of your church?" she would ask. "Swedenborgian!" I would reply. She would then do a masterful job of evoking, for our listening pleasure, a sumptuous buffet table crammed full of fine food, with the faithful filing by filling their plates, and thus participating in the primary ritual of the Smorgasborgian church. Yes, we were weird—and I thought it was kind of fun to be weird! But in the back of many Swedenborgians' minds was the idea that, well, after all, Swedenborg is kind of weird in the eyes of society, and we're perhaps a little weird for believing what he taught.

It used to be conventional wisdom in the church that when you're talking to new people, you wait a while—until you've piqued their interest and preferably gotten them hooked—before talking about strange things like Swedenborg going into the spiritual world and talking to angels and spirits. Otherwise you might scare them away!

Today, we are living in a whole different world. Angels have major network TV programs, near-death experiences have become a staple of popular movies, and practically every book store has a Religion and Spirituality section. Of course, there are still plenty of materialists and skeptics out there who think this is all an irrational craze. But there is no denying that spirituality and the afterlife have gone mainstream. And now, instead of being a bit shy about Swedenborg's spiritual-world experiences, we're more apt to brag just a bit about how our guy was there before it became popular!

Today, millions of people are searching for what we have: a spiritual perspective that is deep, satisfying, sensible, and personal. And I believe our church is finally getting to the point where we can offer our perspective and our spiritual community to the many.

Of course, we Swedenborgians have been offering people Swedenborg and the New Church for over two centuries now. Yet though our church showed signs of real growth throughout the 1800s, we did not make it far into the 1900s before we entered into the same disastrous decline that decimated the ranks of mainline Protestantism and Catholicism alike. We had a great message, but somehow it was not getting through. People were abandoning the church in droves.

This led to decades of soul-searching in the church. Our standard response to the lack of popular appeal of our church

tended to be, "The world isn't ready for us yet." Maybe that was true. But it isn't true anymore. The world is more than ready for us. People are searching for what we have.

In recent years, we have finally turned the tables and started working on the question of whether we are ready for the world. The earlier Swedenborgian movement tended to be a heady, intellectual affair. This appealed to many of the intellectual and financial leaders in our society; but our church never quite took hold in the popular mind. This, I believe, was because we were not fully applying to our church our own teachings about the necessity of a balance of love and truth, leading to practical acts of kindness and service.

Back in the 1970s, when I was a teenager, the "conservative" vs. "liberal" struggle was still raging in our denomination. Our church was divided into warring camps that glared at one another across the aisles, and did not attend one another's parties.

On a deeper level, the liberal vs. conservative conflict of a few decades ago can be seen as a struggle over whether we would remain primarily an intellectual church, or whether we would combine the powerful spiritual insights in our church with an equally powerful practice of love and compassion. I've heard it said that "the liberals won." But in my

view, the result of that struggle was not really a victory for either side, but a gradually emerging synthesis of the best of both perspectives—a marriage of love and wisdom. The result is a church that is increasingly dedicated both to the truth that our teachings have to offer (which was the core value of the conservatives) and to being a spiritual community

devoted to loving and caring for the people in our communities (the core value of the liberals).

In other words, we are finally becoming a church that begins to express the fullness of our own teachings about how a marriage of love and wisdom makes the Lord's true church. This is why I believe we are finally becoming ready to offer our church to the world. Of course, it will take time and a lot of hard work. But I believe that if we continue to move forward as we have been, and take the necessary forward steps both nationally and locally, our church will begin a period of major growth. And I believe this new growth will not be followed by a period of decline as was our growth spurt of the 1800s. The foundation we are now building is a solid one, based on the bedrock of spiritual reality.

I am optimistic about the future of our church. And I would like to offer you a few thoughts from our experience at the Bridgewater Church to add some practicality to all this great theory. I'm happy to say that after a long decline similar to that in many of our churches, and in the denomination as a whole, the Bridgewater Church is now experiencing modest but definite growth. Our membership has increased by several people each of the last two years, and looks as though it will do the same this year. Meanwhile, our average Sunday attendance has increased from the low twenties a couple of years ago to the low thirties now.

(Continued on page 104)

We are finally becoming a church that begins to express the fullness of our own teachings about how a marriage of love and wisdom makes the Lord's true church. This is why I believe we are finally becoming ready to offer our church to the world.

THEME PRESENTATION

Our Growing Future

(Continued from page 103)

There are several elements that have worked together to make this possible, and they can work elsewhere. In fact, they are now working in several of our other churches. One of them, of course, is good pastoral leadership. It is not easy to grow a church without a minister. And the more ministers we have who combine a knowledge of our church's teachings with perceptiveness and compassion for people—not to mention a willingness to do a lot of very intense work—the more likely we are to have growing churches. This is why I support any mode of training ministers that will move forward the ministry of our church. There can be more than one gate into our ministry, just as there is more than one gate into the Holy City. However, a church's minister (or lay leadership) is only one part of the whole picture in a growing church. Even the best minister needs to be working with a congregation that is willing to lay aside old rivalries and work together to move forward in ways that may involve leaving behind some cherished traditions and familiar ways of doing things.

I believe that the most powerful way to get a church unified and moving forward is to look out into our communities and realize what a blessing our beliefs and our church family could be to many people who are searching for what we have. If we as congregations can move our focus off ourselves and our own survival, and think of how we can serve our communities in ways that uniquely express our faith in action, we can break out of our old patterns and begin to build a new and growing church.

Fortunately, we do not have to figure everything out all by ourselves. There are organizations and consultants out there who know how to grow a church, and who can teach us what we need to know in order to do it effectively. Yes, it will cost some money. But the results of acting with solid understanding and knowledge will be well worth the cost.

The harvest is plentiful and the laborers are few. But Jesus Christ started out with only twelve, and look what happened! If we redirect our energy, time, and money toward offering

Our Growing Future (continued)

to the world the same blessings that our church has given to us, I am convinced that it will not be many decades before we will be filling our churches—and building new ones in places where there has never been a Swedenborgian Church before.

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



Graduation

The Rev. Gladys Wheaton and Philip Bae received their M.A. in Swedenborgian Studies. Sarah Swart, a member of the Royal Oak church, received the Certificate in Spirituality. Gladys Wheaton received the Richard H. Tafel Award in Theology. They are the last students to graduate from the Swedenborg School of Religion.



Jun-Chol Lee, pastor of the Cleveland church congratulates Gladys Wheaton, assistant pastor of the Cambridge church.



(Above) Gladys Wheaton and Philip Bae.

(Below) Rev. Jun-Chol Lee and his cousin Philip Bae in front of the Virginia Street church.



(Above) Gladys Wheaton, Philip Bae, and Sarah Swart prepare to cut the cake.



George's last stand. The Rev. Dr. George Dole receives standing ovation from graduates, SSR/SHS Board of Trustees, and convention participants for his many years serving as a professor at SSR.

OTHER GATES

Graduation Address



George Dole

There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south, and three on the west. (Revelation 21:13)

There is a striking statement in Swedenborg's *Divine Providence* 256 that comes to mind whenever I think of this verse. "The reason Christianity is found only in that relatively small part of the world called Europe is that Christianity, unlike Islam . . . is not suited to the Near Eastern mind."

When you stop to think about it, this is an extraordinary statement in a number of ways, and it might be hard to believe that it issues from the pen of as ardent a Christian as has ever lived. Beyond that, though, there is something ironic about it when you consider the simple fact that the Hebrew Bible and the Gospels are rooted not in Europe but in the Near East. The church was primarily European in the eighteenth century, but Christ was definitely *not* a European. For me, in fact, one of the things that is unique about our Bible is that it comes from the only place on earth where three continents meet. The Holy Land is not rich in natural resources or big enough to be the world's granary, but it is a geographical focal point, a land bridge that joins Africa, Asia, and Europe. It is primarily because the Incarnation took place during the time of the Roman Empire that Christianity spread to the northwest rather than to the south or the east. In terms of our text, most of the world's Christians have entered through the western gate. To borrow a distinction from Raymondo Panikkar, though, Christianity may be a Western religion, but *Christianness* is not so limited.

I have become particularly conscious of this over the past few years through the presence and the witness of our Korean students. For reasons which I do not wholly understand, the form of Christianity that has been most successful among Koreans is a strongly Calvinist Presbyterianism; and it seems totally inappropriate for Koreans to travel three-quarters of the way around the globe and enter the faith through Calvin's Geneva. There should surely be a gate on the East.

