

THE MESSENGER

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Swedenborgian House of Studies Update

Jim Lawrence, Acting Dean

As the Swedenborgian House of Studies at Pacific School of Religion enters final laps in its inaugural semester, I can report that we have a functioning new seminary community as part of the world-renowned Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. We have a student body, a small teaching faculty supplemented by the PSR/GTU faculty resources, an on-campus Swedenborgian library, and an attractive wing of three rooms in historic D'Autremont Hall that are known on campus as "the Swedenborgian House."

While the relationships of these various institutions are now clear to us locals, I realize that for the uninitiated our system of discrete degrees of institutionality can be confusing. The Swedenborgian House of Studies is affiliated with Pacific School of Religion. PSR in turn is one of the nine schools which make up the consortium of the Graduate Theological Union. SHS offers courses which are advertised in the GTU course catalog and open to any GTU student, as are all GTU member-school courses. SHS students are enrolled in one of PSR's degree or certificate programs, like the Master of Divinity or the Certificate of Theological Studies. They take many of their electives from SHS to constitute their Swedenborgian theological education. Also, through the course of their studies ordination-track students will earn the SHS Certificate of Swedenborgian Studies (see below). For those interested in further advanced studies, the GTU consortium itself offers the M.A., Ph.D., and other degrees.

Our Chapel Service

In addition to hosting an Open House in September and participating in numerous ways in the life of the larger theological community in Berkeley, the Swedenborgian community prepared and conducted the weekly chapel service at PSR November 13th. Tuesday chapel is an important part of the week at PSR. Usually about sixty or seventy students and faculty attend, and it is an opportunity to experience the spirituality of the community in ways that are not possible in classes and meetings.

The SHS students and staff planned the service, and then we met with the Worship Planning Committee of PSR, chaired by the Professor of Worship, Dr. Andrea Bieler. We decided that



From left SHS Board members: Mindy Jester, Alan Thomsen, Ron Brugler, Kim Hinrichs, Jane Siebert, Robert McCluskey, John Titus, Robert Leas; students Kevin and Allison Baxter; Jonathan Mitchell, Jim Lawrence (seated).

the lectionary readings for the upcoming Sunday provided ample room to "express our Swedenborgianism," which included a desire to bring a useful worship experience beyond simply doing a commercial for ourselves. Carol Anne Fusco sang beautifully a solo of Ken Turley's "Heaven is a State of Mind;" Kathy Speas wrote a moving pastoral prayer with congregational response; Alison Baxter read the scriptures; Kevin Baxter was liturgist; Kim Hinrichs presided over communion; and I preached a sermon entitled, "Until Love Can Raise the Broken Stone." A great deal of work was put into decorating the chancel with images of destruction and rebuilding, the theme both of the lectionary readings and current world events. Elements of rubble and debris were set beneath a flowing white cloth hung from a cross above and descending down in waves to the communion table set up in the nave. It was a good experience all around.

Our Beginning (and Growing) Student Body

Alison Baxter, Kevin Baxter, Carol Anne Fusco, and Kathy Speas are finishing studies for the fall semester, including two classes offered by SHS faculty (my course, "Introduction to Swedenborgian Thought" and Robert Keck's course, "Spirituality and Healing: the Medical, Theological, and Pastoral Frontiers") in addition to assorted classes in Bible, liturgical arts, and chorale offered by PSR faculty. George Dole provided weekly commentary on the readings for the "Introduction to

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May We Never Be the Same

Guest Editorial by Jane Siebert

Preparation for this message has been an emerging process as the events in our nation and world continue to evolve. At our Swedenborgian house of Studies Board meeting, John Titus, vice-chair, gave me the final part with words from his daughter Alicia, a flight attendant aboard the second plane to hit the WTC September 11. John shared these words that Alicia had written January 4, 1999:

Happiness is such an elusive emotion: One day you're soaring on its wings, the next you're looking about hoping to catch a glimpse of its magnificence, trying to convince yourself it was real and not a memory of a fairy tale from childhood.

Those who have known the greatest happiness have opened themselves to the most gut-wrenching sorrow. It's a gamble; you have to play to win. Or maybe those who have endured suffering have a greater respect for joy and can appreciate it wherever they can find it: the smell of a rose, the sigh of a baby, an old couple holding hands. And those who have lived their lives in a heart-numbing cocoon of sanity, safety and contentment don't have the capacity for pure joy."

The best gift that we can give to the thousands who died on 9/11 is a new reflection in each of our lives—a new ray of light in our eyes, representing a new understanding, a new way of looking at things, a closer perception of truth. We must ask, "what in our own lives is keeping us in this cocoon of contentment that limits our capacity for pure joy?"

Alicia's words echo the warning of Isaiah when he said the hearts of the people were calloused, their ears were dull, their eyes were closed. Otherwise they would see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts and TURN AND BE HEALED.

We have grown quite comfortable in our American dream world. I know I have. I could live my life in Pretty

Prairie, Kansas, content—two kids at university, serving on a few non-profit boards, volunteering some time for hospice—wasn't God pleased with me. I found myself volunteering time when it was convenient, but never getting too attached to the hospice patients that I served, because then it might hurt too much when they died. I thought I was really being of use. And at the time, for the place I was in, I was living the best way I knew how at the moment. I am not putting that space down, but now in the light of the events of 9/11, I look back and realize the incomplete truth I was living.

I had noticed that I was skimming over the stories of the vast number of people suffering from AIDS in Africa. Surely they weren't any of the people we had known when we served in the Peace Corps in Zaire and Sierra Leone. It was too painful to think about, so I blocked it out. Besides, what could I do now?

When emails would arrive about the plight of the women in Afghanistan, I would sign my name to the petitions and send them on. I was making a difference. Yes, there are homeless people, and hungry people...if they would just go out and get a job, right? This is America, right, where we are all born with equal rights, right?

Today I see the folly of my rationalization; I feel the error in my comfortable little world. I will never be the same and I don't want to be. The events in NYC and Washington DC and Pennsylvania have opened my world again. They have touched me. I can feel again. I was there in my teens and twenties. These are the feelings that prompted my husband and me to go join the Peace Corps. And when I got home, I was changed. But slowly, slowly, I walled off the deep concern for others and looked past the fear and hunger in mothers' and children's eyes on TV. I got past the distaste for materialism and waste and settled into a comfortable little world of ordering needless gadgets from catalogues. Last week I looked at my leather-bound journal, embossed with the words, "Give us this day our daily bread" that I purchased for \$29.95, and realized that this is not the

daily bread that God was talking about.

The Places That Scare You: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times, by Pima Chodron, tells us "Don't you go let life harden your heart."

We can let the circumstances of our lives harden us so that we become increasingly resentful and afraid, or we can let them soften us and make us kinder and more open to what scares us. We always have this choice.

We have all been touched and are being touched by the events of 9/11 and the ongoing uncertainty. This is the immediate experience of compassion. This is what led us all to want to do something: to fly flags, to give blood, to touch base with those we love and even those with whom we might be estranged. This was the goodness that caused our Congress to sing together, "God Bless America."

But after that initial phase, we have the choice to continue to experience compassion by keeping our hearts and minds open to suffering without shutting down, or to try to 'get back to normal.'

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Old Testament class" taken by three of the students. Every Wednesday we meet as a full denominational community for what we call the Swedenborgian Contexting Seminar, at which we undertake a broad agenda of planning projects together, discussing the context of our Swedenborgian heritage in light of issues brought up by our courses and contacts within the larger GTU, and looking at aspects of Swedenborgian ministry that will not be covered explicitly anywhere else in the curriculum, such as the musical resources of Convention, New Church Sunday School materials, Swedenborgian resources for special rites, etc.

In the spring semester, we will be joined by a new student graduating this December from Urbana University: Sage Currie, daughter of the Rev. Susannah and Deane Currie. Sage visited the PSR campus for an orientation weekend in October, thinking perhaps in a year or two she might be interested in attending seminary. After her experience with the orientation process, however, Sage found that she wants to begin right away.

Continuing on the subject of the student body, we are in discussion with several students who may wish to begin next fall, some of whom have already initiated the application process. All students so far have been interested in ordination.

