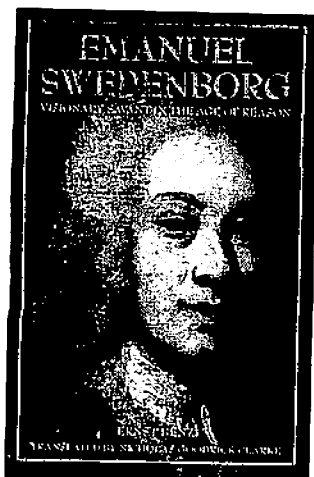


THE MESSENGER

Published by the Swedenborgian Church of North America

October 2002



Book Review

Emanuel Swedenborg: Visionary Savant in the Age of Reason

by Ernst Benz

Published by the Swedenborg Foundation, West
Chester, PA, 2002 hardback \$24.95

Reviewed by Wilson Van Dusen

Here is a fresh breeze in the Swedenborgian realm. At first you may think this is just another biography of Swedenborg. It is that and a great deal more. The main competing biography is that of Trobridge, 162 pages in the latest edition. Benz's is 536 pages, a substantial work, 3.3 times as large. This was first published in German in 1948. Unfortunately, it came out when Germany was still recovering from World War II and had a paper shortage, so many notes and references were omitted. Some main references have been put back. Benz is a true European scholar, easily reading in several languages materials we would not likely see here in the United States. But more than that, he seems to muster all that is available on every point. Swedenborg did not ever seem to write down the momentous event when the Lord came and gave him his life's task. So our author finds every allusion to this event by others and compares the slightly differing accounts.

I came to see Benz as a substantial scholar. He will find it all, including sources we are likely to know little about, and then analyze what it all means. As a long time follower of

Swedenborg I naturally looked for any sign of bias. But the author's conclusions are based on such an even handed review of evidence that I came to rely on him. In addition he puts Swedenborg into the larger picture of the historical currents of his time. Many great philosophers and major figures Swedenborg didn't actually refer to are in this book because they represent major currents of his time. So, though this is a biography, it is larger and of greater scope than any we have seen before.

Benz found Swedenborg's father's diary, so we learn more of his father and his life circumstances. The young Swedenborg ran out of money in London and came home feeling he was a great scientist. He returned to Sweden and recommended professors in a department take a cut in salary so he could join the staff. This, of course, went over like a lead balloon. I was taken aback by evidence that he was greatly impressed by his achievements as a scientist. Everything about his *Journal of Dreams* period is chronicled. Coming into the spiritual made him more humble. Unfortunately Benz did not know of *The Messiah About to Come*, the work in which Swedenborg

found the internal sense, but everyone else has missed it, too. There is a more careful study of *The Word Explained* and *The Worship and Love of God* than I have seen before. Our author has studied other European mystics and compares Swedenborg to them, particularly Jacob Boehme. He sees him most similar to St Bernard of Clairvaux. In the United States we still seem in some doubt that Swedenborg is even a mystic and here Benz compares him to other mystics. A major point is that Swedenborg is no prophet; rather, he is a visionary out to illuminate the fundamentals of Christianity. Swedenborg takes the unusual approach of backing up doctrinal matters with his actual experiences in heaven and hell. He doesn't really want to produce something of his own but rather to illuminate the depths of scripture. Things seen in heaven and hell illustrate his points. He is a visionary. His gift as a mystic was that he was allowed to see so much more which he shares with us.

A number of personal details also come out. His diet was poor, far too simple with too much sugar. Yet he was never ill. He had only dental problems, which he credited to demons. He was in bed an average of 13 hours a day, but part was exploring spiritual worlds. There is every sign of a quiet, unobtrusive scholar who spent much time exploring the worlds beyond this one. At first this required a deep trance, but later he could be in this world and the other at the same time.

Benz has a particular interest in, and feeling for, Swedenborg's visionary experiences, hence the book's title. A long center section deals with a careful analysis of these visionary experiences.

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Embracing Change

By the time you read this, the Anniversary of 9/11 will be behind us, and it is my hope that the only events to mark that day will be healing ones. But as we go to press with the October 2002 issue, several days before the 11th, we know only of some of the memorial services being planned: Wayfarers Chapel, reserved for prayer and meditation all day with a candlelighting Service of Remembrance at 7 p.m., the Visitors Center featuring our J. Appleseed book, *God in the Midst of the City*. San Francisco's Swedenborgian church garden opens with a bell toll that is continuing throughout the day, ending with an evening piano concert in the candlelit sanctuary by parishioner Steve Bailey from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. The seven full-time students at the Swedenborgian House of Studies are participating in a special service on campus; the St. Paul church commemorates the day with an evening service.

The evening service at the New York church is including several readings from *God in the Midst of the City*, some from contributors to the book such as Kelly Piper and Dylan Tucker, and Robert McCluskey will include the tribute song to the firemen that he played at convention. The Stonehouse Bookstore and Growth Center, conducting a 24-hour prayer vigil with all invited to participate in reflection, meditation, candle lighting, blessings and prayers for those who were lost, the lives that were changed, and the visualization of world peace.

Lives that were changed...I was thinking about the stunning number of life-changing and transformational events that we've experienced personally and witnessed happening to others since 9/11. Difficult to comprehend that so much has happened in just one year. Then today, September 9, as if to underscore the realization, I received the following letter from the Rev. Andy Stinson, pastor of our church in Elmwood, Mass.

Dear Friends,

As many of you know I have been off training to be a U.S. Army Chaplain for the past three months. For all of you who have written me this summer I cannot say how grateful I am. Your letters have been a source of strength and refuge from the world of green at some very key times and I thank you. This has been difficult and rewarding training, which is going to allow me to bring many new skills back to the church with me—a return I have been looking forward to for some time now.

However, the needs of the Army delay that return longer than expected, as I am being called to active duty for the next year. While we had discussed the possibility of this happening, the reality of it flies in the face of many of our hopes.

There is a war on. If my time at the chaplain school has taught me anything, visiting with chaplains that have been in Kosovo, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Korea, and a dozen other places, it is that men and women put their lives on the line daily in support of freedom. Regardless of your belief in the politics of what is happening, whether we should or not be doing what we are doing, the bottom line is that our military is not made up of technology, but of young flesh and blood and hearts and souls. Hearts and souls and minds that struggle with what they are doing, that are without anyone to care about or for them, and who wrestle with who they are as people in the midst of strife and difficulty. Whatever the politics, these people need ministry, they need to know the love of God in their lives, and that love does live in the Universe.