A very similar message has been brought home to me through work on the New Century Edition. One of the essays planned for the introductory volume is to deal with the development of institutional Swedenborgianism, and the first draft of this article identified three major branches of the church, namely Convention, the General

finally, some natives of Africa who have been standing outside ask whether they may be allowed to contribute. When they have done so, the crown, the prize, is given to them, and the Europeans go home. The spokesman from Africa, incidentally, refers to the Europeans as "You Christians."

There is definitely something comfortable about living in a world where we all wear the same kind of clothes to church, so to speak. There are definite advantages to sharing a common language. A recent letter concerning the Foundation's *Debates with Devils* criticized the translations of Swedenborg included simply because they differed from those of the Standard Edition. In fact, the writer went so far as to say that the "translator of Swedenborg need not know Latin, but needed simply to be able to edit the translations with which we are familiar."

Theological education must surely look deeper than this. In her very thoughtful article "The Power and Limitations of Language in Swedenborg, Shakespeare, and Frost" (*Studia Swedenborgiana* Vol. II, No. 3 [November 1999]), Kristin King makes a statement that is all too easy to read over inattentively. "The world at the close of the twentieth century, on the

One of the greatest assets we have is represented at this ceremony, where we graduate one student from an African-American background and one from a Korean background. If all that has happened during their studies is that we have taught them, they have the advantage of us; for they will have learned and we will not. They do not necessarily take for granted the same things that we take for granted, which means that they will see some things that are hidden from purely Caucasian eyes.

Church, and the General Conference in England. The fact is, though, that the independent churches in Africa outnumber all the rest of the churches put together.

Swedenborg himself was of course a European, and a northern European at that—about as far removed from South Africa as one can get. There can be no question that the message of our theology is presented in Western clothing, in the vocabulary of eighteenth-century European scholarship and diplomacy. It is frighteningly easy for Occidentals, then, to become skilled tailors, experts in the vocabulary and proud of our expertise. Yet it is in *Marriage Love* 102-114 that we read the story of a forum on the origin of marriage love. Representatives from Spain, France, Italy, Germany, Holland, England, Sweden, Denmark, and Poland offer their thoughts; and

threshold of a new millennium, needs many more readers and readings of Swedenborg's writings." (p. 4). The first, the new readers, is a matter of numerical growth. The second, the new readings, is a matter of spiritual growth.

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(Continued on page 110)

How We Love, Defines Us

Sarah Buteux

Tonight I would like to read to you a passage from the book of Ephesians that deals with an issue near and dear to my heart.

It is a subject that relates to my ordination and in many ways has helped me clarify my call to ministry. I would like to talk to you about circumcision. Now I know what you are thinking . . . actually I have absolutely no idea what you are thinking . . . but bear with me for a minute.

There was a lot of controversy in the early Christian Church about exactly what it took to become an official follower of Christ. Many Jewish-born Christians felt that these Gentile believers were not really true followers of Christ until they were circumcised, because circumcision was the sign of the covenant between God and his people. Now I am not going to go into details here, but if you think we have a hard time recruiting new members you can only imagine the kind of problems this might have posed for Paul. Throughout the epistles, when Paul is talking about faith vs. works, this is the controversy he is trying to resolve. Again and again, he says that belief, faith, Christ's love for us and our love for him are more important than the ritual observances that had defined the Jewish faith for thousands of years. It is Christ that defines us, Christ that marks our hearts, not our flesh. In this particular passage, Paul is writing to a gentile Christian community. He says:

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised"



Sarah Buteux

by those who call themselves "the circumcision". . . remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the promise, without hope and without God in this world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations.

He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. . . Consequently you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his spirit.

—Ephesians 2: 11-15a, 17, 21-22

Now that is a lot to take in. Paul is saying, *remember*. Remember what it was like when people told you that you were excluded from the promise, because you were not following the same set of rules they were. Remember what it was like to be "without hope and without God in this world." Well, if there was one message Christ preached loud and clear, it was that the rules of religion pale next to the spirit. Christ broke all the rules to let you in, to let all people in. Remember. Don't forget what it felt like to be on the outside, and be thankful that in him we are all one people, dearly loved, a whole building joined together to become a dwelling place here on earth for the spirit of God.

As people, we have a remarkable capacity for shutting one another out.

Christ broke all the rules to let you in, to let all people in. Remember. Don't forget what it felt like to be on the outside, and be thankful that in him we are all one people, dearly loved, a whole building joined together to become a dwelling place here on earth for the spirit of God.

We like to have things clearly defined. We want to know who is in and who is out, what is right and what is wrong, or as the modern lingo would have it, what is hot and what is not.

I think we do this to reassure ourselves that we are okay, but we shut a lot of people out in the process. In our attempts to prove that we are right and therefore others are wrong, we cause a lot of pain and we miss the point. Christian history is littered with the consequences. In my own ministry I have seen some of the casualties, and it hurts.

It hurts to minister to an elderly couple in the hospital who haven't been



Laying on of hands at ordination of Sarah Buteux

allowed to take communion together in the thirty years they have been married because this is a second marriage after a first that ended in divorce. It hurts to see the haunted and angry look in the eyes of gays and lesbians who shy away from any mention of God because they have been told that people like them have no right to God's love. Or to see families walk away from church and the Christian community, further dividing us as a people, simply because they can't agree on points of doctrine.

Religion, this force that should be uniting us, seems more often than not to cause division, strife, and pain. We don't need to look any farther than the Middle East to see this theory in action. In this passage, Paul is saying that Christ came to bring peace, to destroy the barriers, bring an end to hostility. He is writing to an early Christian

(Continued on page 108)



John Maine

Reflecting Upon My Call to Ordained Ministry

John Maine

It was our Sunday School Picnic at the Kitchener church a couple of weeks ago. It was a wonderful day: The sun was shining in this big blue sky, the kids were shrieking and yelling and running everywhere, the older folks were sitting in their lawn chairs, watching the kids, smiling, swapping stories with one another. And everybody was just lying back, letting their appetites build a little for the big potluck lunch they knew was waiting for them in the community center nearby.

It was a beautiful scene, the sun, the park, people just being there with one another, spending time together and most importantly—with the courage that comes from love—sometimes sharing more deeply with one another. Here and there, people would give voice to some worry or fear that had been troubling them—the frustrations of looking for work, the return of an illness, concern for a loved one. And to this kind of news there would always be responses of gentleness and understanding. In those moments I knew that already phone calls and visits were being planned, and help and guidance were being offered. Yes, even the shadow side of life could be accepted and woven lovingly into the bright shining moment of that day, and it seemed to make it shine brighter still.

As I was contemplating this truly heavenly image, my buddy Joe

walked up to me. Joe is an older gentleman for whom I have a great fondness and a very great respect. He's certainly given a lot of his time to serving the church and serving it well. But I like him especially because he's such a straight shooter. He's one of those people who tells it the way he sees it. You always know where you stand with Joe. Of course he's not always right—who is?—and I don't always agree with him, but he speaks from his heart, and I think that's always a good place from

which to start.

So Joe came up to me and said, "Well John, I have to tell ya, I sure wouldn't wanna be a minister. No way. Not these days." He talked about the troubling shortage of clergy, not only in our denomination but in all denominations today. He talked

about how the church had lost its place as the heart and center of a community, how people had left the church to be caught up, and their energy used up, in the everyday whirl of our fast-changing society. Joe concluded by saying, "I'm worried about our church, but not just our church, I'm worried about all churches, anybody's church, how they're going to survive, the way things are now."

So many people feel so very lonely, so trapped inside themselves. Why? Because they live in a world that tells them they are essentially incomplete, not good enough, always needing more, more things to get, to have, to be. No one is telling them that, instead of being forms of need and emptiness, they are actually forms of love and fullness, that in truth they already have all they need within themselves—the faithful presence of the One who made them and who loves them completely and whose love makes them complete, now and forever.

Yes, the churches in general, and our church in particular, often seem to be facing an uphill battle. And yes, the need for more clergy is certainly a cause for concern, a concern which our church is seeking to address with its implementation of new seminary programs and resources. But the church is of course not just clergy, it's all the people gathered together in the Lord's name, each with their unique gifts and calls to ministry. So we may find that the present need for more ordained ministers may be prompting us to develop new models of church leadership and new ways of, as Swedenborg would say, "being church" together.