Faculty Search for Professor of Swedenborgian Studies

Building the Swedenborgian teaching resources has been an urgent priority. In our affiliation agreement with PSR, there is to be one full-standing PSR Professor of Swedenborgian Studies, in addition to a teaching Dean and any other visiting or distance educators we can provide for the special needs for ministry training in Convention.

The Professor of Swedenborgian Studies will have full standing and prominence throughout the Graduate Theological Union (whose nine seminar-

ies and thirteen institutes serve approximately 3,000 students). A regular faculty search process is currently underway. We are closing off the reception of applications on December 7th, interviewing candidates in early February, and should have an announcement to make by the first of March. Requirements for the position are steep: the candidate needs to have a completed or nearly completed Ph.D. in a field recognized in the curriculum of theological education, as well as solid familiarity with Swedenborgian theology. We have received interest from a number of possible candidates and are looking forward to growing our residential scholarly base.

And speaking of faculty, for the spring semester we will be joined by visiting scholar Gregory Johnson, Ph.D., from Catholic University of Washington D.C., whose doctoral dissertation on Kant focused on Kant's relationship with Swedenborgian thought. He will be teaching a course entitled, "Swedenborg and 19th-Century American Philosophy."

Accredited Online Coursework: for Local and Distance Students

George Dole has agreed to serve as an online adjunct professor in biblical studies, and PSR has agreed to support this course (it will be the first online course in PSR's history). Entitled, "A Spiritual Sense of the Bible," this course will be offered next fall. Due to its electronic delivery system, this course may be taken (and transferred for academic credit) by students training for ministry anywhere in the world.

In addition, SHS is offering several other online courses in the current academic year. While not available for PSR credit, these courses are available for anyone desiring to deepen their Swedenborgian knowledge. The Rev. Dr. Ted Klein is teaching "Introduction to Swedenborgian Concepts," "Swedenborgian Concepts and Life Issues," and "Swedenborgian Perspectives on Violence and Non-Violence." The Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake is teaching "Spiritual Growth with Christian Mystics," "Spiritual Teachings from Around the World," and "Spiritual

Companionship." Dr. Wake's courses will form the basis for a Certificate in Spirituality. For more information about any of these online courses, please contact Kim Hinrichs, Program Director of SHS, at khinrichs@shs.psr.edu.

Certificate of Swedenborgian Studies

After consultation with CAM (Committee on Admission to the Ministry), the SHS staff and Board of Trustees Curriculum Committee have devised a Certificate of Swedenborgian Studies which entails: 21 graduate level units of Swedenborgian theology; completion of Level One of Certified Pastoral Education; completion of at least one Swedenborgian field education experience; completion of one Swedenborgian camp experience; and attendance at two Council of Ministers meetings.

All PSR-based Swedenborgian students will easily accomplish this amount of work along the way to their Master of Divinity degree from PSR. But the thinking from CAM at this point is that this Certificate, or its equivalent, may be used as a standard for denominational theology and practice for ordinands training for Swedenborgian ministry at institutions apart from SHS at PSR.

At the least, since PSR has its own graduation ceremony, and since ordinands training at other institutions presumably would celebrate graduation from those institutions, this Certificate of Swedenborgian Studies can also provide the basis for celebrating academic accomplishments at our annual conventions. As such, the Certificate of Swedenborgian Studies would provide a common ground for Swedenborgian ministry training no matter where the training is undertaken.

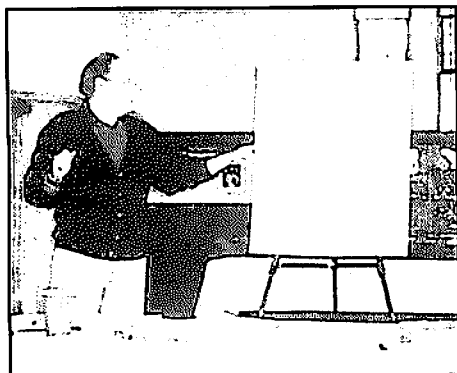
Library and Archives

As has been previously reported, SHS received a grant this year from the Teagle Foundation to enhance its affiliation with PSR. A major component of this work is the "retrospective conversion" of our library card catalog

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Swedenborgian House of Studies Update

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Jim Lawrence.

into Library of Congress format and then to integrate the catalog electronically with that of the GTU library. The special qualifications for a librarian to oversee this project has made it difficult to find the right person, and we are in the middle of a second full search process. In the meantime, we hired a temporary librarian, Lissa Dirrim, to

begin retrospective conversion and to handle some basic organizational work for the collection. Board member Alan Thomsen, who chairs the Library Committee and who lives in Berkeley, has worked with Lissa and has contributed countless hours readying the collection for use by students.

One important future development for our library is to increase our holdings in areas of likely scholarly interest. We have begun to identify these (Blakean studies, science and religion, progressive movements in 19th-century American spirituality, among numerous others). A recent conversation of note is a planned future acquisition donated by Wilson Van Dusen of his personal library and various research items pertaining to his life and career, all of which will become the Wilson Van Dusen Archives.

SHS Welcomes New Board Member and Treasurer

With the resignation of John Anthony from the Board of Trustees, and with Trustee Sue Burns

wishing to step down from the role of treasurer, Board chair Jane Siebert presented Garfield Byrd to the Board of Trustees as a replacement for John and to take up the treasurer's role from Sue, all of which was affirmed by vote by the Board of Trustees. For the past seven years Garfield served as Chief Financial Officer of Pacific School of Religion and was closely involved with the financial analysis of the viability of the affiliation of our seminary program with PSR. In September, he moved to his new position as Chief Financial Officer of the Community Foundation Silicon Valley, a large non-profit organization providing many kinds of community support programs to the South Bay area. Garfield was a vital, creative, and beloved part of the PSR community, and his contributions to organizational development during his tenure here are now legendary. We are thrilled to have his skilled assistance.

A final note would be congratulations to another trustee, Dr. Robert Reber, on his retirement from many years of distinguished service as the Dean of Auburn Theological Seminary in New York City.



SHS Board of Trustees Meeting

Jane Siebert, Board chair

The first official board meeting of the Swedenborgian House of Studies was held October 19-21, 2001, on the campus of the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. Members present were Jonathan Mitchell, Alan Thomsen, Mindy Jester, John Titus, Robert McCluskey, Ronald Brugler, Rachel Rivers, Robert Leas, James Lawrence, Jane Siebert, and invited guest, Kim Hinrichs.

Garfield Byrd, former CFO and Vice President of PSR, led the board in a review of SHS's financial viability and financial planning. His conclusion:

The SHS financial model is viable and sustainable. It will take careful stewardship to ensure the success of the SHS financial model, but it is not fragile and can absorb some of the unexpected. SHS needs to build additional endowment and or other sources of sustainable income before making multi-year

commitments to faculty positions.

The Board then approved a balanced budget for the 2001-2002 academic year.

SHS has received a two-year grant from the Teagle Foundation to put the Swedenborgian library online with the Graduate Theological Union. This is helping with ongoing expenses, such as the librarian and program director salaries, as well as the expenses of online cataloging. Alan Thomsen, Library and Archives Committee chair, reports that there is a great need for additional funds to preserve the books in both the library and archives. There have been several years of deferred maintenance. Further study was recommended. Alan has been volunteering countless hours to the library.

There was extensive discussion about distance education and coordinating efforts with the East Coast. The requirements for a Certificate of Swedenborgian Studies were approved. They include:

I. Seven SHS courses (includes residential faculty and distance educa-

tion), 21 credits: four Swedenborgian theology courses, two Swedenborgian Bible/biblical theology courses, one denominational history/polity course.

II. Participation in a weekly one-hour Swedenborgian contextualizing seminar. This will provide a forum for exploring the Swedenborgian denominational for its unique teachings in religious education, pastoral care, worship, homiletics, and issues that may be arising in any subject area for students.

III. One four-week full-time Swedenborgian Center Experience.

IV. Completion of a Level One Unit of Clinical Pastoral Education.

V. One Swedenborgian Camp Experience.

VI. Attendance at two annual conventions and two Council of Ministers annual sessions

Robert McCluskey led the group in a review of the bylaws and recommended

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Swedenborgian House of Studies Online and Correspondence Course Offerings

Spring 2002

SWEDENBORGIAN CONCEPTS AND LIFE ISSUES

Have you sometimes wondered what concepts are important to you as you make decisions about your life? Have you sometimes wondered how to make connections between theological concepts and daily life? This course explores questions such as these in the light of basic Swedenborgian concepts and their relation to a variety of life issues. It consists of 15 lessons which will begin by February and will be done in correspondence with the Rev. Dr. J. Ted Klein. Tuition: \$300.00.