The workings of Providence assign it to me to look after these soldiers for awhile. These soldiers, our brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, husbands, and wives deserve someone who will seek to take their cares and their pain seriously; and for the next year, that someone will be me. I do not think myself equal to the task before me, only that I will give it what I have and through the workings of Providence hope for 'all things to be possible.'

I leave September 9th and anticipate a deployment of about a year. As I expect to be within the United States there is a very good chance I will be able to get back periodically to say "Hi" and to check in and maybe even lead a service.

I will be back on September 8th to lead worship. I hope all of you will consider coming out, as I do want to visit with everyone before I go. While hellos and goodbyes are hard to do all in one day, I think we have, in the midst of all that is moving in our world, much to celebrate. I want to celebrate with you how fortunate I

feel about the ministry of our church. I want express my thanks to God for my call to participate in ministry with all of you.

This time away will most likely be difficult for both the church and me. However, I think that simply speaks to the bond that has been forged between us and how sacred and important that is. In light of this, let me spell this out: I am coming back. I have every intention to return to the church when I am released from active duty.

Good can come from everything that happens, and it is my prayer that the church, and I, will find the good, the opportunity in this time.

*Yours in God's Love,
Rev. Andy*

Andy, we'll keep you in our prayers, God's blessings on your new ministry, and we will continue to visualize world peace.

For those who wish to get in touch with Andy, he can be reached at the following addresses:

Rev. Andy Stinson
P.O. Box 125
Elmwood MA 02337
(mail will be forwarded)

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HQ MTMC DSC (719th Trans BN)
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Fort Eustis, VA 23604-1644



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Emanuel Swedenborg.

(Continued from cover)

He makes good use of the memorable experiences. This long section on the visionary ends with Swedenborg in a theological debate in heaven with leading scholars. Here was the modest man with a slight stammer who could bravely speak up in heaven. There he and his books were known and respected. Instead of the scorn and misunderstanding he met in this world he found himself understood and supported in his doctrines in heaven. I recently did a study of what was promised of the New Church in this world. While reading Benz's dramatic account of the scene in heaven I came away with the extraordinary idea that the New Church was actually founded in heaven. If you turn to the dramatic debate in heaven you might come away with the same feeling!

Part four of the book, *Doctrine*, deals with giant themes. Correspondences led to the internal sense of the Word, which is the Lord's second coming. Existence is a theater of representations of the Divine. All things in nature drift toward the human and even toward the Divine human. The Christian church waited so long for the second coming it faded from people's awareness. *Heaven and Hell* solved a number of doctrinal problems. Insipid Protestant guesses about the next life were replaced by a stronger sense of what awaits us.

Benz takes a little getting accustomed to. He loves and respects Swedenborg's visionary experiences and easily lives and moves in them. We see Swedenborg anew and in greater depth in the panorama of his visions. But it all makes sense. Swedenborg seeks the living truth of religion. He finds it first in the direct experience of heaven and hell and from this corrects serious misunderstandings of the life beyond this one. But as a mature spiritual explorer he corrects some fundamental doctrinal errors. Benz is invigorated in this visionary material. He presents the writings with a liveliness and an inner insight we are

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The Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Fund

On October 6th, 2001, the Ohio Association of Swedenborgian churches voted to partner with Urbana University in establishing a fund in memory of Alicia Nicole Titus, who was a flight attendant on United Airlines Flight 175, which crashed into the second World Trade Center tower on September 11th, 2001. Alicia and her family were longtime residents of Champaign County. Both her parents, John and Bev Titus, are graduates of Urbana University. John served as Dean of Students at Urbana for twelve years before taking a position at Schoolcraft College near Detroit, Michigan about four years ago. Alicia's sister, Shanoa, graduated from Urbana, and Alicia and her brother Zach attended Urbana for a period of time, Alicia graduating from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. The Titus family are longtime members of the Swedenborgian Church.

Her family, her church, her community and friends, desire to remember Alicia as an exuberant and vital young woman whose life was dedicated to the pursuit of peaceful living among others and loving service. As her father, John Titus, has stated, "She totally opposed violence, acts of terrorism, hate, prejudice, killing or any act against another living thing. Her true nature and human existence were totally opposite of the evil forces that took her life." (Memorial Service, Sept. 17th, 2001)

The purpose of the fund is to carry out the legacy and spirit of Alicia's life by enabling Urbana University to sponsor programs whose major focus would be to promote and support the cause of peace in the world. These might include speakers, panel discussions, workshops or seminars. Such programs would be for the benefit of both Urbana University, and the surrounding community and might be located at the university or taken into local schools or other appropriate community settings, depending on the nature of the program.

In August, 2002, a restricted account was established at Urbana University and named "The Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Fund." A portion of annual interest from the fund will be used to support programs to be offered. To date, the Ohio Association of Swedenborgian churches has pledged to donate to the fund (the amount to be decided at its October 2002 meeting), and the Boston Swedenborgian Church has sent a gift of \$2,000. The Urbana and Champaign County community, members of the Swedenborgian denomination, or any other interested persons are invited to make donations to this fund.

John and Bev Titus have been involved in the development of the Statement of Purpose for the fund and have voiced a desire that activities or programs to be supported by the fund should be in keeping with the view that peace is not just an absence of conflict. It is a state of harmony which occurs within and among human beings and their environment when they coexist with a spirit of cooperation and community building, where differences of culture, tradition and spiritual roots are respected, and the practice of stewardship and service to others, to the community, and to our natural environment are valued. Programs that support and further these principles will be considered appropriate recipients of proceeds from the fund.

Contributions to the fund may be sent to: The Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Fund, care of Urbana University, Business Office, College Way, Urbana, Ohio 43078.



God Is One: The Way of Islam

by R. Marston Speight

(2nd Edition with Afterword and Study Guide) 175 pp. Friendship Press, \$9.95 (to order, call 1-800-889-5733)

Reviewed by Lorena Costello

How did I come to write this review? One afternoon in mid-July I opened an email; to my surprise the editor of *The Messenger* asked me if I would care to read a book titled *God is One: The Way of Islam* and write a review. Well, being one who loves to read, I said yes. Then came the hard part, writing. While writing poetry comes easy for me, I came to the realization that writing a book review is a challenge. Initially my intent was to write an unbiased review, but because one of my loves is Islam, it is not possible for me to be unbiased. Also, it is not easy for me to be critical or to judge harshly, but I have tried to give a fair and accurate review while at the same time point out things that would be of interest to this Swedenborgian audience.