But there is also my friend Joe's second worry, about the large numbers of people who have left the church over the years or who have never been part of one. Of course the problem extends far beyond that of declining membership rolls. So many are out in the world, getting very different answers, answers fed to them at every moment by a consumer society obsessed with promoting individual self-interest and self-importance above all else.

Yet even here, there is a providential opportunity for us as the Lord's church. Because all of the rushing around, the wanting and getting—or not getting—the distrust of others, the fear of losing out and the struggle to keep up, not only wearies us, it makes us feel alone. That's my sense of the people of God today. So many people feel so very lonely, so trapped inside themselves. Why? Because they live in a world that tells them they are essentially incomplete,

(Continued on page 109)



Eric Lange, Laurie Turley, and Lisa Cole from the Puget Sound church make beautiful music for the ordination.

How We Love, Defines Us

(Continued from page 106)

community, but there is a message here for all people. Maybe if we could keep in mind what it felt like to be on the outside, we might be more inclined to make peace with one another in the name of Christ, rather than shut one another out in the name of Christ. There are few things worse than going through life without God and without hope.

I'm sure that you agree and you are probably wondering what this has to do with my calling. Let's just say that I have seen the power religion has to divide and to unite us.

Ladies and gentlemen, my family is here tonight. For some of you that probably seems only natural, but in our case it wasn't that easy. I was raised in a wonderful Baptist church that instilled in me a love for God and a desire to share that love with others. But my journey out of that church, into this one, and into the ministry has not been an easy one for my family to watch or understand. My calling to become a minister is hard enough to understand and accept, but becoming a minister in this church—well, you can see how that crosses the line into sheer lunacy. So you see, when I invited my family to come to my ordination, I wasn't sure if they would be able or willing to come. But about a month ago I got a call from my mom, who simply said that she loves me more than she disagrees with me, so she was going to come to my ordination. My parents and my sister were going to be here to support me, not because they understand what it is I am doing, or even why, but because they love me, and they know this is important to who I am and who I am becoming. I think if all Christians could love one another and show love to one another, the way my family is showing their love for me right



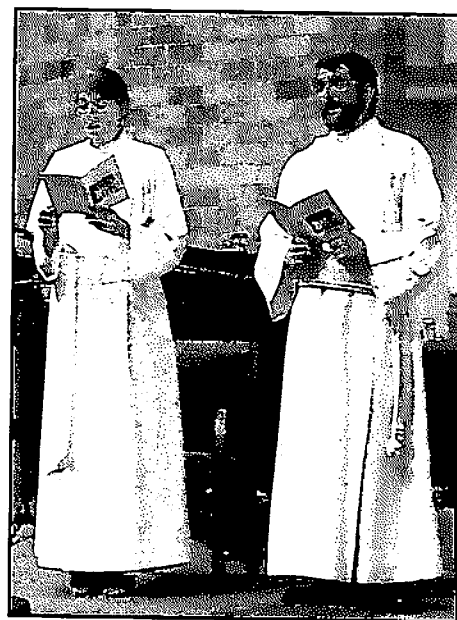
Sarah and John greet their audience.

now, we wouldn't have so many different types of churches and so many people who fall outside of them.

One of the most valuable ideas in Swedenborg's thought is the idea that the truths of faith are first in time, but charity is first in end. What he means by that is that on this plane what we believe appears to be of highest importance to us. It is how we define ourselves, and we think that it is our faith that impacts how we live and love. But in truth, it is the other way around. Your love is what ultimately defines you. What you believe, well that's subject to change. As we grow through this life and into the next, there will be so much more for us to learn and be made aware of that our faith will constantly shift and change. But how we love—that will simply deepen and grow along the lines we have chosen here. My family loves me with the quality of love that Paul is talking about, a love that brings peace and breaks down the walls that divide us. It is a love that runs deeper than understanding.

This is the same kind of love that I have encountered in this church, and why I have chosen to be part of this ministry. In the Swedenborgian church I have found an openness, a humility, and a spirit of charity that allows for differences in people. I can love and respect someone of a different faith, because I can trust that God sees past all of our imperfect understandings straight into the heart.

In his letter to the Church at Ephesus, Paul says, "Remember . . . remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the promise, without hope and without God in this world." I don't know about you, but I remember what it felt like to be without hope and without God, and if it were not for this church, I might never have found my way back to a faith that fills me with his presence and his hope. But I know that there are others out there. People who have become convinced that somehow they are "separate from Christ," people who have been excluded and who feel that they are outside of the promise. People who live day in and day out, "without hope and without God in this world."



My calling is to find these people, because I think that, at least for some of them, this church might just be the home they are looking for, it may be a home full of people who can receive them just as they are.

I will be honest with you. I don't know that the Swedenborgian church is ever going to be really, really big, but I do know that it is a necessary and vital presence in this world. A presence I am committed to seeing grow. With your help I want to find those people who have given up hope and show them that maybe, just maybe, there are people with whom they can belong, there is a community in which they can learn, and be loved, and be made whole. This is my calling, and I thank you all for the honor and privilege of pursuing it within this church.

The Rev. Sarah Buteux received her B.A. from Smith College and her M.Div. from Harvard. She is presently head dorm parent and director of social services at the Westover School for Girls in Middlebury, Connecticut, and is actively involved with the Committee on Worship in developing music resources for our churches. Her ultimate goal is parish ministry. She is a member of the Cambridge church, and the wife of Andrew Dole, who is in the thesis stage of doctoral studies at Yale. Her career plans depend on where Andrew is ultimately employed; meanwhile, she will be on the roster of pulpit supply ministers, going where she is needed.



Reflecting Upon My Call to Ordained Ministry

(Continued from 107)

not good enough, always needing more, more things to get, to have, to be. No one is telling them that, instead of being forms of need and emptiness, they are actually forms of love and fullness, that in truth they already have all they need within themselves—the faithful presence of the One who made them and who loves them completely and whose love makes them complete, now and forever.

But I believe that this great love can be made known only in communities consciously grounded in it. Only by sharing our lives with each other in authentic relationships of caring and service, in the image of the Divine love, can we experience the power of this love to heal and transform us. And that brings me back to the beauty of that Sunday School picnic of a few weeks ago. Because I also believe that we have a great treasure to offer a spiritually impoverished and desperately lonely world. It is the knowledge of our call to regeneration, the revelation given to us of our power in the Lord to enter upon the path of new life in the Spirit, the life of love. And even more, we can offer the truth of this understanding through the love we commit ourselves to practice and to share, to make real, in our church communities.

So I guess in the end I would have to disagree with Joe: I really do want to be a minister, especially *because* of the “way things are now.” Because I know and I have seen what our Swedenborgian faith can do, the power it has to sustain human relationships with an amazing love. I have experienced this in my own life, as a husband and a father, in this journey toward ordained ministry that I have walked, hand in hand, with my wife Catherine and my son Joshua. I have known this love as a member of the Kitchener church and for this I will always be deeply grateful, for without their love and support, so freely given to me and to my family, I could never have come to this moment in my life. I have seen it, too, in the warm and generous welcome of the Edmonton church to



John Maine ordained (l-r): Sarah Buteux, Amy Reichert, Paul Zacharias, George Dole, Ron Brugler. The Rev. Paul Zacharias gave the charge to the ordinand for John; Amy Reichert gave the charge for Sarah.

which I am called.

Both of these churches have shown me what an extraordinary achievement a community of faith can be, a kind of new creation, at once human and Divine. That's what our churches can be today—a kind of “alternative space” for fostering our transformation in the Spirit, for growing and becoming real together in Love—even in the very midst of all the sad and foolish ways of this world.

I believe that the building of this sacred space, making it known and making it accessible to as many of our brothers and sisters as we can, is a great work. Indeed, ultimately it is the greatest thing any of us can do; it is how we become, each in our own way, most spiritually “useful.”

So I feel very honored and privileged by the trust you have shown in me today, that I might join with you all in building the New Jerusalem.

The Rev. John Maine has been called to the Edmonton Swedenborgian Church, the Church of the Holy City in Edmonton, Alberta.