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. This course will be available either online or by correspondence. There will be 10 lessons, with the first online lesson beginning in mid-January. This course will be taught by the Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake. Tuition: \$300.00.

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 the Swedenborgian. We'll explore some of the issues involved in being a companion to others and look at ways companions can support each other. This course is available either on-line or by correspondence. There will be 10 lessons beginning in mid-April and ending before Convention. There will be mini-course time available for students taking this course to have a chance to talk together. This course will be taught by the Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake. Tuition: \$300.00.

SWEDENBORGIAN PERSPECTIVES ON VIOLENCE AND NON-VIOLENCE

In the wake of the terrible events of September 11, 2001, this course will look at important teachings in Swedenborgian theology that can be offered into dialogue on violence and non-violence. Teachings on love, community, charity, and service are among those that can contribute to conceptions of non-violence, peace, and cooperation. The idea of use of violence as acceptable in defense (as a last resort and lesser evil) but never acceptable in attack can be carefully considered when searching into an ethics relating to violence. Perhaps elements in Sweden-

borgian theology can help in developing ideas and practices of protective force as an alternative to violence, as when one disarms an attacker or separates fighting parties. The course will begin on March 4, 2002, and will be taught by Rev. Dr. Ted Klein. Tuition: \$300.00.

Fall 2002

A SPIRITUAL SENSE OF THE BIBLE

The focus of the course is on the use of Swedenborg's exegetical discipline to see broad parallels between underlying issues of biblical narrative and underlying issues of individual spiritual journeys. It includes comparison with the developmental schemata of James Fowler and Robert Kegan as well as introduction to the extensive body of Swedenborgian collateral literature. This course will be taught by Rev. Dr. George Dole for PSR academic credit. Tuition for full PSR credit: \$1,500.00; for SHS credit only: \$300.00.

To register for any of these courses, please contact Kim Hinrichs, Program Director of the Swedenborgian House of Studies, at khinrichs@sbs.psr.edu, or at 510-849-8228.



SHS Board of Trustees Meeting

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changes for the new mode.

The structure of the board and its functions in this new arena was also discussed. This will be further reviewed at the Corporation meeting at the convention in Portland, Maine next summer.

Officers for the next year are: Jane Siebert, chair; Bob Reber, vice-chair; Bob Leas, clerk; Rachel Rivers, assistant clerk; Garfield Byrd, treasurer; Mindy Jester, assistant treasurer. (Garfield Byrd was approved to fill the vacancy created by John Anthony who has resigned from the board. Byrd was also elected to treasurer by email vote after the meeting).

The students, Carol Ann Fusco, Kathy Speas, Kevin and Alison Baxter led closing worship in conjunction with Jim Lawrence and Kim Hinrichs. Members of the board; Kim, Bob and Claire Hinrichs; the students and their families, dined together on campus.

The Board would like to give special thanks to Kim for her work orchestrating and facilitating the meetings. She and Jim are proving to be a most capable team as each new hurdle is overcome and a solid path for the future is established.



(Photo right) Kim Hinrichs, Kevin Baxter, Kathy Speas, Carol Anne Fusco, Allison Lane Baxter, Jim Lawrence.



Kundalini Energy and Spiritual Direction

Wilma Wake

This summer I attended my second residency for spiritual direction training at the Shalem Institute. I am nearing the end of my two-year training program there which has involved offering spiritual direction to others as well as having my own spiritual director. I have been reading piles of material on spirituality and have joined a local peer supervision group for spiritual directors. For each of the past two summers, I've spent ten days at retreat centers near the Shalem Institute in Maryland in order to experience the two residencies required in the program. I am now working on my final paper in order to be finished by December. My experiences of the past two years with Shalem have been among the most enriching in my spiritual life. I know that it will be a part of my life and ministry forever.

So what have I learned? Much of it can't even be put into words, but some of it can be. First, I've ditched the term "spiritual direction" in preference to "spiritual companionship" or "spiritual friendship." "Direction" is an old term for this ancient Catholic practice. To modern ears, it can have the ring of implying that the role involves "directing" the spiritual life of others. It doesn't, of course. It involves helping another find God's direction for his/her life. But I think that "companionship" or "spiritual friendship" gives a clearer sense of this.

Second, I've come to understand this field in an interfaith context. That which we call "spiritual direction" comes from the Christian tradition. Yet, most world religions have some way of supporting one's spiritual journey. We enrich this concept of spiritual companionship when we expand it to include diverse religious paths. I realize that it is particularly important for me to acknowledge the vast range of spiritual traditions and to be open to whatever pathways may be drawing someone for whom I'm a spiritual companion.

Thirdly, we Swedenborgians have a tradition that gives us a vast wealth of material for understanding and partici-

pating in spiritual companionship. Much of Swedenborg's writings are about the process of spiritual growth, and in a way that honors all religious paths. We have a great deal to offer to others about this process.

I was present at a workshop a few years ago given by Roy Oswald of Alban Institute [a well-respected institute providing workshops and consultations to churches]. He was working with us Swedenborgians, and he said that our best way of becoming better known in the world was to share what we could do best. He saw our capacity to work with spiritual growth as a special gift we have to offer the world.

*Wilson Van Dusen,
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part of his life of praying,
dreaming, and spiritual
growing.*

Fourth, there is still so much more to learn! I am beginning yet another program at Shalem that will help me learn to facilitate spiritual companioning groups and to mentor others in starting such groups.

Fifth, I'm researching the topic of kundalini energy in the context of spiritual companionship. This is the subject of my final paper. Kundalini energy is primarily known through Hinduism and Buddhism. It is the energy that is said to lie at the base of our spine and makes its way up the spine during our spiritual journey. For my Shalem paper, I'm looking at how this energy has been

found and discussed in other traditions.

Dr. Stuart Sovatsky, well-respected kundalini scholar and head of the Kundalini Clinic in San Francisco, writes that there is an energy, normative in spiritual development, that is part of our spiritual growth just as puberty is part of physical growth. The process that precedes the kundalini spinal puberty is "pranotthana" which he says is "intensified, uplifted life energy." He says that this "is clearly the same force of quivering uprightness active in Quakerism, Shakerism, Judaic davening (torso-rocking prayer), charismatic Holy Ghost phenomena, the swaying zikr and whirling dervish of Islam, the quiverings of the Orthodox hesychast, the Goddess-worshiping circle dance, the Dionysian revel of the Greek mystery schools, the flowing movements of tai chi, the ecstatic shamanic dance, the yogically derived Andalusian flamenco, the Middle-Eastern belly dance, and the orgonic quivering-streamings of bioenergetics ..."

Another writer who sees kundalini energy as a source respected in all major religions is Philip St. Romain, author of *Kundalini Energy and Christian Spirituality*. He says that "every religion includes accounts of the awakening of the kundalini." He looks in particular at kundalini energy in the Christian tradition, and he writes: *The chakras, the astral body, and the awakening of the kundalini are experiences that can be identified in the experiences of many, many Christian mystics. In contrast to the East, however, these experiences were not sought as means to union; they were experienced as a consequence of prayer.*

St. Romain asks the question: "Could it be that the Holy Spirit is the kundalini energy of the Risen Christ?" For many Swedenborgians, it is not difficult to entertain this idea. Wilson Van Dusen, in his translation of Swedenborg's dream journal, suggests that it's possible that Swedenborg himself experienced kundalini energy and wrote about it in his journal. It seemed to be part of his life of praying, dreaming, and spiritual growing.

In my study with Shalem Institute, I


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Kundalini Energy and Spiritual Direction

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find myself particularly drawn to this issue of kundalini energy in spiritual companionship. As a Swedenborgian, I can appreciate that there may be some universal experiences of spirituality that are encountered in many traditions. As a spiritual companion, it is important to me to be able to honor and affirm the ways in which encounters with energy can be part of many spiritual paths.