The first edition of this book was written when the author was serving as director of the Office of Christian-Muslim Relations, under the National Council of Churches, from 1971 - 1992. He is a former missionary who spent years living with Muslims in northern Africa. His lifetime contribution to Muslim/Christian dialogue and relations shines through in this book. Now a retired minister in the United Methodist Church, he lives with his family in Connecticut.

The first five chapters explain the beliefs of Islam and touch on the history of Muslims and Christians, focusing mainly on how Islam differs from Christianity. In chapter 6, the center of attention shifts to the common ground shared in chapter 7.

Some highlights:

Chapter 1: Why Is It Important To Know About Islam?

In the conclusion of chapter one the author points out that his principal approach to the subject of Islam is the Golden rule found in the sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7:12). As a Muslim I believe he achieved this goal.

On page 11, Mr. Speight states that what may keep some distance between Christians and Muslims are biases and stereotypes. The sad thing is that we may not even be aware that we have preconceived notions. He suggests the following test. Ask yourself what comes to mind when you hear the words "Muhammad," "the Quran," and "Islam." In finding common ground, the author feels that what has been lacking over the ages is "careful listening to each other's views."

Islam is more than a religion; it is a way of life. As the author points out, for a Muslim "all duties are religious duties, for example to make a business contract is just as much an act of faith as to say a prayer."

Muslims are expected to live a moral life; doing good things is being obedient to God.

The Quran expresses this wonderfully in Surah 25 ayah 63-76.

63. And the servants of (Allah) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace!";

64. Those who spend the night in adoration of their Lord prostrate and standing;

65. Those who say, "Our Lord! Avert from us the Wrath of Hell, for its Wrath is indeed an affliction grievous.

66. "Evil indeed is it as an abode, and as a place to rest in."

One aspect of moral living is modesty. Both Muslim men and women are called to dress in a modest way. According to Mr. Speight, "Men have distorted Islamic religious teaching to justify their discriminatory behavior." The practice of secluding women and forcing them to cover all but their eyes is part of the culture.

The Quran and the Hadith—sayings and traditions of the Prophet (pbuh)—call for equality between women and men. For example:

Surah 49 Ayah 13:

13. O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).

Hadith:

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "All people are equal, as equal as the teeth of a comb. An Arab is no better than a non-Arab, nor is a white person over a black person, nor is the male superior to the female. The only people who enjoy preference with God are the devout."

Chapter 4: Great Themes of Islamic Life

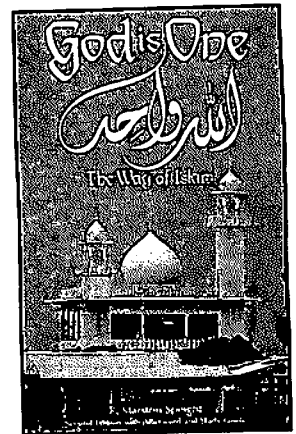
All Muslims are part of the Ummah (community of Islam), united not by blood but by faith. A Muslim's loyalty is to Allah and to Islam. Making Shahada (the confession of faith) brings one into the Ummah. In the Shahada one states in arabic there is no god but God, and Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the messenger of God. Muslims are one people, under one God, following one way, Islam.

Chapter 6: Our Common Situation as Muslims and Christians

It points out both groups:

- Have faith in one true God
- Believe that prophets, as

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God Is One:

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- instruments of God, were used to draw people into a life of faith
- Invite people to a life of prayer and worship
- Have Scriptures
- Are universal in perspective

Other similarities Swedenborgians have with Muslims are that both share a focus on seeking knowledge, practicing charity daily, belief that angels and evil spirits are with us, and a daily desire to struggle against evil influences.

It is my hope you will find the following Quran and Hadith texts taken from this book interesting; I feel they show common beliefs that both faiths share:

16. So fear Allah as much as ye can; listen and obey and spend in charity for the benefit of your own soul and those saved from the covetousness of their own souls—they are the ones that achieve prosperity. (Surah 64 ayah 16)

39. That which you give in usury for increase through the property of (other) people, will have no increase with Allah: but that which you give for charity, seeking the Countenance of Allah, (will increase): it is these who will get a recompense multiplied. (Surah 30 ayah 39)

62. Those who believe (in the Quran), and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabians,— any who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. (Surah 2 ayah 62)

14. Tell those who believe to forgive those who do not hope for the Days of Allah: it is for Him to recompense (for good or ill) each People according to what they have earned. (Surah 45:14)

22. Let not those among you who are endowed with grace and amplitude of

means resolve by oath against helping their kinsmen, those in want, and those who have left their homes in Allah's cause: let them forgive and overlook, do you not wish that Allah should forgive you? For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surah 24 ayah 22)

You are not really believers if you do not desire for your fellow believers that which you desire for yourself (Hadith)

As the one year anniversary of September 11 focuses again on aspects of those tragic events, many in the West are wondering how much the

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extreme right in Islam represents Islamic teaching. This book reminds us that after the events of September 11, many Muslim leaders issued anti-terrorist statements, but these statements were not reported in the US press. Furthermore, it states that if most Muslim leaders were *not* speaking out against terrorism and hate, the world might have witnessed not thousands, but millions of Muslims in the streets calling for Jihad against the United States.

What happened that tragic day was not Islamic. Why do I say that? Because I am Muslim, and I know that Islam is a religion of peace and of submission to the will of Allah.

In conclusion, if you are looking for a book that will allow you a quick

peek into the religion of Islam, this is the one to buy. You will find research, interesting data, and pictures that make it both enjoyable and informative. If you are seeking answers to what occurred on the tragic day of September 11, 2001, in my opinion this book will not provide what you seek. While it does give some information on the Taliban movement in the Afterword section, it just scratches the surface. Unfortunately it fails to look deeply into the root economic and social causes of extremism.

Lorena Costello is a wife and mother of three sons, currently enrolled in Interfaith Seminary's Distance Learning Program. "My passion," she states, "is to see how God works in all things. In October 2001 I reverted to Islam, but feel I am part of the New Church family and have kept my membership at Bridgewater church." [The Swedenborgian Church in Bridgewater, Mass.]



Emanuel Swedenborg:

(Continued from page 119)

not accustomed to. So this is beyond a biography of great sweep and detail. He shows quite an insight into the full scope of the writings. A fresh breeze in Swedenborgian literature.

The paper cover of the book mentions six times esoteric Christianity. This comes in part from the translator, and it is in the translator's preface. To me this is a strange idea. What are the hidden, esoteric secrets in Christianity for which we should select, train, and initiate the special few? There are none. What Swedenborg presents is for all who want it. Thankfully Benz doesn't dabble in the esoteric. Like Swedenborg, he tries to make it all clear.