The Swedenborgian Church Election Results

Chris Laitner Vice-president
Gloria Toot Secretary
Larry Conant Treasurer
Dexter Pasternak

General Council

Duane Beougher General Council
Charles Winter.. General Council
Rev. Harvey Tafel.....

General Council

Susan Poole. COMSU
Susan Hemmerich EDSU
Jennifer Lindsay FPSU
Karen Conger MINSU
Carl Blenkin MINSU
Robert Hinrichs IMSU
Sue Burns SHS/SSR

Board of Trustees

Melinda Jester SHS/SSR

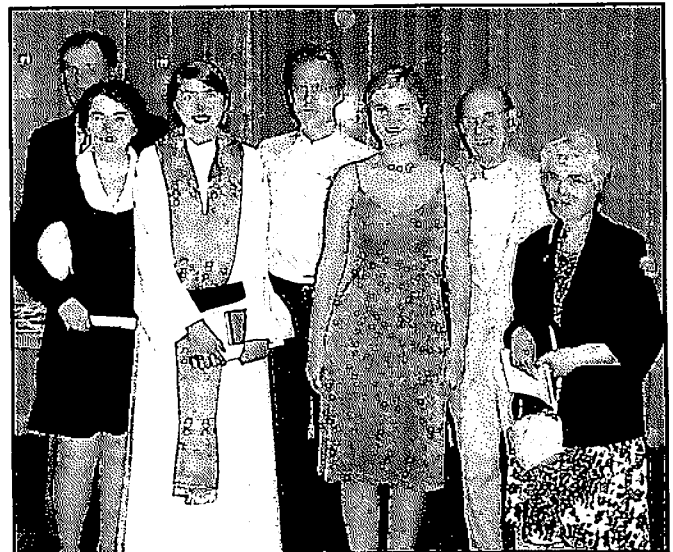
Board of Trustees

Rev. Marlene Laughlin CAM
Pat Tukos CAM
Mary Crenshaw

Nominating Committee



Photographs in this issue were contributed by Patte LaVan, Steve Koke, and Lee Woofenden.



The families: Buteux and Dole. (l-r) Ray, Sally, and Sarah Buteux, Andrew Dole, Heather Buteux, George and Lois Dole.

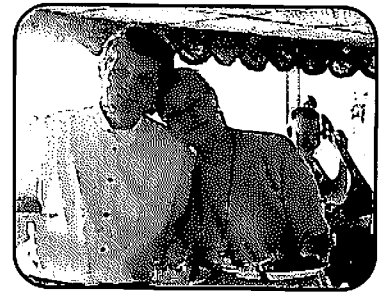
TWOSOMES



(Left)
Bev & John
Titus prepare
for cruise.

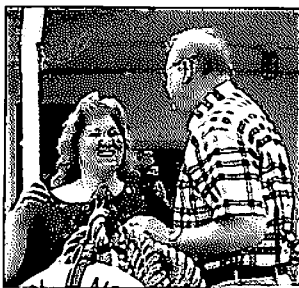


Ron & Val Brugler stop to smell the roses. Yes!
He remembered their 28th anniversary!



Jim & Carla Abler Erickson, stalwarts
of the Convention Planning Committee,
finally get to relax & chow down on cruise.

Bob Kirven
chats with his
daughter
Diana Kirven
Stickney,
SHS Board
Member.



Nancy Freestone & Herman
Foegelle cruisin'.



John & Sharon Billings
slow dancin'.



(Above) Joe serenades Renee as
he did on their first meeting—or
so it is rumored.



Susan & Jerry Poole swingin'.

OTHER GATES

(Continued from page 105)

I have in mind particularly the hegemony of Western academics. There are brilliant and devoted minds in other cultures, but they gain little or no respect among us because they do not play the academic game by our rules. The Islamic scholar is likely to have far more respect for the Qur'an than for *The Chicago Manual of Style*; and it would take a referee who stood outside both traditions to judge between them with anything like impartiality. Of course, Islamic scholarship does not meet our standards of scholarly detachment. Our scholarly detachment does not meet Islamic standards of reverence, either. Must they be at odds with each other, or can they listen to each other attentively, appreciatively—or even humbly?

This is not to say that we should discard our rules, not at all. We may criticize hard science for its neglect of the spiritual side of life, but that misses

the point. There are clear benefits gained by restricting a field of study, and the accomplishments of science are due in no small measure to the clarity of its focus. The problem comes when science says that anything outside its material focus is irrelevant or non-existent. The problem comes, that is, when a discipline fails to recognize how its limitations affect its conclusions. If we are to be scholars, let us by all means be disciplined scholars—but let us not fall prey to the pretense that there is an invariant relationship between good scholarship and saving faith.

All this is one specific dimension of a tension that is not unique to our denomination. The primary task of a seminary is to prepare individuals for ministry to the church, and that means to the church as it is, not to some imaginary church as it should be. Yet it is expected also that the ministry will have visions of what could be and will lead the church beyond where it is.

We do, I believe, have a strong theo-

logical foundation for a truly multicultural form of Christianity, a form that can move beyond "that relatively small part of the world called Europe" and that in fact has begun to do so. It may well be that the heart of the Swedenborgian church is not in Newton or San Francisco or Bryn Athyn but in Africa. It may be that we are the ones who are on the fringe of the movement. Perhaps we should visualize ourselves as pioneers venturing forth into the Wild West of Western academia and even beyond, into the uncharted seas of multiculturalism.

If so, let us not do so as our ancestors did, with conquest and conversion in our minds. Let us start with the assumption that the natives are friendly, and that we have a lot to learn from them.

The Rev. Dr. George Dole is a former professor at the Swedenborg School of Religion (now Swedenborgian House of Studies), retired this year. He resides in Bath, Maine, and is the parish minister for the Bath Swedenborgian Church.



Swedenborgian House of Studies Distance Education and Correspondence Courses

Ted Klein and Wilma Wake

Have you sometimes wondered how you can more fully be of service in the church and in the world? How to relate concepts in Swedenborgian theology to daily life and decision making? Would you like to explore the relation of Swedenborgian theology to ministries? You can explore questions such as these in the 2-semester **Introduction to Swedenborgian Concepts** online distance education course and the 15-lesson **Swedenborgian Concepts and Life Issues** correspondence course. These two courses, offered for the first time last year at SSR, will be offered again this year through the newly constituted Swedenborgian House of Studies. Both courses will be taught by the Rev. Dr. Theodore Klein.

Both courses explore such basic theological themes as the nature of God, life of charity, human freedom, providence, and regeneration. The focus of the online course is on developing a systematic theological approach and specifically relating it to ministry. The focus of the correspondence course is on relating basic theological themes to a range of life issues people face. The textbook for the online course is *New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine*, supplemented by use of the *Arcana Coelestia*. The correspondence course draws some selections from these works and also from *Heaven and Hell*, *Divine Love and Wisdom*, *Divine Providence*, and *True Christian Religion*. For both courses students need access to either printed volumes or to the New Search website (www.ns98.org).

Each semester of the online course involves reading text materials, reading supplementary materials online, responding to weekly questions, participating each week in threaded discussion online, and completing mid-term and final examinations.

The correspondence course, which students are encouraged to work on by e-mail, includes readings from texts and supplementary readings available in

print or by e-mail, and completing four written assignments.

Registration for the online course, first semester, must be completed no later than **September 30**. Completion of the first semester is necessary for taking the second semester, which begins in early February. Registration for the correspondence course must be completed by **December 1**. For more information about the courses you can contact Rev. Dr. Ted Klein at Tklein3388@aol.com or (617) 325-1214. To register for one of the courses or find out more about the Swedenborgian House of Studies, see complete contact information below.

Spirituality Certificate Offered at SHS

Swedenborgian House of Studies will offer a certificate in spirituality this year via online and correspondence courses. The four required courses are:

Swedenborgian Concepts and Life Issues, taught by the Rev. Dr. Ted Klein (see description above.)

The following courses are taught by the Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake:

Spiritual Growth with Christian Mystics

What do mystics of the Christian tradition have to say to us today about our own spiritual growth in the modern world? We'll look at mystics of the past [including Emanuel Swedenborg] and some present mystics [including Swedenborgian writer Wilson Van Dusen] to see what we can learn for our own lives. Available either online or by correspondence, 10 lessons, first online lesson beginning in early October.