My adventure of learning about spiritual companionship is just beginning. I look forward to further exploration of this field, and to discussions with many of you on how we Swedenborgians can integrate the ancient art of spiritual direction with the spiritual insights that Emanuel Swedenborg has helped us to comprehend. Together we can help develop some ways of integrating ancient spiritual practices with Swedenborg's spiritual insights and then find ways to bring them more clearly into our troubled world.

Wilma Wake is a part-time professor with the Swedenborgian House of Studies teaching online courses in spirituality. She is the author of two recently published books, available from the Swedenborg Foundation and J. Appleseed Press. 

What If God Used Voice Mail?

You might get the following responses:

- I'm sorry, all of our angels are busy helping other saints right now. However, your prayer is important to us and will be answered in the order it was received, so please stay on the line.
- To find out if a loved one has been assigned to Heaven, press 5, enter his or her social security number, then press the pound key. (If you get a negative response, try area code 666.)
- Our computers show that you have already prayed once today. Please hang up and try again tomorrow so that others may have an opportunity to contact us.

—Unknown Jester

Discovering Swedenborg in the Library

Gunda Caldwell

How come your mother talks so funny?" "You don't belong—you weren't born here." "Why didn't you stay where you came from?" Later on, "You're not like us...you belong to the 'Starvation Army.'"

It wasn't bad enough that my family came from Sweden and my parents had a Swedish accent, we also were members of the Salvation Army, an organization my mother loved since she first saw them in Stockholm. I felt a great alienation—a terrible loneliness. I hated who I was. With blue eyes, blonde hair and statuesque proportions, I envied the petite, brown-eyed, dark-haired girls in my class.

Why couldn't I be born looking like that? They bragged about ancestors from the Mayflower and the Civil War, and I had no history, other than what I perceived was a country without anyone special.

I fared no better with my religious life. I rebelled against the strict dogma taught in earlier years and refused to wear the uniform they mandated for their members. I argued that God did not care what I wore to church, he only cared how I lived. I didn't believe that a God of love would inflict so many cruel things on his people. They insisted God was a punishing and a rewarding God, that he tested his people and our obedience to the church. I questioned eternal damnation and a materialistic heaven, and they called me a heretic. Mother was distressed and prayed with me, asking God to touch my heart and make me conform to the church.

After several unhappy years, I lost my way, my confidence, my desire to conform to social expectations, and to a church I could not accept. Too young and naive to know what to do or how to find my way again, I decided to be silent and not share what I thought with anyone else.

Destiny stepped in. I believe fathers have special roles to fill in the lives of their offspring. Beyond giving sustenance, a father may quietly and without fanfare provide a helping hand to a troubled child, often seeing the best long-term solution to make things right again. My father saw what was happening, and that mother was not helping, so he decided to act. He told me about strange, exotic, mysterious parts of the world, the fascinating history of the human past, and the wonderful people I could find in books. He then put a library card in my hand (at that time costing a dollar a year) and told me to go there and ask the librarian where to start.

It was the nicest thing anyone had ever done for me. I spent so much time there and checked out so many books that the librarian came to know me and suggested that I go to various other sections, during the summers, to broaden my reading. That precious library card started me on a lifetime journey of information and love of the printed word. If I hadn't been so unhappy, I might never have found the joy of reading.

A second wonderful thing happened...accidentally? During a recess my teacher heard the taunts I endured from my classmates and decided to do something about it. She talked with me alone, first, then with the entire class. She told them about the wonderful work the Salvation Army did, and how they had a church separate from their charity work, with members often donating time and finances to help those in need, and were a symbol of goodness wherever they went. She then asked if anyone had been privileged to go overseas, or cross the Atlantic Ocean. No one raised a hand. Then she asked if anyone knew a second language. Again, no one raised a hand. She then told them there was someone in the class who had done it all, traveled all the way across the Atlantic Ocean, knew two languages, and had lived abroad. She announced that I had consented to tell the class about those experiences, and show them things from Sweden. Because of an alert, compassionate teacher's concern, my family became special people, instead of aliens. No more teasing.

As years passed, I found no reconciliation between church teachings and my intrinsic beliefs, and my regrets at not being American by birth still lingered. What

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Discovering Swedenborg in the Library

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was so special about Sweden that I should be proud to come from there? My early impression had been that Sweden chose to remain neutral, self-centered, and to take advantage of both sides during wars. They didn't try very hard to rescue Raoul Wallenberg when the Russians kidnapped him, because they were afraid of their big neighbor and refused help from others.

It was much later that I learned about Sweden's wartime roles and how wrong I was about many other concepts. Little had been said about Sweden giving shelter and protection to endangered people, that their neutrality actually was tilted in favor of the Allies, and their use of neutrality to gain access where needed to help people who came under their protection. I discovered much more about their gifted scientists and inventors who had shared their findings with the world.

What else was there? I learned about their past wars, such as the loss of Finland to their huge and always menacing neighbor, Russia. I heard about the peace of Copenhagen that ended the conflict between Sweden and Denmark and opened the Baltic Seas to foreign ships. I found a copy of the Swedish anthem written by Richard Dybeck (1811-1877). Swedish pioneers were called derogatory "square heads" because of their wonderful stoic calm and peaceful dispositions. What an asset in today's temperamental, road-rage society.

A once-in-a-lifetime exhibition came to our town, November 18, 1989-January 31, 1990. It was initiated and supported by the Federation of Swedish Industry and shown in our local South Florida Science Museum. On display was a mind-boggling collection of Swedish contributions to science, technology, medicine, space programs, and industry. It included a replica of the log cabin, symbol of American pioneering spirit, but in fact a type of dwelling introduced to America by the first Swedish immigrants. My husband and I went to learn about my ancestry. We heard about the New Sweden, the great immigration, their inventions, such as the mechanical pacemaker, high tech medical technology, cameras, safety matches, and famous people such as Alfred Nobel, Carl Sandburg, Emanuel Swedenborg, Charles Lindbergh, Edwin Aldrich, Earl Warren, and many others. We learned the source of the zipper, invented and patented by a Swede named Gideon Sundback in 1913. Excellent cars and telecommunications (e.g. Ericsson's mobile radio systems), and many, many other inventions are in use today, thanks to Sweden's innovative and careful development of new ideas.

We left the museum in silence, thinking about the exhibit. I came from a race of people who had changed the world in many ways and included seafaring Vikings who dared to explore the great void beyond the Old World. They had the courage and sense of adventure to leave the homeland to explore the mysterious and uncharted waters outside the

perimeters of what they already knew, long before European explorers set foot in the new world. Vikings left their mark on the continent that was to become North America. They, too, were my ancestors.

There was one more major problem to solve: my religious conflicts—the difference between what I instinctively felt about God and what I had been taught. Like a bird trapped in a cage, I struggled to escape the church teachings. There was no way to reconcile them. I asked questions no one could answer and was told to accept church teachings by faith alone. I could not accept a God who so casually inflicted such terrible events as was happening to helpless victims. How could we blame God for suffering that I, an imperfect human being, would never inflict on others, no matter what they had done? How could a God of love and mercy mete out eternal vengeance and unending punishment? Why must there be only two judgments:

good or bad, when most of us are combinations of both? What kind of God would inflict a living hell on those ignorant of, or misinformed about, redemption? How could hell be endless fire and torture, and heaven a place where only saints reside? We have so few saints and so many with imperfections and flaws. Was there no redemption beyond doom?

How could heaven be both spiritual and material? How do we transport from earth to our final abode?

Some people have reported that in near-death experiences they travel rapidly through a dark tunnel and emerge into brilliant and beautiful lights. There they are guided by loved ones or friendly spirits dressed in flowing white robes into the light itself, and then sent back to earth again. Here again, we blend material and spiritual values. Some churches teach purgatory or other waiting areas before final judgment.

Others teach rapture, a day of reckoning

before judgment, or other variations.

There I left it, thinking I was a lone soul in the world of spiritual matters who had such a rebellious attitude toward conventional, historical religious dogma. Was it possible that I was the only person who felt so distanced from a religious upbringing?