Wilson Van Dusen is a clinical psychologist, Swedenborgian scholar, mystic, and author of numerous books on the inner world.



Editor's Note: *The following report was presented by Dr. Robert L. Head, president of Urbana University, during our convention at the University of Southern Maine in Gorham, June 29th-July 3rd*



Dynamic New Developments at Urbana University

Robert Head

I bring you greetings on behalf of the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, and students of Urbana University.

From time to time my wife has reminded me "for your words to be immortal, they don't have to be everlasting." So, with that in mind, I will begin by telling you the same thing that Henry the 8th told each of his many wives, "My dears, I won't keep you long."

Urbana University recently completed an outstanding 2001 - 2002 academic year. We were fortunate to enjoy an increased enrollment of 8% over the previous year; improved financial performance (would you believe that every bank in the region has offered to finance any upcoming projects for us?); and we have developed a better focus on students, our top priority.

Even with the accomplishments of the past year, we have much work to do. Will Rogers, an American folk hero, once stated, "Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there." Therein lies our challenge. Urbana University must leverage today's momentum and develop programs and an infrastructure that provides for the needs of tomorrow's students.

This past spring, we concluded a strategic planning process. During that process we affirmed our mission, which is "to offer a liberal education in a small college environment emphasizing student learning through individual attention, excellence in instruction, career-oriented programs, and critical reflection on moral and ethical values." Our vision continues to focus Urbana University on excellence, leadership, and service.

The planning process yielded four priorities. I will summarize each priority and identify a few, but not all, of the underlying strategic initiatives:

1. Establish Urbana University as a regional provider of excellent and innovative academic programs.

- Two new programs have been targeted for 2003. The first will be a Master of Business Administration. Our timeline is to have this program available in January, though the Ohio

Board of Regents has already approved it at its most recent June meeting.

- The second new program will be a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. This program is being developed in partnership with the Community Hospital School of Nursing in Springfield, Ohio, and is targeted to begin in the fall of 2003.

Our most critical strategic development will occur during the fall of 2002 when Urbana University will identify a program for development that will provide the distinctive niche among regional competitors.

2. Enhance the learning environment for Urbana students.

- We are creating a Center for Student Success that will provide enhanced programs and services aimed at increasing the success of our students from entry through graduation.

We continue to be an institution that provides an opportunity for higher learning for those students in our vicinity and for those who may be the first in their families to go to college. But we must do more.

This center will also develop the first honors program for Urbana University and therefore provide advanced opportunities for students who excel academically and additional resources for those students who need greater academic support.

- The campus is being wired to provide a technological backbone sufficient to enhance communication and to serve as the infrastructure for teaching, learning, and administrative tools.

3. Expand partnerships to provide opportunities for learning and service.

- Our next generation of leaders must have a knowledge base that incorporates an understanding of diverse cultures, economies, and political structures.

In May, I toured Taiwan and China and entered into several agreements with colleges and universities there to provide opportunities for the students and faculty of those institutions and ours to study abroad and to participate in joint research projects.

Our academic vice president left yesterday for Europe to accomplish similar collaborative agreements.

- Service learning has been introduced to our students and organizations in our community. Service learning allows students to experience, through service, what they are learning in the classroom.

Through service learning students are able to develop academically and as citizens within our society.

4. Enhance the physical spaces available for learning and living.

- Engage the community in developing a master plan for

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Editor's Note: The following article was written in response to a request from the Ohio Bicentenary committee which is putting together a book of profiles of all the churches and spiritual groups who contributed to the history of Ohio. The book's purpose is to support tolerance and understanding among religious groups. It has not yet been published, and they have given permission to use the piece wherever we like. *PWL*

The New Church in Ohio

A Brief History of the Swedenborgian Presence

Ken Turley

It is safe to say that the New Church influence in what was then called the Ohio Territories, and is now more specifically known as the State of Ohio, is directly linked to the life of one John Chapman. Born in 1774, he lived and worked until his death in 1845 as an orchardist and missionary and was better known throughout the Ohio as "Johnny Appleseed." It was a time of turmoil, rebellion, independence, and exploration. All over the world immense changes and discoveries were taking place—geographically, of course, but also in art, music, science, economics, politics, and theology. As if to prove the point, the Revolutionary War created an entirely new nation independent of the Old World.

Dynamic New Developments at Urbana University

(Continued from page 122)

future development of the campus to include new buildings, infrastructure, vehicular and pedestrian traffic patterns, and landscape.

- Renovate several historic buildings to include Barclay, Bailey, and Browne Halls.

Browne Hall was started this past spring and Barclay and Bailey Halls will soon be underway. We are working to resolve a couple of issues with the Ohio Historical Association and expect to begin the project in September.

- Provide additional spaces for student recreation to include a swimming pool and a cardiovascular fitness center.

Thanks to a \$120,000 gift from our

Emanuel Swedenborg's theological works first appeared in the new world in 1784 through the independent efforts of Hannah Holland Smith and James Glenn. An immigrant from Holland settling in New England, Smith brought some of Swedenborg's works with her and translated them into English. At the same time James Glenn, who discovered Swedenborg's writings in 1781 and then gave up his South American plantation and freed his 6,000 slaves, was giving a series of lectures on Swedenborg at Francis Bailey's shop in Philadelphia. Bailey was a fellow printer and close friend of Benjamin Franklin.

In 1789 George Washington was elected President. John Chapman was then a young man in Massachusetts with high principles, few means, and even fewer prospects;

new facilities maintenance firm, Sodexho, the pool is currently being repaired and will be up and running in late August.

We are respectful of our past, encouraged by our present situation, and optimistic regarding our future. My deepest appreciation goes to the General Council for your contribution of \$25,000 to our Barclay and Bailey Halls Project.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge the Ohio Association for its gift of \$25,000 to fund an endowed scholarship in honor of Helen Keller.

These gifts, and others like them, make it possible for Urbana University to serve our society by making a quality educational experience available, affordable, and meaningful.



Two artists' renditions of Johnny Appleseed (Urbana University Museum).



so, along with many others of his day and age, he looked to the west for a life occupation. He was a gentle but adventurous young man. Somewhere between leaving Massachusetts and establishing himself as a provider of apple seedlings in the Ohio, he discovered Swedenborg's writings. They had only recently been published in England and made available in the States, let alone out on the frontier. In them he discovered a way of looking at Scripture, Christianity, and life that did not require that he choose between faith and knowledge. He found a perspective that brought the intellect and the emotions into balance and harmony in the spirit, the way light and heat are in balance and harmony in the flame.