Spiritual Teachings From Around the World

What do the many different traditions of the world have to offer us for our spiritual

growth today? We'll look at spiritual teachings from Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, the Sufis, and various Native American traditions to find inspiration for enhancing our own lives. Available either online or by correspondence, 10 lessons, first online lesson beginning in mid-January.

Spiritual Companionship

Do you think you might have a call to be a companion to others on their spiritual journey? This course will look at spiritual companionship from various religious traditions, including Swedenborgian. We'll explore some of the issues involved in being a companion to others and look at ways companions can support each other. Available either online or by correspondence, 10 lessons, beginning in mid-April and ending before Convention 2002. There will be mini-course time available at convention for students taking this course to talk together.

Cost is \$300 per course is \$300 or \$1000 for the entire series, with a 10% discount for groups of 3 or more taking a course together. For more information, contact:

Swedenborgian House of Studies at
Pacific School of Religion
1798 Scenic Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94709
(510) 849-8228

Rev. Dr. Ted Klein
Tklein3388@aol.com

Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake
wilwake@aol.com



Jane Siebert, Ted Klein, Wilma Wake, Dorothea Harvey

General Council Report

General Council met June 27, 2001 at St. Thomas University in St. Paul, Minnesota for their pre-convention meeting. The officers' reports were given and accepted. Vice-President Chris Laitner was directed to set up a committee to develop an International Youth Conference tentatively set for 2003. There was lengthy discussion about the proposed Youth Minister job description. After a few changes were made to the job description, it was voted to bring it to the floor of Convention.

In response to a request by the Guyana Church, it was voted to forgive any of its debts or encumbrances; to transfer any deeds or titles to the appropriate party (at the Guyana Society's cost); and to acknowledge that the Guyana Church is no longer affiliated with the General Convention of the Swedenborgian Church.

Following lengthy discussion, General Council voted to establish a line of credit to the Pacific Coast Association of \$180,000 at one-half percent over prime to be secured by a mortgage on the Kirkland property. It was stipulated that the PCA inform General Convention monthly that payments to the existing notes on the Kirkland property are current. It was also voted to grant up to \$20,000 to the National Church in Washington, DC, for gutter and downspout repair/restoration on the south-facing wall.

There was lengthy discussion about

the ministerial salary proposal during which various concerns were explored in order to feel confident about presenting it on the floor of Convention as voted at the March General Council meeting.

At the post-convention meeting July 1, General Council approved or confirmed the following board and committee appointments:

Board of Mediation
Kurt Fekete and Lorraine Sando
Library & Documents Larry Conant,
Jim Erickson, Linda Tafel,
Martha Bauer attending as
Central Office manager
Retirement Committee
Ian McIntosh (2004)
Susan Wood (2003)
Rev. F. Bob Tafel (2002)
Committee of Inquiry
Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake,
Duane Beougher, Mary Crenshaw,
Rev. Dr. Ted Klein,
Rev. Dr. Jonathan Mitchell
Structure Review Committee
Chris Laitner,
Rev. Dr. George Dole
Committee on Amendments
Rev. Dr. George Dole,
Mary Crenshaw
Central Office Committee
General Council Executive Committee,
vice-president as chair
Investment Committee
John Perry, Larry Conant,
Dan Dyer, Jane Siebert, and
Barb Boxwell
New appointee— Rev. Robert Bossdorf
Building Fund
Sue Burns (2002), John Perry (2003),
Betsy Lau reappointed
Wayfarers Chapel
Pete Toot, Rev. Erni Martin



Carol Lawson gives Swedenborg Foundation report, displaying a copy of the New Century Edition of Heaven and Hell.

National Council of Churches
Rev. Robert McCluskey,
Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey,
Mary Ann Fischer, and
Rev. Dr. Jonathan Mitchell
(Kim Hinrichs as alternate)
Rep. to Executive Board:
Rev. Robert McCluskey
Faith and Order:
Rev. Dr. Robert Kirven
Ecumenical Minority Bail Bond Fund:
Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey

Among other items of business, Rev. Lee Woofenden was appointed to the Information Management Support Unit to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Jim Erickson. Jim will continue his work on *Messenger* compilation under auspices of the library and document committee.

To enable the San Francisco church to obtain a grant from an historical society, General Council voted to return their deed to them.

It was voted to grant \$25,000 to Urbana University's capital funds drive to renovate Barclay and Bailey halls, to be budgeted in 2002, and it was voted to grant \$8000 from mission funds to the Edmonton Church for moving assistance for John Maine.

Lastly, there was discussion about the line of credit extended to the Pacific Coast Association, voicing concerns that the Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit expressed as well as concerns of other council members.

—Gloria Toot, secretary



Executive Committee conducts convention business. (l-r) Larry Conant, Chris Laitner, Gloria Toot, Rev. Ron Brugler.

Council of Ministers Report

The Council of Ministers held eight regular sessions from Sunday, June 24, through Tuesday, June 26, with 31 members and guests participating. Four of the sessions were devoted to business, and four were workshop sessions. Howard Friend, who led a workshop at last year's meeting, was again our guest facilitator.

Howard Friend's workshop engaged us in looking to nurture emerging new life, imaged by blowing on sparks and tending a garden. Among issues we addressed were: spiritual change; values, beliefs, and principles; the relation of the Council of Ministers to the new seminary; clergy fatigue; and regional cooperation.

The Council of Ministers welcomed Pavel Heger as its foreign ministry guest. In words and pictures, Pavel shared about the New Church Mission in the Czech Republic. The Committee on Worship presented the new songbook and described its work in creating a website. The Swedenborgian House of Studies presentation pictured how the new seminary effort is taking shape. The presentation on the National Council of Churches provided updates on issues and outlined five developing recommendations.

We discussed and approved unanimously the proposed minimum salary guidelines that have been considered by the Council of Ministers Executive Committee, Ministries Support Unit, Augmentation Fund Committee, and General Council. We considered the idea of a winter meeting and agreed on planning for one going forward, possibly a meeting to be held near the Pacific School of Religion. In response to a proposal from Massachusetts ministers on regional theological training, we agreed that the Committee on Admission into the Ministry and the Council of Ministers Executive Committee would enter into discussions on issues raised. We affirmed the need for a lay leader program and referred further discussion of lay leader training to the Committee on Admission into the Ministry and the Council of Ministers Executive Committee, to be in dialogue



Council of Ministers

with the Swedenborgian House of Studies. The proposed Council of Ministers budget for 2002 was approved.

Election Results


Chair	Paul Martin
Executive Committee member, 3 year term	Renee Billings-Machiniak
Executive Committee member, 2 year term	Jerry Poole
CAM member	Kit Billings
Nominating Committee Member	Nadine Cotton
Convention Preacher 2003	Ken Turley

The Council of Ministers made the following recommendation to Convention regarding Thomas Noack, who was ordained by Friedemann Horn in his capacity as ordaining minister.

"The Council of Ministers recommends to Convention that Thomas Noack be added to our Roll of Ministers for service in the Continental Association."

The Council of Ministers made the following recommendations 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 John Maine, whose ordination has been requested by the Edmonton Society, whose preparation has been recognized by the Council of Ministers as adequate, and who has served as an Authorized Candidate for the Ministry for one year, 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."

"At her own request, supported by the approval of her 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 Sarah Buteux, having preparation recognized by the Council of Ministers as adequate, and having served as an Authorized Candidate for the Ministry for one year, be ordained into our ministry, and that the service of ordination be held at this session of Convention, her name, after ordination, to be placed on our Roll of Ministers."

Ted Klein, secretary 



General Council (Back row, l-r) Susan Wood, Jim Erickson, Rev. Harvey Tafel, Rev. Lee Woofenden, Larry Conant, Rev. Ken Turley, Chuck Winter, Rev. Ron Brugler, Duane Beougher, Chris Laitner, Martha Bauer, Rev. Paul Martin, Gloria Toot.



COMSU chair Mona Conner presented Jim Lawrence with a plaque from the Communications Support Unit in recognition of his twelve years as founder and director of J. Appleseed.

APPRECIATIONS



A certificate of appreciation was presented to Rae Guin for his many years of faithful service to the church. (l-r) Ron Brugler, Elizabeth and Ray Guin.