I could not escape the name Swedenborg. I had seen it a number of times but took no action to find out who he was until I did research for a book I was working on. Meanwhile, I was thinking about canceling my *Writer's Digest* subscription. I had several editions stacked up on my desk and without reading them, put them out in the recycle bin . . . and promptly turned around to retrieve them. I don't know why. I flipped the pages, and here again, Swedenborg came to my attention. This time I did not let it drop. We went to the library for a more diligent, thorough search for information about him. We looked through encyclopedias and listings, combing through everything they had stocked. First I learned that there was a

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*Reading
{Swedenborg's} books
brought me a feeling
as though I had found
a kindred spirit, a
spiritual coming home.
I forgot about the time
span between us, and
felt as though he had
heard the questions in
my heart and written
the answers, long
before I was born.*

Editor's Note: The Rev. Susan Turley runs the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Program at California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco. She wrote the following article for the Fillmore newspaper and the CPE Student Handbook, and thought *Messenger* readers would be interested in a clearer understanding of CPE. Rev. Turley, former director and founder of the Living Waters HIV Ministry in San Francisco, says she is excited about seeing our Swedenborgian House of Studies students enrolled in CPE at the California Pacific Medical Center. The article appears here in slightly abridged form.

Spiritual Care Services at California Pacific Medical Center (CPMC)

Susan Turley, Spiritual Care Coordinator the Institute for Health and Healing

Hospitalization can be a traumatic experience for both patients and their loved ones. It is a time of uncertainty, challenge, fear, healing, and hope. Although we, as patients and families, work in partnership with medical staff, we often feel a sense of vulnerability in the face of strange technology, foreign medical terminology and major life decisions.

During such times of crisis we often respond with a wide range of feelings, behaviors, perspectives, and beliefs. Some of us experience hospitalization as an opportunity for healing, recovery, growth and transformation, while others experience it as a time of loss and grieving. Whatever the circumstances or our beliefs, hospitalization can become a significant time when both we and our loved ones find ourselves grappling with spirituality.

There are many definitions of, and ways that people talk about, "spirituality." By spirituality, I refer to the sacredness of life, that which we consider to be holy, transcending, incorporeal, or supernatural. This includes the beliefs, values, assumptions and expectations that guide our lives, our understanding of a "greater" or "loving" presence, an inner knowing of what is good and true, the influences of our religious upbringing, and our present relationship to these traditions.

Spirituality can inform our response to crisis. Beliefs and values have an influence on how we deal with medical situations, often bringing a combination of comfort, distress, hope and fear, clarity and confusion. Unspoken beliefs and assumptions about faith and religious traditions also impact the way

in which we make decisions and interact as individuals and in community.

It is the right of every patient at CPMC to receive Spiritual Care Services. "Spiritual Care" refers to the individual pastoral counseling, family support, bereavement services, and traditional rites and sacraments used to address unspoken beliefs and assumptions that affect our response to a medical crisis or call upon spiritual traditions to help process a loss.

The Institute for Health and Healing, committed to expanding our notions of health and wellness, includes the Spiritual Care Services offered by the medical center. The Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Program at IHH trains chaplains to provide spiritual direction and counseling, arising from illness and changing health status, for individuals, families, medical center staff, and groups seeking support for spiritual issues.

As the patient's primary spiritual care provider at the medical center, chaplains make spiritual assessments of each patient's needs. Chaplains are in a unique position to hear particular concerns of patients and their families that they might otherwise feel reluctant to share. In addition to spiritual matters, these concerns often include the extent of the pain patients endure, their life situation upon hospital discharge, their fears as they face surgery, or family matters that weigh heavily on their minds. Chaplains address these concerns directly or, when appropriate, inform the doctors, nurses, or case managers. They work as members of the interdisciplinary medical team, presenting their assessments and

intervention plans as part of the patient's treatment plan. Chaplains also serve on hospital-wide committees such as the Ethics Committee.

To do this work with patients, chaplain residents and interns draw upon the Spiritual Assessment Theory devised by the Rev. Dennis Kenny (author of the forthcoming, *Promise of the Soul*) to help patients and families grapple with questions such as, "Why is this happening to me?" or "Is God punishing me?" Chaplains consider how a patient's healing may be jeopardized by feelings of guilt and shame or enhanced by the contemplation of the possible meaning and opportunity for personal transformation. Chaplains also help patients cope with associated feelings of anger, resentment, and hope that their situations may produce.

Chaplains aim to reach each patient within twenty-four hours of admission. This first visit may include emotional support, spiritual direction, or family support. Chaplains may also be called to the bedside to provide the rites and sacraments during emergencies, and deaths.

Chaplains also extend their services to family members who may have differing opinions on what medical treatment is best. Sometimes a patient can no longer communicate his/her treatment choices, and families wonder who can represent the true wishes of the patient. They may also have to decide what to do when the religious convictions of one family member differ from those of the patient's other loved ones, leading to conflicts around medical care. For example, even if the Durable Power of Attorney has the final say, chaplains work with familial differences to bring families together rather than tear them farther apart in their time of crisis and need.

Chaplains provide spiritual care to the medical staff as well. They may provide emotional support during times of bereavement by providing memorial services for staff and the families of patients who have died here at CPMC. Chaplains celebrate Pastoral Care Week by offering a *Blessing of the Hands* for the nurses and other staff at CPMC. They also design and lead support

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Spiritual Care Services at California Pacific Medical Center (CPMC)

(Continued from page 9)

groups for heart transplant patients, the Women's Breast Cancer Support Group, and Nurses' Support Group. In addition, the overnight on-call chaplain makes spiritual care available 24/7 for patients, family, and staff at CPMC.

Within their sponsoring department, the Institute for Health and Healing, chaplains also play an important role. Chaplains participate in the weekly clinic meetings, which include case presentations. They provide input into these cases, include an assessment of the spiritual needs of the patient, how these needs impact the patient's healing process, and our plan for spiritual interventions. Again, by functioning as members of the team, patients' needs are considered and responded to from a holistic perspective. Through mutual referral, the chaplaincy staff at IHH can meet the spiritual needs of patients.

Chaplains undergo rigorous training to prepare themselves to provide such comprehensive care and serve in such diverse capacities. This training is known as *Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)*, an international professional

training program originally conceived by Dr. Richard C. Cabot in 1925 as a method of learning pastoral practice in the clinical setting under supervision. The Rev. Anton Boisen expanded the concept to include a case study method of theological inquiry which he referred to as the "living human document." As CPE developed, other leaders integrated knowledge of medicine, psychology, and the behavioral sciences into the pastoral relationships being formed through an integration of personal history, behavioral theory and method, and spiritual development. This integrated approach helps chaplains build a diverse foundation on which to draw.

CPE is theological and professional education in ministry, hospital chaplaincy, leadership, and counseling. Students enrolled in CPE include seminary students, ordained clergy, members and leaders of religious orders, and qualified lay people from all backgrounds. While participating in the program, students minister to people in crisis situations while under supervision. CPE students are challenged to improve the quality of their chaplaincy work by reflecting on their interaction with supervisors, other students, people in crisis, their status as members of the interdisciplinary medical team, and how

they represent Spiritual Care Services on hospital-wide committees and events. Students learn how to develop spiritual skills and counseling through spiritual practice, case studies and verbatim individual supervision, seminar participation, group work, and relevant reading. By examining complex life situations from different viewpoints, students gain new insights and understanding about the human situation and their roles as chaplains. For example, "Religious Heritage Reflection" is an exercise examining interfaith perspectives and beliefs, as chaplains seek to integrate spirituality with life experience.

As Spiritual Care providers, we feel privileged to journey with others in their time of crisis. During their hospitalization, we want patients to experience support and comfort from a loving, compassionate community, to find inner peace by examining choices with clarity and perhaps find new meaning and deepen their spirituality. In addition to their physical recovery and healing, we want patients and their families to experience an inner transformation from brokenness into wholeness.



General Council Report

General Council convened its fall meeting at Blairhaven Retreat Center October 26th through 28th, 2001. Michael Shone with Pierce Park Group, adviser to the investment committee, spoke to us at the start of the meetings about the overall history of endowment investing and about investment strategies/policies.