John Chapman, soon known as Johnny Appleseed, found a way to express this balance as an orchardist. He went out alone into the wilderness to hack clearings and plant apple seeds to provide the settlers with saplings and the fruit and stability they would bear. His travels and contact with the settlers also gave him a way to sow the spiritual seeds of love and wisdom in the hearts and minds of the people on the frontier. This spiritual husbandry took place in readings and discussions of Swedenborg's writings, perhaps in

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The New Church in Ohio

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church gatherings, but far more often over a shared chore or at the dinner table, and especially before a fire late in the evening in some rustic log cabin in an outlying homestead. "Appleseed John" loved the free and enthusiastic exchange of ideas and perspectives, especially about the Bible and heavenly life. And he loved making a living by providing something as beautiful and natural as apples, something created by God, useful to all and harmful to none.

But "Allegheny Johnny," as he was also called, loved as well to spend time alone out in the wilderness going one on one with God. Here it was, in Ohio, in his readings of Swedenborg and contemplations of God and nature, heaven and earth, that he found a vocabulary expressing a divinely inspired and "God given" correspondence between the things of spirit and the things of nature. He found a level of meaning in the Bible that portrays the unfolding of the inner spiritual life as well as the history of a

people, both coming into being in a growing relationship with God. In Swedenborg's harmony of science and spirit, Chapman found a vision of life and salvation as a growth process extending from creation to an ultimate transformation, taking place in the natural world but having its highest meaning in the spiritual world.

In 1812, as the war with England and Native American tribes raged on, and at the time of Greentown and the Copus Massacre, John Chapman ran from Mansfield to Mt. Vernon to warn the settlers of an impending attack. Yet, even during these dangerous times, he was never known to carry a gun. He simply and quietly kept on with his work and travels and was known by all as a kindly, if not eccentric, fellow. His life is the perfect testament to the tenets of his beliefs, and his seed planting bore fruit of all

kinds. All of the teachings of Jesus, and the ideas from Swedenborg regarding the useful life of faith and charity, found form and statement in the life of John Chapman. His natural life was the hard but rewarding work of bringing fruit trees into being in order to provide sustenance and joy to people, and his gentle and kindly spiritual work brought people more awareness of the divine presence, the wonders of Scripture and of nature, and the joys of a life that leads to heaven. Johnny Appleseed lived what he taught, both personally and professionally, and in a manner that was offensive to none, including Mother Nature and Heavenly Father.

But John was not the only New Church missionary of those times. A merchant by the name of Michael Shlatter had been slipping books and pamphlets of Swedenborg's writings and New Church teachings, the ones

Here it was, in Ohio, in his readings of Swedenborg and contemplations of God and nature, heaven and earth, that he found a vocabulary expressing a divinely inspired and "God-given" correspondence between the things of spirit and the things of nature.

printed by Francis Bailey, into bales of his merchandise that would then be shipped out to the frontier. And there were other preachers of the New Church persuasion speaking and leading worship on a regular basis in the Ohio. Soon reading groups, and then societies, began to form as people gathered together and found community around New Church worship and the life of charity. In the late 1790s, a reading circle formed in Steubenville, led by David Powell, and by 1809 the group had formed into what was then the second "Swedenborgian Church" in the United States. In 1808, Adam Hurdus arrived in Cincinnati and began to preach New Church teachings, accompanied by one of the first organs in existence that far west. By 1818, forty-five members incorporated into a "society" and in 1819 built the first New Jerusalem church east of the

Alleghenies. In 1812, a group at Turtle Creek near Lebanon gathered around the leadership of Thomas Newport. Records show that by 1817 there were eighteen different locations in Ohio in which groups were gathering to worship and to study the Bible using the teachings of Swedenborg. There were now enough bonafide "Swedenborgians," or "New Church folk" as they preferred to be called, to send nearly one hundred representatives from Ohio to the first General Convention of the New Jerusalem, held back east in Philadelphia.

Quite a number of Ohio New Church folk, out of necessity, frustration, and even religious persecution, wanted opportunities to combine instruction in spiritual matters with the elements of a good higher education. Judge John Young was married to the daughter of Francis Bailey; Bailey was the first "new world" printer of Swedenborg's writings and was living in Urbana. Young had also known John Chapman personally. Approached by a New

Church minister, he donated ten acres of land and organized the effort to build and establish a college based on New Church teachings and values. In 1849 Urbana College came into being; it and Oberlin College were the only co-educational institutions of higher learning in existence. Since the freedom to pursue truth was, and is, a basic tenet of the Swedenborgian perspective, the founders mandated that "any subject, secular or religious, should be open to inquiry." (*The Will to Survive*, Frank Higgins, pg 13, 1977; Urbana College)

By this time the number of Swedenborgians had grown considerably. They were now resident in sixty-two cities. Yet political turmoil had already embroiled the all too human church bureaucracy, even one carved out of the Ohio wilderness by the frontier spirit

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The Arabs And The Jews

Eric Zacharias

I may not do this very well. We'll see! The people of the Middle East, the Jews and the Arabs, are engaged in a conflict that defies resolution. Both sides make claims for peace—but, there is no peace. The siege that brings this conflict to the front door of the Church of the Nativity, the birthplace of the Prince of Peace, raises the level of our anxiety, and with this the question, "What are the circumstances which have brought about this deep-seated bitterness?"

With this question urging me on, I have done some reading of history. Before moving on to the substance of this article, I feel the need to make a disclaimer. In order for one to adequately address this complicated issue, a mind much more acute than mine would be the first requirement

and much more space, too, than can be allotted to me here.

It's a fascinating story—one that has its origin in one of the most dramatic and far-reaching pronouncements of God. In the Book of Deuteronomy Ch. 14:2, we read, "For you (Hebrews) are a people holy to the Lord your God. Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the Lord has chosen you to be his treasured possession." The benefits of "treasured possession" status are not without cost. Turn to Deuteronomy 28. Again the Lord speaks: "... if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commandments... (he) will send on you curses, confusion, and rebuke in everything you put your hand to, until you are destroyed and come to sudden ruin because of the evil you have done in forsaking him."

Well, we know from our reading of the Old Testament that the relationship between God and His Chosen People, the Hebrews, followed closely the pattern of our own life

experience. There were success and failure, there was love amid hate, there was growth amid decline. Beginning with Abram, the Jewish line continued on through his descendants—Isaac, Jacob, and his twelve sons. Abram fathered also another son, Ishmael, by Hagar, an Egyptian woman, who was serving as Sarah's maid. In Genesis 16:12 we read of Ishmael, "He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand will be against him." Ishmael and his sons, it is believed, were the first Arabs. They, too, Scripture tells us, will be richly blessed. "...twelve princes will he beget, and I will make him a great nation." It will be Isaac, however, through whom the Jewish story moves forward.