Members associated with Temenos, Living Waters, Puget Sound, Stonehouse, SHS, Music Ministry, Wayfarers Chapel and Network Center gathered in front of the auditorium to present a certificate to the Los Angeles Society for their very generous support of all these ministries. Merle and Pat Lundberg (front row, at right, next to Ron Brugler) accepted the award.

Other certificates of appreciation (not shown) were presented to:

- ★ Rev. Dick Tafel for his service on FPRSU
- ★ Betsy Coffman for her service on MINSU
- ★ SSR Board of Trustees in recognition of their work of transforming SSR into the Swedenborgian House of Studies
- ★ The Wayfarers Chapel Board in honor of their 50th anniversary and opening of new visitors center
- ★ The Cambridge Society in honor of their 100th anniversary.

Editor's Note: As reported in the June Messenger, Anna Martinian was the first winner of the COMSU-sponsored scholarship to the writing workshop presented twice a year at Temenos. Following are her impressions of the spring workshop.

Listening to the Voice Inside

Anna Martinian

Proprioception: Awareness of the position of the body. This part of the nervous system is made up of sensory nerve endings in muscle, tendon, and inner ear that allow us to be aware of the position of our bodies. They enable us to get up and go to the refrigerator without first figuring out which foot to put the weight on to get out of the chair.

As a children's book illustrator, I have been ostensibly sitting down to write and publish a story of my own for

years. Glints of ideas have winked out at me from time to time, yet when I've actually tried to get them onto paper, they quickly turn into a bowl of cold spaghetti, impos-sible to unravel and make sense of. This is just one of the things that led me to respond to COMSU's offer of a scholarship to attend a workshop on proprioceptive writing. I wrote down what I'd like to get out of attending a writing workshop and what I would do with the tools put in my hands. I got lucky and was off to a weekend in the Pennsylvania countryside, a pleasant train ride, someone else driving the train. Many of my expectations were met right there.

It turns out I had no idea what this was all about, and as is not uncommon I went looking for one thing and came back with something else entirely. Proprioceptive writing is a meditation practice that allows one to become aware of the internal dialogue. I am like many people—this sometimes constant mind-

patter is hard to grasp or reflect on, rolling on as it does while I am doing something else. The proprioceptive process demands that the writer slow down and listen. Balanced reflection becomes more likely. When you stop to read what you have written, there's a chance to do so more objectively.

Some of the tools seem unlikely at first—somewhere you won't be disturbed for twenty minutes, paper and pen will be expected, but baroque music and a candle? Baroque music I like, but I hold no affection for candles, eschewing their employment as mood-setting devices (soot on the ceiling from burning paraffin!). Even I have to admit, though, that the act of lighting a candle is succinct and effective for signaling a shift in perspective and attention.

Nine people and our instructor, Mary Bok, sat in an informal circle as Mary told us how this technique came about

(Continued on page 115)

Listening to the Voice Inside

(Continued from page 114)

when a writer and teacher of writing sat down to work on an important assignment and found she could not focus on the task at hand. Her mind went in every other direction unbidden. I have had this experience occasionally before a blank canvas, having to have another cup of tea or needing to look at a magazine. This writer put two sheets of paper before her. On one she wrote down all the thoughts and thought fragments that barged in on her while she attempted to carve out her thesis on Shirley Jackson. On the other paper she wrote down what she had to say about Shirley. In this way she kept all that constant chatter from preventing her working because it got out on the page. The history and development of this technique is more involved than this; further refinement enabled her to help high school students improve their writing.

The time came for the group to jump right in. We sat together around a few tables, each with our own candle. Mary started the music, and we were told, after a few breaths, to listen and write down what we heard. At any natural pause in the writing, when one thought had landed on the page and the next thought hadn't yet shown itself, our instruction was to ask ourselves the proprioceptive question: "What do I mean by ___?" with the blank being filled in by a word or phrase that stands out as you look over what you have written.

For my first *write* as it is called, I was entirely distracted immediately by the music: Pachelbel's Canon in D, and then by the smell of burning candles. My only thoughts were my memory of the time when I owned a copy of the recording and the utter silliness of burning wax candles! (It wasn't too clear to me I had this animosity until then.) Other participants had more personal dialogues spinning in their heads, and I found out that when I am asked to listen, my inner chatterbox will actually shut up so I can hear, and what I am aware of first is my immediate, physical surroundings. In every "write" I sat down to during the workshop and since, I have had to acknowledge what is going on in my external sphere of existence before I can

hear what is going on inside. At the end of the specially recorded twenty-minute tape, we were asked to finish our thoughts on paper and extinguish our candles when ready.

Over the weekend we did five or six "writes." After each one we sat in a circle and took turns reading our work aloud. Mary listened, and as each one finished she asked the proprioceptive question about a word or phrase that needed some consideration. After awhile, some of us noted words or phrases that jumped out at us as well. Mary made it clear there was no need to try to explain or defend a choice of words, the idea was to consider the choice; why one and not another?


Other things to consider after writing are how you feel; are your "writes" tied together unconsciously by a theme? Is there some thought that came to mind that didn't get written out? Is there something that did get written out that you may want to revisit? I have been following the practice in the month and a half since my visit to Temenos. I find that I don't follow a strict schedule, writing two or three times per week in the mornings as a veteran proprioceptive writer I met at the retreat does, so I allow myself to write for both sides of a tape if I feel like it (40 minutes). One of the messages I took away from Mary Bok's instruction was that there was no requirement to impose any more structure on the practice than what I listed at the beginning. Essential, however, is to *listen* to the voice inside and write down what you hear.

For our final write of the seminar, I recalled the tour of the Temenos farmhouse Deane Currie gave when I first arrived. I was amazed to learn that part of the building was standing in the seventeenth century and built by Scandinavian people. I visualized Emanuel Swedenborg sitting down to work in a room there, near a window. He would have a candle if needed, though not a cassette player. I'm sure he didn't listen to music while he worked but when he heard any music at all it was surely baroque; he and J.S. Bach were contemporaries. I don't doubt he sat quietly for awhile after lighting his candle until he heard words and began writing.

Proprioceptive writing seems to me

to fit in with Swedenborgian ideas about regeneration. At the very least I think I catch a glimpse of my own *proprium*, that tireless chatterbox, and beguile it to reveal itself on the page. Once I have given it its due by writing it down and reading it, I have a chance to examine what I really think. I like to think that the Lord might use this tool to reach any of us. Now anything can happen.

I finished a children's story a few weeks ago, and now I'm tweaking the text and working on the "dummy," a penciled mockup of the story along with pictures. Though I find writing a lot tougher than drawing and painting, I've had other ideas for stories as well and I continue to write them down, a little less anxious than I used to be about how they'll end up. It is slow going since much time is devoted to revolving around the two-year-old planet: Otto.

I've been a member of the New York New Church for about eleven years. I became interested in the church through my friend and colleague, Mona Diane Conner, who in one or two conversations deftly outlined a religious perspective that, to me, rang perfectly true. 



Anna and "planet Otto."

NEW WRITER'S SCHOLARSHIP APPLICANTS:

Please refer to the June
Messenger for scholarship
information. Deadline has
been extended to
September 15, 2001.

TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

Regarding Ron Siddell's response to the article, "Who Was Listening," {"To the Editor," June 2001, referring to your editorial, April 2001} his opinion is well reasoned, yet it falls into the trap that he warns about. The "family" is another band-aid—albeit a big one.

We are members of a culture that blames. We have not had a national president who advocated responsibility since Harry Truman, who had a sign on his desk saying "The Buck Stops Here." Perhaps we would do better to accept responsibility for our actions—both individual and collective—and *then* turn band-aids into building blocks.

Lon Elmer
Seattle, Washington



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 \$3,485, with \$1,290 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.

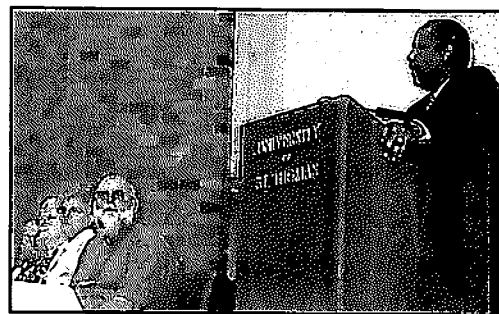
MORE HIGHLIGHTS



Sylvia Lange and Laurie and Ken Turley were applauded for their contribution of wonderful music during convention. (l-r) Laurie Turley, Renee Billings-Machiniak, Sylvia Lange, Kit Billings, Ken Turley, Ron Brugler.