The usual officers' reports were accepted as well as reports from Wayfarers Chapel and the Swedenborg House of Studies. Wayfarers Chapel's 2002 budget was accepted. An amendment to the Wayfarers Chapel bylaws reads as follows: "Those members who have served two consecutive three-year terms, including ex-officio members, shall not be eligible for immediate re-

appointment.") The amendment was approved. It was voted to have the president appoint a committee to explore the issues of disability insurance, health insurance, and sick leave policy for ministers, as well as pension benefits for Convention employees. It was moved to grant the Rev. Pavel Hager \$3000 out of the 2001 mission fund for his ministry work. Kurt Fekete has been hired as Youth Minister. The position will be called Youth Director, and Kurt's start date was November 1, 2001. The Communications Support Unit has employed Ross Fish as the new editor of J. Applesced. It was decided to have the Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit arrange a fund-raising mini-course.

A proposal for a Spiritual Ministries Consultant, from the Ministries Support Unit (MINSU) and the Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake was discussed and sent back to

MINSU for further work. A proposal regarding managing the assets of the Connecticut Association (Adrienne Frank Fund) was given initial consideration. More study is needed on this issue.

One major issue facing General Council was the Pacific Coast Association (PCA) and Stonehouse property situation. Following major losses in the investment market, PCA voted to take management back from Stonehouse, including collecting all the rent receipts. This caused major concern on the Stonehouse Board, who stated they would have to close the doors in a month's time because of cash flow problems this would cause. Paul Martin was dismissed as Director by the Stonehouse Board. Much discussion revolved around the possible consequences of all this on the Puget Sound

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CALL FOR Nominations

The Nominating Committee is seeking qualified candidates for the offices listed below. If you have any suggestions or questions, please notify your minister or any member of the Nominating Committee immediately. Please know that the Nominating Committee encourages you to consider individuals who have talent and abilities in particular areas, but have not yet served within Convention. Thank you for your prayerful involvement in this process.

VICE-PRESIDENT:

elected for one-year term

RECORDING SECRETARY:

elected for one-year term

TREASURER:

elected for one-year term

GENERAL COUNCIL:

three persons elected for three-year terms. One minister and two lay persons

COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT UNIT (COMSU):

one elected for three-year term

EDUCATION SUPPORT UNIT (EDSU):

one elected for three-year term

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SUPPORT UNIT (IMSU):

one elected for three-year term

MINISTRIES SUPPORT UNIT (MINSU):

two elected for three-year terms

FINANCIAL AND PHYSICAL RESOURCES SUPPORT UNIT (FPRSU):

one elected for three-year term

NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

two nominations for one elected five-year term

COMMITTEE ON ADMISSION TO THE MINISTRY (CAM):

one minister and one lay person, each elected to one-year terms

BOARD OF TRUSTEES, SWEDENBORG

HOUSE OF STUDIES (SHS):

two elected for three-year terms

Mildred L. Laakko, Chair

1025 Dettling Road

Wilmington, DE 19805

(302) 994-4804

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Nominating Committee:

Mildred Laakko, Delaware

F. Robert Tafel, Massachusetts

Linda Kraus, Kansas

Steve Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Mary Crenshaw, California

May We Never Be the Same

(Continued from page 2)

What we need is compassion—our ability to feel the pain that we share with others. Without realizing it, we continually shield ourselves from this pain because it scares us. We build walls made of opinions, prejudices, and strategies, barriers that are built on a deep fear of being hurt. But fortunately for us these walls sometimes crumble in the face of life events. We have the choice to let the compassion enter and open our hearts and feel again, or we can build them back up and try to get back to normal. I am asking each of you today to feel the pain, because this opens our ability to love. And this is what the world needs.

This is what Alicia and Isaiah are telling us. This is our choice. We need to examine our lives. Hear with our ears. See with our eyes. And turn and **WE WILL BE HEALED**. May we never be the same.

Editor's Note: Jane Siebert's guest editorial is an abridged version of a sermon that was preached at the San Francisco church and printed in the November 2001 The Plains Banner, the Kansas Association's newsletter.

General Council Report

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Church. It was finally voted to sign a note up to \$40,000 at 7% interest to the Stonehouse Board, to be secured by their inventory, to be paid in 90 days. It was hoped that this would allow the Stonehouse Board to work out some solutions and still enable them to remain open over the holiday shopping season. Stonehouse will be urged to obtain independent expertise, and they will be told that their plan should not include any further support from the denomination after January.

There was discussion about the new salary guidelines, based on MINSU's request for clarification. A letter will be written, including clarification of need for medical insurance and information on the interim geographical figures. The salary guideline in relation to

Convention's employed ministers was discussed. The president formally requested that the new guidelines (which would increase his salary) not apply to him. The chair of Council of Ministers and the *Our Daily Bread* editor were excused from the meeting. After lengthy discussion it was voted that we use \$46,000 ministerial base salary (which is the ten-year level) adjusted by 1.2 geographical multiplier (mode) for all ministers' salaries paid directly by Convention, except president, who would be considered separately. The position of COM chair and the ODB editor will both be 1/3 time.

The budget was reviewed and changed as appropriate, then it was approved. It was voted to give a 2.6% cost of living raise to Convention employees whose cost of living raises were not already taken care of in the

budget. This includes Central Office manager and assistant, executive secretary of EDSU, youth coordinator, COM chair, ODB editor, etc.

It was decided to have an expert lead us in strategic planning at the spring General Council meeting. This will be a joint meeting with Cabinet, who had to cancel their face to face meeting at the end of September.

"Living For Peace" was selected as the theme for the 2002 Convention and the invitation from St. Louis for the 2005 Convention was accepted and dates set for 2003 and 2004. Convention 2003 will be held in Washington, DC July 2 to 9. Convention 2004 will be in Kitchener July 7 to 14.

—Gloria Toot, secretary



MINSU Report

Barbara Halle

In June, as incoming MINSU chair, I joined the Rev. Ron Brugler in Seattle for a meeting with the Stonehouse board. I then participated in several meetings at convention in St. Paul in regard to new augmentation requests, the proposed ministers' salary guideline, and other matters relating to the ongoing business of MINSU.

MINSU held its fall meeting September 6-9 at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario. The housing and meal arrangements, by Ron and Val Brugler and Paul and Pat Zacharias, made our stay very comfortable. We were blessed to have both Ron Brugler and Chris Laitner participate in our meeting. (Unfortunately, Chris' meeting time with us was shortened by her slippery 'trip' down the church stairs which broke her leg, and which resulted in her spending the rest of the meeting in the hospital and having surgery!)

We welcomed newly-elected MINSU member Carl Blenkin, while acknowledging our great appreciation for the dedicated work of former MINSU Chair, Betsy Coffman, who finished her final term in June. Attending this meeting by special invitation was Barbara Boxwell, Augmentation Fund Committee chair. MINSU believed that having an AFC

member present during the evaluations of the Common Assessment Forms and the Augmentation recommendation process, our main focus of our fall meetings, would aid both MINSU and AFC in making the most informed and fair evaluations possible, particularly in light of the new minister salary guidelines. The joint meeting worked well and the invitation is extended for next fall's meeting as well.

Other meeting highlights included

- MINSU's blessing of each church by lighting a candle and reading inspirational pieces before discussion of the churches and centers
- the need for the Common Assessment Form to be revised by both MINSU and AFC to become more user-friendly and more useful during evaluations
- the kick-off of the Sister Church program with Pavel in the Czech Republic interested in pairing up with a church in Western Canada
- the acceptance and appreciation of Susan Wood's generous offer to begin a Swedenborgian Good Samaritan Program in which all kinds of resources can be shared among Convention and others
- the formulation of a Spiritual Ministries Consultant position to take the place of the vacated Pastoral Ministries Consultant position

- the adoption of a budget for 2002.

In addition, the Rev. Eric Allison's eleven years of service as an employee under MINSU, as the denomination's Pastoral Ministries Consultant, was honored with a Chinese dinner, cards and emails from several people across the country, gifts, jokes (Eric's, of course!), and a song sung by MINSU and others, having been creatively penned by the Rev. Susannah Currie to a familiar tune. Eric's position as PMC will end at the close of this year. He will be sorely missed by MINSU for his insight and good works and good humor, but we are very happy that he will be able to devote all his efforts to the growing Puget Sound church.

Cabinet had planned to meet in Cincinnati two weeks after MINSU met. Instead the support unit chairs and executive committee chose to hold an abbreviated meeting via teleconference in deference to travel complications and out of respect for the victims of the September 11 tragedy.