One of the most significant events to impact Jewish history was the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586BC (By the way, up to this time, these folks were known as Hebrews). Now they were taken into captivity by Babylon. While it is true that in 538 BC King Cyrus allowed some 40,000 to return to Jerusalem—and the temple was rebuilt—the Jews experienced what is known as the Diaspora, their dispersion throughout the Old World.

We might bear in mind that, even though Palestine was a very small geographical area, it, from ancient times, served as a bridge between Africa and Asia. It served as a principle communication route between the great empires of Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt. The level of rivalry between these powers was high, and so Palestine over and over again became an international battleground. This narrow strip of land was continually being overrun, and during this unsettled time drifting populations of Arabs settled there.

This leads us to digress for a moment. Mohammed was born in 570 AD—and, at age 40, he began to have visions of prophetic mission. What was so strongly impressed upon him was quite simply the Almighty power of God and man's duty to obey him. The whole duty of man is Islam,

The New Church in Ohio

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and built in the sincere attempt to know and worship God in freedom. And it was not many years later that money from local successful businessmen in the glass industry entered the picture. During the early 1900s a controversial split produced two Swedenborgian denominations, one centered in Philadelphia called the General Church, and the other, centered in Boston, called the General Convention. After years of rancor, an era of peaceful coexistence and growing affection has settled between the two denominations.

The General Convention is the smallest denomination in the National Council of Churches. Small in numbers yet big in influence, readers of Swedenborg include such historical figures as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Robert Frost, and Helen Keller.

Independent, free thinking, biblically based, Christ centered, ecumenical and interfaith, conservative and liberal, faithful and charitable, political, economic, artistic, practical, and spiritual: all these things describe Swedenborgians, or New Church folk as they are sometimes called. Throughout the years, the practical spirituality of Swedenborgians has played an important role in the history of Ohio. And even today they continue to live quietly useful lives blending faith and charity.

The Rev. Kenneth Turley is pastor of the Swedenborgian Church in Fryeburg, Maine.

(Additional contributions from Alice Skinner, Pete Toot, Betsy Coffman and Carol Lawson.)



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The Arabs And The Jews

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which means submission. This, in essence, was an awakening to the existence of the God of the Jews and the Christians who, at this time, were to be found everywhere in Arabia.

During the 6th century, the Moslems had advanced through North Africa and into Spain. Great centers of Moslem culture flourished in Egypt, and Moslem scholars were attracted to the philosophers of ancient Greece.

Warring, it seems, was a way of life in these ancient times. Even as "submission to God" is the first teaching of Islam, the followers of Mohammed had no hesitation in taking to the sword, and within a few years all of Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Egypt were brought into the Moslem Empire. And the Jews, who were scattered throughout all of these areas, were very much in sympathy with the Islamic teaching of the "One God."

Here is another interesting feature that I can throw into this mix. The city of Jerusalem was sacred to the Jews—the temple, etc. It became also a sacred city to the Moslems—for it was on the very site of the Jewish temple that Mohammed placed the scene of his

Here is another interesting feature that I can throw into the mix. The city of Jerusalem was sacred to the Jews—the temple, etc. It became also a sacred city to the Moslems—for it was on the very site of the Jewish temple that Mohammad placed the scene of his ascent into heaven.

ascent into heaven.

In the year 1517, Palestine was conquered by the Turks and lived under its domination till the First World War when Britain's General Allenby defeated the Turks, and

Palestine—with the passage of the Balfour Declaration, was offered to the Jews as a national homeland. With this there began a long train of events that led to the new, complex situation we have today. About 30% of the population was Jewish in the beginning. That would soon change. Palestine was now under the governance of the League of Nations—with mandatory power given to England. It was gradually discovered that they had a bear by the tail. Hostility between the Arabs and the Jews soon took center stage. Buildings on both sides were blown up and people on both sides were assassinated. The Jews began buying up more and more land—and the Arabs were feeling pushed out of the land they believed rightfully theirs. Britain tried to be fair in its dealings with both sides—but in the end pretty much gave up—and, so in 1948 Britain's High Commission went home to England accompanied by England's 100,000 troops who had served as peacekeepers.

All of this, of course, left open the door to massive immigration of Jews from all over the world, it left the way open for the formation of radical groups on both sides, it paved the way for over-crowding—and a conflict which seemingly has no end.

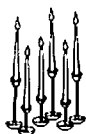
It is interesting that three world religions, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, should be so intimately connected with this little plot of ground—that is Palestine. Surely, too, this is providential. Could it be that God in his infinite wisdom—and, perhaps with a bit of a smile—is telling us, "I have put all three of you here on this historical little plot of ground to give you an opportunity to respond to each other and to me." Deuteronomy 30:19: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live."

The Rev. Eric Zacharias is a retired but active Swedenborgian minister living in Pretty Prairie, Kansas.

Reprinted from the *Plains Banner*, May 2002.

Samhain

Rebecca Elliot



Samhain (sow-wane) is the largest Sabbat festival of the year for Pagans and Wiccans. It marks the turn of the seasonal wheel—completion to new beginnings. It is the eve of the Celtic New Year (November 1) and All Souls Day (Mexico). From a time when we were mostly agrarian, following the turning of the seasons and the cycles of the moon closely—Samhain marked the last harvest when all livestock and planting deemed "extra" were slaughtered and preserved for the winter reserves. Now at the end of a busy year of plowing, planting, weeding, and harvesting, the people could celebrate their accomplishments, honor their losses,

and reflect on the past year through the coming winter hibernation. The celebrations were often introspective and usually somber. Not like today, where the original meanings and connection to the earth have been lost to the dressing up and mischief of children in their unending search for more candy.

All Hallows Eve is a perfect chance to reaffirm our own beliefs in the eternal circle—a spiraling circle of life, death, and rebirth. The emphasis is on love and compassion, focusing not on what is lost, but what is reborn anew. We too can take time this special night to celebrate the spirit world and honor our

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New Church of Southwest Florida Update



Dick Tafel

So much is happening so fast here that an update is most appropriate. First of all, we want to thank those of you who contributed to our new facilities fund drive or the various kids' programs. Some of the church computer disks seem to have disappeared into the vast unknown regions of wherever. So we apologize if you did not get a personal "thank you." We are using this update to thank you and trust this will suffice.