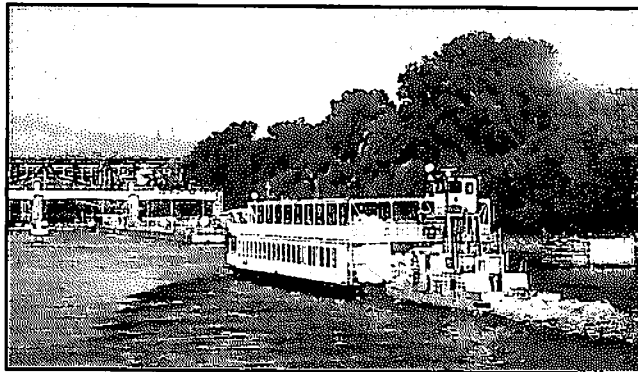
Catherine Maine's mini-course, Sacred Circle Dancing, was greatly enjoyed.



Dr. Robert Head, dynamic new president of Urbana University, (at rostrum) was introduced by Betsy Coffman (not shown). Executive Committee at left.



Rev. Pavel Heger, Czech Republic, was a special guest at convention.



Riverboat



Lorraine Sando and Laura Lawson Tucker, co-facilitators of the pre-convention workshop.

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT:

Swedenborgian Church Youth Minister

JOB DESCRIPTION:

This position is for the Youth Minister of the Swedenborgian Church. The person in this position will minister to the needs of teens and pre-teens ages 10-18. This is a full-time salaried position.

The Youth Minister will be actively involved with, and will provide guidance to, youth of the church, including youth groups and programming, and local and national youth and teen leagues. The Youth Minister will work with the youth personally, participating in hands-on interaction directly with the youth of the church, providing programs and spiritual guidance. This person will also personally provide or recruit youth leadership training for local or national youth leaders and to existing youth programs.

This person will work very closely and cooperate with the SCYL Coordinator (the Swedenborgian Church Youth League Coordinator) to maintain, establish and encourage national and local youth league organizations. The Youth Minister will also supervise, coordinate, and assist other youth related programs, such as camps, retreats, and provide training for youth leaders. The Education Support Unit of the Swedenborgian Church will hire and supervise this position.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Has knowledge about, experience working with, and feels actively called to, work with youth

- Loves, understands, and has good rapport with youth and is open, accepting, and loving to all youth
- Knows, or is willing to study and learn Swedenborgian perspectives and theology, and is willing to teach and incorporate those perspectives and theology in their work as Youth Minister.
- Has 1000 hours (equal to 6 months full-time) experience in a youth related program, preferably Swedenborgian
- Has excellent communication skills with both youth and adults
- Must be responsible, committed, focused, articulate active adult with a good sense of humor
- Has demonstrated ability to work with other adults as part of a team
- Has knowledge of instructional strategies, resources, and youth programming
- Is able to travel extensively and to attend retreats, camps, and convention
- Has knowledge of the workings of General Convention or a willingness to learn them
- Is ordained as minister or on the ordination track
- Is qualified to teach, train, or involve other youth leaders and mentors
- Is familiar with, and confident in dealing with, issues that kids and teens face, and has training in, or is willing to be trained in, crisis counseling
- Has knowledge of fund raising

FOR A COMPLETE JOB DESCRIPTION, OR TO APPLY:

Contact Michelle Huffman at the address below (e-mail preferred). To apply, send cover letter, resume, and three references. Applicants should address the goals, objectives, and criteria of the job description, and how they meet the desired qualifications in the cover letter. The deadline for application is September 15, 2001. Interviews will be held the weekend of October 13-14, 2001, at Almont Retreat Center in Almont, Michigan.. Travel expenses will be paid for those invited to interview.

Michelle Huffman, EDSU secretary
E-Mail: jhr@umich.edu
218 Ely St. #3
Allegan, MI 49010
Home: 616-673-0158
Work: 616-673-8965 ext. 113



Wayfarers Chapel Visitors Center Dedication

(Continued from back page)

the numerous supporters who made the day possible. Then with the snip of scissors, the red ribbon was cut, and the center was officially open.

Following the dedication service, the Chapel musicians presented a concert in the amphitheater. Three favorite hymns, "How Great Thou Art," "Londonderry Air" and "O Sing Unto the Lord," which was written by Swedenborgian composer the Rev. Ken Turley, were played, among others. Five decorated cakes celebrating the dual events were served later in the colonnade.

Congratulations on the event were received in the form of scrolls or letters from President Bush, Senators Ted Kennedy, Dianne Feinstein and Betty Karnette, Congresswoman Jane Harman, Governor Gray Davis, Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan, Assemblyman Alan Lowenthal, Supervisor Don Kanabe and Dr. Robert Schuller of the Crystal Cathedral. Each expressed a wish for fifty more years of community service.

Mary Sabol is public relations director at Wayfarers Chapel.



Youth League presents musical worship service at convention.

A CALL FOR INTERESTED PARTIES

Managing Editor for J. Appleseed & Co.

The Communications Support Unit of the Swedenborgian Church (COMSU) is looking for one person or a team of persons to be involved in the professional leadership and management of our outreach publications ministry, J. Appleseed & Co., now in its twelfth year.

The position of Managing Editor is a 1/3 time salaried position, paying approximately \$10,300. A knowledge of Swedenborg's writings and the spiritual tradition of the Swedenborgian Church is very important. A background in publishing is preferred, along with practical skills in teamwork and project management resulting in timely turnaround on projects.

Our Managing Editor will work with and serve as an employee of the Communications Support Unit. He/She will help envision topics, supervise authors, designers, and printers, and maintain and update the J. Appleseed website. As the ambassador for J. Appleseed, the Managing Editor will also handle all its communications and marketing, and supervise inventory management and fulfillment.

Most importantly, the person we are seeking must have a vision for J. Appleseed, and the passion and wherewithal to manifest that vision.

To inquire and apply please respond as soon as possible to Mona Diane Conner, chairperson of COMSU, at either of the following addresses:

E-mail: monadiane@earthlink.net

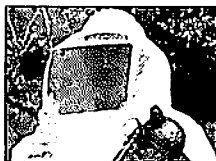
OR

One Montgomery Place #8
Brooklyn, New York, 11215

Please include your e-mail, phone number, and street address with your inquiry. We will send you an application form, and further details about the position. Applications must be in by October 1.



Wayfarers Chapel Calendar of Events through December 2001



Rev. Donald Barnes

September 11:
Rev. Donald Barnes presents, "Bees—Can We Live Without Them? A

Priceless Community Asset." 7-9 p.m. The program will include a 20-minute video. Barnes will pass out samples of different kinds of honey. Honey and beeswax candles will be available for purchase with proceeds going to the Visitors Center. Free will offering with reception following.



Barbara Mark

September 25:
Barbara Mark, Author—*Angelspeak, Angelspeak Book of Prayer and Heaven and Beyond*. Barbara facilitated a popular workshop at the Chapel in 1996, and

we have had requests for her return. Workshop from 6:30-9:00 p.m. Donation \$20, reception following.

October 2: Rev. Eric Allison—Angel workshop, "Angels All Around Us" 7-9 p.m. Donation \$5, reception following.



Eric Allison

October 23: Zhenia Folk Chorus—The mission of this local San Pedro folk chorus is to perpetuate the rich Eastern European village choral music and culture and to signify the primary role of women in preserving this important genre of world music. Zhenia (zena) means woman or wife in Slavic languages. They perform in costume and sing the folk songs of Croatia, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Macedonia, Albania, Russia and Ukraine, a capella and with musical accompaniment. 7-9 p.m. Donation \$5, reception following.

November 13: Eric Lloyd Wright—Lecture on Organic Architecture (to be titled) 7-9 p.m. Donation \$10, reception following.



Eric Lloyd Wright

December: Two Christmas concerts under the direction of Chapel music director Wendy Waring.