MINSU plans to meet again in early May, 2002. In the meantime, we will remain in personal contact with our respective liaison churches and centers (see list below) to learn how MINSU can be of more use in addressing concerns, strengthening the connection between our churches/centers and General Convention, and the sharing of ideas, plans, resources, and joys.

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Ft. Myers Boston
Elmwood Fryeburg
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Little Grain (Brooklyn)
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Transitions Fall Retreat

Jenn Tafel

What is joy? In our ever-changing world joy sometimes seems far away or even non-existent. "Finding Inner Joy" was the theme of the most recent Transitions retreat. The Rev. Jonathan Mitchell facilitated a relaxing and thought-provoking weekend retreat at Temenos, October 25-28, 2001. It is not just anyone who can invoke such lively discussions about joy/inner joy when most of us feel so joyless these days. One of the more lengthy sessions was inspired by the "Beatitudes" (Matthew 5) and what they mean to us. It was awesome to hear such a wide range of responses as well as Jonathan's interpretation of the biblical passage.

While at the retreat our group conducted our annual business session. There are various work groups within Transitions rather than elected offices—this makes accomplishing various tasks much smoother for us, but may not work for larger, more intricate groups. Shelley Dolley shared with us an interesting point during this meeting: Two years ago when we created the work groups and our mission, we felt that if we didn't do something our group would vanish. Now that we have a mission statement and "check-in" with ourselves each fall, we don't feel like we're disappearing from Convention—we're simply young adults still active in the Swedenborgian Church with active roles in local churches, associations, retreat centers, and Convention. We're on a mission from God! While on this mission, we share active dialogue with one another, and we exchange ideas about old programs/work groups/new ways for us to be involved.

One of our new ideas is to become a service group within the church as well as maintaining relationships for the young adults (see the ad for "Will Work for Worship"). We began doing this recently after receiving requests for work to be done at Almont and at Temenos, the two facilities where we have our retreats. At this fall retreat we moved firewood from the Farm House

area up to the main building, and stained glass windows from the Sky Meadow garage to a local Pennsylvania parishioner's home. The stained glass windows, which need to be restored, are from the Cincinnati church and in the loving care of the Philadelphia society. While at Almont, we restored the water pump area to working condition, as well as other useful maintenance. We hope to take our work on the road and help our church's beautiful houses of worship.

Saturday evening brought the close of the retreat. We usually have some type of communion service to offer closure. Jonathan suggested that we eat dinner Agape-style and commune with one another during the meal. I asked Jonathan for a specific "definition" of an Agape-style meal. Here is what he had to say: "An Agape meal is a form of Communion which dates back to the very early church. Information about it is scant, but scholars believe that in some early Christian congregations Communion was celebrated as part of a large meal, using as the Communion elements the same bread and wine as was used in the dinner."

And this is just what we did at our last dinner together ("agape," is a Greek word for "love.")

In a contemporary setting, an agape meal emphasizes the continuity of our natural lives and our spiritual lives—a shared meal which nourishes physically, emotionally, and spiritually. In the Road to Emmaus story (see Luke 24:13-35), Christ was made known in the breaking of the bread. Christ is made known when we share a meal, just as Christ is made known whenever we nourish and support each other.

The whole Transitions retreat is such an event, I would say. While there were "sessions" on our topic, I think you'd agree that there are no strong boundaries between the social and the spiritual. This is what gives such a retreat its power. In offering Communion in the context of a dinner together we affirmed the sacredness of all the time we spend at "the table" together.

We followed Jonathan's suggestion and set a big table so that we all sat together and looked around at all our pals while eating and communing. As we all settled in to our meal we went around the table and shared things for which we are

grateful. After we broke bread and drank wine, we sang "We Shall Overcome." This is one meal that I shall not forget.

As we are a nation under attack and at war overseas, I feel that meals such as these, and retreats as a whole, are more meaningful than ever. Community-building, that is something we hear on the TV and radio so often . . . something that we've been doing for years. What I enjoy most about attending Transitions retreats are the sessions focusing on the various themes, reconnecting with dear friends and walking in nature observing the seasons. Real community-building.

Psalm 126: "A Harvest of Joy"

*When the Lord restored the fortunes of
Zion, we were like those who dream.
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations,
"The Lord has done great things for them."
The Lord has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.*

*Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like the watercourses in the Negeb.
May those who sow in tears reap with
shouts of joy.*

*Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed
for sowing, shall come home with shouts
of joy, carrying their sheaves.*

We miss you, Lish.

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Discovering Swedenborg in the Library

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publishing foundation (the Swedenborg Foundation) dedicated to a very special man who lived centuries ago and left a great legacy of discourse on spiritual matters.

Reading his books brought me a feeling as though I had found a kindred spirit, a spiritual coming home. I forgot about the time span between us and felt as though he had heard the questions in my heart and written the answers, long before I was born. He was a vindication of sorts. Here was this brilliant, highly educated man of many talents, a scientist, a prophet, who sorted through the cold, reasoning logic of his day and told us about a God who was all love, and the enduring relationship between God and humans.

He revealed the gradual transition between life and death, the varying degrees of the hereafter, the angels and their roles. He wrote that we go to the place with which we have the

greatest affinity, meaning there are many levels of good and bad. He gave details about heaven and hell and added that Jesus would not come back to earth a second time in a physical shape. His thirty-three years on earth fulfilled God's purpose. Best of all was his reminder that God is a God of great, enduring love for mankind. He does not toy with us, and he continues to care about all of us.

Important to me was Swedenborg's explanation of the so-called punishment attributed to God. Our destiny, he stated, is influenced by the choices we make in life. Those choices inevitably lead to specific results. Our own circumstances in life do not condemn us to certain fates.

We choose our future by what we do today. Greatness is possible in the poorest of circumstances, and failure can be found in the best. They are consequences of our choices, not reward or punishment from God. There are lessons

to learn to make us strong and wise. We value success only when we know failure. We value love when we have been without it. We appreciate food after we have starved. After losses, we count our blessings. All these things Swedenborg understood and conveyed to us, with the lengthy discussions he penned to guide the future generations.

He has changed my direction and attitude in life and brought a peace and a quiet happiness I never before experienced. There are no more questions. The great Swedish prophet has answered them. With that I am content.

Gunda Peterson Caldwell is an author, newspaper writer and reporter, with numerous feature stories published in the Palm Beach Post. She has won cash prizes in short story and poetry contests and written two published histories of the Salvation Army. Ms. Caldwell's poems and short stories have appeared in several periodicals. She resides in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.



Will Work for Worship

Does your church need maintenance or repairs? Does your congregation need young, energetic and reliable people to dedicate themselves to a particular project? Are there too many projects with too little time and too few volunteers?

Let us come to your church and help repair or maintain the church or just plant some trees or flowers. We've got beautiful churches, and we want to help them stay/become the glorious structures they are meant to be! After all, we're on a mission from God!

Several young adults are willing to come to your church and help with various work projects. You supply the materials and we'll do the work. All we ask is for a place to stay—hopefully in the church. We will do the work and worship with the congregation on Sunday morning.

Please send requests to:
Arianne Halle, Transitions Coordinator
1436½ South Street,
Lafayette, IN 47901
(765) 428-8303
arianne_halle@yahoo.com

Of course we will need some notice to plan and gather ourselves to get to your church. Please give two months notice. Thank you for your interest and support.



Photo collage of Transition members by Jenn Tafel.

Transitions Fall Retreat (Continued from 13)

Public Relations Coordinator:

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25637 Oak Street #110
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If you are interested in facilitating one of the GREAT Transitions retreats please contact any of the people listed above. We look forward to seeing you at a retreat!

Baptisms

Ashleigh—Justice Ashleigh, daughter of Susan and Steve Holczer (granddaughter of Sharon and Alan Williams) was baptized October 5, 2001, in Kelowna, B.C., by great grandpa the Rev. Erwin Reddekopp.

Bolduc, Brett, Butters, Fadden, Grout, Hart—Sallie Jean Bolduc (Mrs. Martin Bolduc), daughter of Richard Graves and Claudia Graves; Shawn Matthew Brett and Richard Jamison Brett, sons of Christopher and Robin Brett; Scott Michael Butters and Joshua Harold Butters, sons of Jason and Lisa Butters; Thomas Richard Fadden and Jessica Jean Fadden, children of Thomas Fadden and Vicki Graves; Samantha Lynn Grout and Ashley Jean Grout, daughters of David Grout and Julie Grout Fox; Kyle James Hart and Felicia Carmen Hart, children of John Hart and Susan Graves, were baptized into the Christian faith November 4, 2001, at the Fryeburg New Church in Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Kenneth Turley officiating.