A quick chronology since the beginning of the year will put into perspective where we are. The funeral home where we held worship for five years was sold in January, and our last service there was January 27. Since then we have been using our Thrift Store for Sunday worship. This has meant rearranging things for Sunday morning and then converting the space back for the everyday thrift store use.

We continue our efforts to raise funds for a leased or purchased building so that all our program operations can be held under one roof. We need a lot of space and are hoping to find a commercial building that we can remodel (little by little) for our space needs. We need space to house our free daily bread distribution program; and we need extra space so that we can add free fruits and vegetables. A number of homeless come here in the fall and stay through spring because of the warm climate, while others make this their home throughout the year.

Our thrift store has been very successful. Under the direction of church member and volunteer Patty O'Neil, the thrift store's walls are bulging. But more important than any fiscal return from sales is the people return. The thrift store gives us a much needed window to interface with the public on a daily basis. And interface we do, with members Paul and Ruth Lindstrom and Patty, besides Rev. Dick when he is in the office, staffing the store, we serve a lot of people each week. A number of people come in just to talk because they are lonely. We are able to help clothe the naked through our clothing department, and feed the hungry, not only with bread, but with a variety of foodstuffs from our emergency pantry. We need more space for a church office—to better oversee our growing programs and to handle small groups. Adequate space is needed for counseling, weddings, memorials, baptisms, and worship. And there is a need to establish a seniors' program like a coffee house-style gathering place.

And we need space for the successful and recognized Kids' VIP After School Program. We were informed on July 12 that our former home at the Baptist Church was not available this year, as they were starting a program for kids of missions, music, and child evangelism. While looking for permanent quarters, we are using outdoor space at the Beach School. In weather emergencies, we use space at the thrift store. God works in ways we know not. We are working intently on several possibilities at this very moment. To illustrate what we mean about a successful program, even

with no real location, we had 16 kids in attendance on August 14, and several more are registered and start August 16. But we need our own space to effectively help these kids—space for small classrooms for tutoring, small computer modules for computer learning, space for crafts and storage, as well as for recreation and one-on-one time with adults. Last year we averaged about 20 kids. We expect at least that many this year.

Part of the overall kids' program is the summer camp aspect. Two years ago, we took five kids to Almont. Last year we took seven kids to camp. Both years we needed financial help from the denomination, Almont, and other church sources to do so. This July-August Almont camp session, we brought five kids to camp without any outside financial help. We raised all the funds needed for camp from our beach community—gas, motel, food, road expenses, camp fees, etc. This support was gratifying, and we trust that support for our community-focused programs will continue. We asked for camperships in the amount of \$350 each. It worked. Two of our church families gave camperships, and one of these lent us their van to drive the kids up to Almont. We seem to have achieved a good working mix of church members/friends and community people. This shows not only in financial support programs, but also through individuals' support with the programs.

We continue to raise funds toward our second \$50,000 facilities fund drive. We are about halfway there now. But we have lots to do yet. We are presently in dialogue with the Town of Fort Myers Beach regarding a grant for the Kids' VIP After School Program. We have been told it looks like a good possibility, but would not kick in till 2003. We are also in dialogue with someone from Children and Family Services about a grant. Hopefully this will come to fruition. However, the state children and family services department is in turmoil, as some of you may have been reading in your local papers.

The community is our congregation, so the community is the source of our funding. We are busy setting up a schedule of fundraisers for the coming year. This is a two-goal project: raising funds for our programs and getting publicity for our church's community-focused programs. Our program-based church approach is working!

We continue our search for a new minister. Rev. Dick is ready to retire right now if someone is found to take over. If a new minister desires, Rev. Dick will help him/her with publicity and fundraising. While Rev. Dick will not leave us or this unique and promising ministry in the lurch immediately, he has stated his intention to "sail off" with Linda in another year or so. Programs are growing and expanding, and finances are looking strong, especially if one of our grant proposals comes through. So all of you ministers out there, looking for a change and a challenge, give us call at 239-765-8483. Do it now! The sun, surf, and sand are waiting.



The Varieties of Chapel Experience:



Carl Schroeder

In March 2001, the congregation of the Cambridge Swedenborg Chapel was given the deed and two years to raise 2.5 million dollars or face extinction. Even with unlimited manpower, no amount of bake sales, flea markets, and car washes would raise such a total. Our primary assets are in fact not manpower but great historic beauty, significance, and location to serve the Swedenborgian mission for the Lord in the modern world. Thus we have coordinated our appeals for donations with the launching of an unprecedented number of good uses of the chapel. We have worked hard to demonstrate our intellectual, spiritual, and cultural worth with all the joy and hope we can muster.

In 2001-2002, the chapel worked hard to present the Swedenborgian world view while endearing itself to the Boston area and beyond, with its Centennial celebrations, seasonal spiritual arts festivals, philosophical lecture series on Swedenborg and William James from Dr. Eugene Taylor, more summer Concerts at Noon than ever, the bimonthly Mystical Experiences Discussion Group, the Wedding Chapel, and the Martin Luther King services and Gospel evenings with Rev. Gladys Wheaton, all in addition to our year-round Sunday Swedenborgian worship services with the Rev. F. Robert Tafel who is now succeeded by the Rev. Sarah Buteux.

We grew our affiliations to host functions with the Carl G. Jung Society, the International Association for Near-Death Studies, the Anglican Church, the performances and equinox rituals of several local artists, and the

Banner Events in Cambridge Designed to Attract Donations to Help Purchase Chapel

Non-Violent Communication Foundation. These affiliates were in addition to existing functions with the Tibetan refugee population's worship services, AA meetings, the Peace Corps, the Oriana consort's rehearsals and concerts, and a few others.

The Cambridge Swedenborg Chapel has never been so busy or so proud to serve. At Convention 2002 held in Maine we shared some photos in a display of our chapel events from the past year. Images included: the Rev. Ron Brugler speaking at Centennial Sunday June 9, 2001—we had so many guests and speakers that day that the chapel was filled joyfully to capacity; posters and photos from the five Mystical Art and Talent Shows thus far, which have been so successful and a unique ministry in their own right (see the series website at www.SoulStirring.org—each show features over two dozen local artists sharing profoundly from their spiritual experiences); the Rev. Sarah Buteux speaking at Easter 2002 services (since July, Sarah is now our full-time minister and doing wonderfully. We give great thanks to Pastors Emeritus, the Revs. F. Bob Tafel and Gladys Wheaton for their many years of faithful, inspired service.) And the ever stellar Reiko Akasaka playing organ (Reiko is now graduated from the Conservatory and teaches organ at the chapel, potential students take note!)