Important Church Calendar Dates

September 6-9	MINSU meeting, Kitchener, ONT	October 6-7	Retirement Committee, Newton, Mass.
September 19	FPRSU @ Kemper Rd., Cincinnati	October 12-14	EDSU meeting, Almont, Michigan
September 20 -23	Cabinet Meeting @ Kemper Road Church	October 16-18	Mid-Atlantic Association, Temenos
October 5-7	Pacific Coast Association Meeting, Kirkland, Washington	October 18-21	SHS Board Meeting, San Francisco
September 29-October 3	CAM meeting, San Francisco	October 25-28	General Council Meeting, Blairhaven, Mass.
October 1	Ohio Association Meeting - 1st weekend of Oct. each year	October 27	Urbana University Board Meeting, Urbana



BIRTH

Immediato—Seth Hendrix Immediato was born May 15, 2001, to Paula and Carl Immediato, active members of the Swedenborgian Church of the Holy City in Wilmington, Delaware.

BAPTISMS

Kopa—Darren Xian-Lung and Ryan Shane-Hwa Kopa, sons of Judy Chiu-ling Tang Kopa and David Richard Kopa were baptized into the Christian faith May 27, 2001, at the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, the Rev. Edwin Capon officiating.

Rev. Capon comments: *"I married Judy and David a number of years ago. David's parents, Adrienne Kopa and the late Richard Kopa were married at the Wayfarers Chapel at an earlier date. They were given some New Church book at the time of the wedding but did not look into it right away. When they did, they became interested and joined the San Francisco church. I also had the pleasure of officiating at the wedding of David's sister, who now lives in Virginia. That I was asked to do these baptisms came about because I was asked to do the service when the ministers and many of the members were at a retreat. Adrienne read in the*

church newsletter that I would be in the pulpit and contacted her son. It was good to be involved with the Kopa family again."



Koskela—Clark Crenshaw Koskela, infant son of Terrie and Jukka Koskela and grandson of Mary Crenshaw, was baptized into the Christian faith at the San Francisco church April 29, 2001, the Rev. Jim Lawrence officiating. Mary was present, as were Jukka's parents from Finland.

CONFIRMATIONS

Carr, Crahan, Gottschalk, Jaffe, Lapping, Morrill, Peterlin—Ian Carr, Brendan Crahan, Ryan Gottschalk, Stuart Jaffe, Hilary Lapping, Jenny Morrill, and Anton Peterlin were confirmed into the Christian faith May 6, 2001, at the San Francisco church, the Rev. Jim Lawrence officiating.

Rev. Lawrence comments, *"All those baptized were 13 years old, except for Jenny, who grew up in the Sunday School."*

Ela—Karen B. Ela (Mrs. Bruce) was confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church May 6, 2001, at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Kenneth Turley officiating.

Lageson—Jacqueline B. Lageson was confirmed into the life of the Swedenborgian Church May 13, 2001 at the Cambridge Church of the New Jerusalem in Cambridge, Mass., the Revs. F. Robert Tafel and Gladys Wheaton officiating.



MARRIAGES

Greiff and Illing—Elisa Greiff and Mark Illing were married May 5, 2001, at the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, the Rev. Jim Lawrence officiating. Elisa grew up in the San Francisco church and is now a member of the Puget Sound church and also sits on the board of the Pacific Coast Association.

Holland & Honick—Candice Marie Holland and Louis Honick were united in marriage June 29, 2001, at the Swedenborgian Church of the Holy City in Wilmington, Delaware. Candice is the daughter of Andrew F. and Constance Swann Watt, active members of the Wilmington church.

DEATHS

Raymond A. Gurney, age 87, husband of Jane (Farris) Gurney, entered the spiritual world May 2, 2001, at the Bridgton Health Care Center in Bridgton, Maine. A graveside service was conducted at Pine Grove Cemetery May 10 in Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Kenneth Turley officiating.

Largey—Ruby L. Largey, age 88, entered the spiritual world May 12, 2001, at Bridgton Hospital in Bridgton, Maine. A memorial service was held May 17 at Wood Funeral Home in Fryeburg,

Maine, with the Rev. Bryce Whiting, a family friend, officiating.

McCormick—Charles "Mac" McCormick, age 81, longtime active member of the Riverside church (California) before it closed, entered the spiritual world July 7, 2001. A resurrection service was conducted July 12 at Ft. Rosecrans Veterans Cemetery, Point Loma, California. Eldon Smith, consecrated lay leader of the San Diego Swedenborgian Church, officiated. Mac had been in a convalescent home for a number of years in La Mesa, California. He was one of the pioneers of the Friends of Wayfarers Chapel, and served on General Council.

MacDonald—Hilda Marie MacDonald, age 94, longtime active member of the Cleveland Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world May 12, 2001. A memorial service was conducted at the Swedenborg Chapel, Cleveland, Ohio, the Rev. Jun-chol Lee officiating. Hilda was the sister of Bill and Jean Garbera, Harold and Patricia Dennis, and aunt to Judy Dennis. She is survived by two sons, Jack and Paul. Her daughter Margaret died in 1998. Fellow church member and friend Jean Bestor said of Hilda, "Her loving presence will be long remembered."

Sanborn—Mina Sanborn, age 68, entered the spiritual world March 11, 2001, in Bridgton, Maine. A graveside service was conducted May 16, 2001, at South Bridgton, Maine, the Rev. Kenneth Turley officiating. Mrs. Sanborn was the aunt of Martha Richardson, longtime member of the Fryeburg New Church.

Vickers—William H. Vickers II, age 86, entered the spiritual world June 16, 2001. A memorial and committal service was conducted at the Chapel of Delaware Veterans Memorial Cemetery June 21, the Rev. Randall Laakko officiating. Bill is survived by his wife Mary, both members of the Church of the Holy City, Wilmington, Delaware.



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 Celebrates 50 Years and Dedicates Visitors Center

Mary Sabol

The worship service in Wayfarers Chapel celebrating 50 years of ministry began on Sunday, May 20th, with a procession of the clergy, much as the service began 50 years ago in 1951. Two of the Chapel ministers, the Revs. Marlene Laughlin and Harvey Tafel, with guest minister, the Rev. Ron Brugler, president of the Swedenborgian Church, entered the Chapel to the trumpet fanfare of Geoffrey Waring.

The Rev. Erni Martin, from Seattle, Washington, who served at Wayfarers Chapel from 1975 to 1984, offered the pastoral prayer and gave thanks to those who gave to the Chapel, with the words "ever faithful to the vision that inspired the chapel."

Chapel soloists Leberta Clark and Susan Dietz, under the direction of Wendy Waring, stirred the soul with their magnificent voices.

Following Marlene's reading of the scripture, Ron spoke about a quiet summer evening in 1968 on his family farm when out of nowhere there was a horrendous noise. As the noise grew louder, the family could see things flying in the air, and a few moments later, a ferocious tornado ripped through the peaceful Ohio countryside and left his single parent mother and his siblings in a state of disbelief. As his mother went through her papers she discovered that her insurance would not cover the damage to their home because it was deemed an *act of God*. But later, another noise was heard by the family—a caravan of trucks, trailers and wagons coming to their site. These neighbors stopped and asked his mother, "where do you want us to begin?" This truly was an act of God.

Ron noted that this underscores a part of life we all face. There will be times of turmoil when chaos reigns supreme, but the Swedenborgian faith teaches that God is always with us and that Wayfarers Chapel offers a refuge to all wayfarers on life's journey.



Ron Brugler, (center) cutting the ribbon, (l-r) Margaret Snively, Marlene Laughlin, Dean Andrews, Ron, Jeannette Hille, Eric Lloyd Wright, Harvey Tafel.

The old Visitors Center had to be razed years ago—due to an act of nature—and the new one was dedicated on May 20th, 2001 to God's service and use.

Following the church service, a picnic lunch was served in the colonnade with the soothing strains of harpist Dorothy Victor in the background.

The Visitors Center was dedicated with acknowledgments from the Revs. Ron Brugler, Marlene Laughlin, and Harvey Tafel, design consultant Eric Lloyd Wright, architect Dean Andrews, Jeannette Hille, chair of the Chapel Board of Managers and Margaret Snively, manager of the Visitors Center.

Eric Wright said, "It is a privilege to be involved in the design of the center. In years to come, tens of thousands will go through it and leave with a better understanding of what the Chapel and Emanuel Swedenborg are about." Dean Andrews stated, "I am a better person as a result of this experience, having been enlightened about the philosophy of the Swedenborgian faith." Each speaker gave thanks to

(Continued on page 117, Wayfarers Chapel Calendar of Events on page 118)

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