Mutrie—Breven Andrew Mutrie, son of Andrew and Wendy (Rogers) Mutrie, born October 27, 2000, was baptized into the Christian faith October 21, 2001, at the Fryeburg New Church, the Rev. Kenneth Turley officiating. The godparents are Matthew Mutrie and Cecilia Vazquez.

Confirmations

Baker, Fullerton—Cheryl Baker (Mrs. Matthew) and Jane Fullerton were confirmed into the faith and life of the Swedenborgian Church October 29, 2001,

at the Fryeburg New Church, the Rev. Kenneth Turley officiating.

Milne, Peters, Trink, Williams—Michael Milne, Peg Peters, Roxanna Trink, and Kerry Williams were confirmed into the faith and life of the Swedenborgian Church November 18, at the Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church, the Rev. Lee Woofenden officiating.

Welcomed into Membership

Katzev—Bonnie Katzev was accepted into the membership of the Swedenborg Chapel in Cleveland as an isolated member August 13, 2001. When she is able to attend a service the appropriate ceremony will be performed. The Rev. Jun-chol Lee meets with her and Lurabel Colburn every other month in New York state.

Marriages

Slough and McKendry—Patricia (Laurie) Slough and Ron McKendry were united in marriage October 7, 2001, in Kelowna, B.C., with grandpa Erwin Reddekopp performing the ceremony. Laurie is the daughter of Sharon Williams (Airdrie) and Rick Slough (St. Genevieve, Missouri).

Webster and Day—Meggan Aileen Webster and Jeffrey Ronald Day were united in marriage November 17, 2001, at the Fryeburg New Church in Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Kenneth Turley officiating.

Deaths

Ballard—Helen Susan Ballard, age 87, longtime member of the Fryeburg New

Church, entered the spiritual world October 26, 2001, in Bridgton, Maine. A graveside service was conducted at Pine Grove Cemetery in Fryeburg October 30, 2001, the Rev. Kenneth Turley officiating.

Dennis—John Harold Dennis, 53, son of Pat and Harold Dennis, members of the Cleveland church, entered the spiritual world November 14, 2001, in El Cajon, California, while awaiting an organ donor. He is survived by his wife Patty Quint Dennis; a daughter Amber Dennis Staley of Kentucky, sons Cameron and Brandon of El Cajon, and three grandchildren. His sisters, the Rev. Judith Dennis and Melody Nolan, live in Ohio.

Fountain—Tom Fountain, member of the Calgary New Church, entered the spiritual life October 6, 2001, during a vacation in Switzerland. His wife, Ev, and children Tom, Karen and Jeff will greatly miss this gentle man. A memorial service was conducted October 13, 2001, with the Rev. Michael Gladish officiating.

Kraus—Vernon Kraus, Sr., 84, lifelong member of the Swedenborgian Church in Pretty Prairie, Kansas, entered the spiritual world September 30, 2001, as a result of complications following a stroke. Vernon had been the recent treasurer of the Kansas Association and took his turn leading services when necessary. He farmed most of his life and taught school for 34 years. He is survived by his wife, Helen; a son, Vernon Kraus, Jr.; a daughter, Leta Royer; five grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. Funeral services were at the Pretty Prairie church, the Rev. Eric Zacharias officiating.

Lord—Bruce A. Lord, age 58, a member of the Fryeburg New Church in Fryeburg, Maine, entered the spiritual world November 11, 2001, in Fort Walton Beach, Florida. A memorial service was held at the Fryeburg New Church November 14, 2001, the Rev. Kenneth Turley officiating. He is survived by his wife, Jeannette; three sons, Nicholas, Jarrod and Jason; his mother Charlotte Lord of Fryeburg; two sisters, Deborah Dolley and Jane Dutton, both of Fryeburg; and four brothers, Dale, Terry, Murray, and Gene.

Sloan—Ida Sloan, 93, mother of the Rev. Donna Sloan of Austintown, Ohio, entered the spiritual world October 28, 2001. The funeral service was conducted November 2, 2001, at the Himrod Church of God in Austintown, she where was an active member for 60 years.

Kemper Road Center to Repeat Community-Building Workshop

The Kemper Road Swedenborgian Church is planning to have another community building workshop the second weekend of March beginning Friday evening March 8 about 7 PM and concluding Sunday afternoon March 10, about 4 PM. Last year's was so successful, we want to sponsor another one. We are limited to about 26 participants.

The community building workshop will be led by three leaders trained by Scott Peck's FCE

(Foundation For Community Encouragement). Attendees from out of the area are invited to stay in the homes of Kemper Road church members. Cost for the workshop is \$100.00 (if registered before February 15; after that \$115.)

For complete registration information, contact:

Rev. John Billings
5602 Betty Lane
Milford, OH 45150
Phone: (513) 248-0636
email: jscincy@juno.com



San Francisco Church Historic Landmarking Nomination Underway

The San Francisco Swedenborgian Church is currently developing the nomination materials necessary to receive National Historic Landmark Designation status. They have retained Architectural Resource Group of S.F. to assist them in the preparation of the extensive nomination documentation. The San Francisco Architectural Heritage Society has been selected to be their advocate through the nomination process, which is expected to culminate in their designation early this year. One of the greatest benefits of designation will be the ability to preserve the church, its furnishings and collection in accordance with nationally recognized standards of conservation.

New York Church Gives the Word

This past summer, the Rev. Robert McCluskey, pastor of the New York New Church, received a request from the Rev. Dr. Welton Gaddy, executive director of The Interfaith Alliance, asking for a "good word": one word or phrase that is especially meaningful to him as a Swedenborgian, followed by a brief explanation of why this "good word" deserves to be shared with others. Drawing "words" from religious leaders all over the world, Gaddy is developing a "vocabulary of spirituality." Here is the "word" and explanation Robert contributed:

The Marriage of Love and Wisdom

This "mystical" image speaks to the possibility of the unity of life and doctrine, charity and faith, within the individual and among the community. It suggests the gradual decrease of divisions based on doctrinal differences, and a growing emphasis on genuine acceptance, and compassion. It reminds us that God's

truth is merciful as well as just, and that God's love is discerning as well as forgiving. Finally, just as marriage is a process of growth, and not a fixed state, so our spiritual life can be seen as a process of growth, in which we change, and are changed by, others; always connected, in community, in relationship, allowing our faith to be regularly influenced by our actual experience, and ensuring that our response to the world around us is always grounded in our faith.

Bridgewater, Mass.

Eli Dale, member of the Portland, Maine Swedenborgian church, is attending Andover-Newton Theological Seminary in Boston, is currently interning at the Bridgewater church and has started a choir there. Looks as though she'll be the third Swedenborgian minister to emerge from the Portland church—her predecessors are the Rev. Susannah Currie, director of Temenos Retreat Center and pastor of the Swedenborgian Church at Temenos, and the Rev. Andy Stinson, minister of the Elmwood New Church in Elmwood, Massachusetts.

LaPorte New Church, Indiana

Loaves & Fishes Ministry (formerly LKaring Kitchen) continues to offer its soup kitchen to the community two evenings per month, also providing "take home" bags for the guests that contain items that could be easily prepared by children. The ministry has been steadily growing over the past year and served a record number on October 26: thirty-two guests and seven church members. People come not only for the good meal but for the fellowship as well.



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Emanuel Swedenborg was born January 29, 1688, in Stockholm, Sweden. Although he never intended a church denomination to be founded or named after him, a society was formed in London 15 years after his death. This 1787 organization eventually spawned the present General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. As a result of Swedenborg's own spiritual questionings and insights, we as a church today exist to encourage that same spirit of inquiry and personal growth, to respect differences in views, and to accept others who may have different traditions. Swedenborg shared in his theological writings a view of God as infinitely loving and at the very center of our beings, a view of life as a spiritual birthing as we participate in our own creation, and a view of Scripture as a story of inner-life stages as we learn and grow. Swedenborg would conclude, "All religion relates to life, and the life of religion is to do good." He also felt that the sincerest form of worship is a useful life.