Full event details are always available on our website at www.SwedenborgChapel.org. Thanks to Emily Romney and others for coordinating the 14th annual concert series that ran through August. The final Mystical Art and Talent Show for 2002 is entitled "The Harvest of Grace" and was held Saturday Sept 21. Rumors fly that Dr. Taylor has more lectures to give, and other historical interest functions are in the works.

Rev. Buteux will be reviving the Swedenborg reading group twice monthly, and her Sunday services have been superb already and still gathering momentum. We want you to feel welcomed to attend—inspired to know what has been possible for and with a modern spiritually-minded public—and of course, informed in case you should know of any white knights or angel donors who could be sent our way.

On the personal note, in the past year our congregational family has seen some touching changes, including the baptism of Brenda Wiberg, the confirmations of Carl Schroeder, Zeta Gonzalez, and Gretchen Tafel, and the passing of dear Harriet Whitehead, whose memorial services drew a very large crowd of family and admirers.

Now in its second century, the Cambridge Swedenborg chapel has proven its spiritual worth time and again, even as the appeals continue to go out for the fundraising of two-plus million dollars for just the privilege of surviving (one century-old finial of a stone cross has fallen down, but that remains a luxury to fix). We face a post-recession landscape in which Massachusetts, like most states, is forced to slash so many budgets that just about every service and cultural organization is a charity case now. We hope to distinguish ourselves for the unique beacon of love and wisdom that is a Swedenborgian church in a prime multi-cultural location. We have faith we will endure, if for no other reason than that we have been positioned by the Lord to serve so many divine uses here on the edge of Harvard campus, in the historic neighborhood of William James and Ralph Waldo Emerson, in a city and state so important to the Swedenborgian cause.

Before 9-11, a woman wandered into the chapel one Sunday after sightseeing, for reasons she could not explain. We talked with her and it came out that she was local and her name was Chapman. She'd always wanted to know more about her famous Massachusetts ancestor, Johnny Appleseed. We were delighted to tell

(Continued on page 129)

Spiritual Innocence and Rebirth

The spring retreat for the young adult group, *Transitions*, was held April 12-14, 2002 at the Almont New Church Assembly and Retreat Center (www.ancarc.com). The Rev. Renee Billings-Machiniak facilitated our discussion of the theme: "Spiritual Innocence and Rebirth."

The Varieties of Chapel Experience:

her all about the Swedenborgian missionary who planted apple seeds in correspondences to the truth of God. We gave her a book on Chapman and Swedenborg, and she went on her way amazed. We like to think of Johnny Appleseed as one of our first great spiritual performance artists. A storyteller who specializes in Johnny's tale later found us and volunteered for the summer's mystical art show at the chapel.

After 9-11, we were holding a candlelight vigil at the chapel. One woman came in quietly who sat alone and sobbed. We brought her a box of tissues. She thanked us and explained that she'd been wandering Harvard Square in pain and then she saw our lights. Her best friend had been on a Boston flight and died, and she was supposed to have been on the plane with her. This young woman was so grateful for a place to cry. After a while she left, and we were just grateful to have been there for her.



Last October, the theme for the retreat was harvesting joy. It's no coincidence that this was the theme right after the terrorists' attack on our country as well as the loss of one of our own. Now, six months later, the theme was innocence and rebirth.

The next session focused on what gets in our way when we try to

We were planning a surprise baby shower for Chris Hamilton and Heather Fick later that night. Time flew by, and it was time for the baby blessing that Chris and Heather planned for the afternoon. We met outside and sat in a large circle under the trees. More than anything, Chris and Heather simply wanted to include us in their journey into parenthood and recognize that all of us are going to have a role in their baby's life. Some of us read poetry or shared thoughts, and I gave them a baby jar filled with water and things from the Pacific Ocean. It's little things like this that add up to the positive influence we want to have in one another's lives. They ended the blessing by lighting a candle together and gave some of us candles so that

[illegible]

Letter from the Editor:

The Communications Support Unit and *The Messenger* want to thank all those who responded to the Fall 2001 *Messenger* Fund Appeal.

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 or contribute to the Endowment Fund. 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, MA02460.

For All Youth Group Leaders

Are you looking for a simple fundraiser for your youth group? Check out: Youth Group Promotions. They make wall calendars that your youth group can sell. Our youth group at the Fryeburg New Church has sold them for three years in a row, and now people ask when we're going to sell the calendars—they really sell themselves! Each month has a beautiful nature photograph with Bible quotes. You can choose from either the NIV or the King James version. Their phone number is: (800) 279 - 1621, and their website is: www.ygp.com Want more information? Contact Laurie Turley at laurieturley@pivot.net I'd love to start a network of suggestions and support for fellow youth leaders...what ideas do you have for fundraisers and other activities? Let's share!



—Laurie

SHORT TAKES

Mark Allen, president of our Portland, Maine, Swedenborgian Church, is excited and pleased to announce that the Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake has accepted the call to service as their halftime minister starting in January 2003.

The Rev. Dr. Theodore Klein was elected as assistant pastor of the Boston church. He will be working with the Rev. Steve Ellis in fulfilling various ministerial duties.

Transitions Spring Retreat

(Continued from page 129)

when Heather goes into labor we will light candles around the country and focus loving energy on Heather and the baby's direction.

We talked about what role we're going to have as staff in the teen activities. This is so important to us because we want to preserve and participate in a great program and give something back. All sorts of cool things are happening with our group. Kurt Fekete talked about the first opportunity for some of us to participate in the "Will Work For Worship" campaign. This campaign is a chance for us to act as a service group within our church as well as for some of us to check out the churches in the General Convention.

Rev. Renee facilitated the evening session about what signs to look for when spiritual rebirth or regeneration is occurring. These were ideas—not necessarily what is true for everyone. She gave us a handout listing these ideas, and we discussed each one and what this meant to us individually. Having some guidelines is critical during this process so that we can create our own "safety nets" and lean on one another as we travel through this thing called life.

Then we held the surprise baby shower for Chris and Heather. It was great to have this sort of thing during a retreat about innocence and rebirth. The little kids helped decorate the dining room for the party and totally were into the party.

After the baby shower shindig we did what we normally do...talked, hugged, hung out, talked, supported one another, talked, and had fun! This is some of the *most* important stuff that happens at retreats. When we commune with one another we build our community and look forward to the changes and consistencies that are happening in our lives. We are able to relate and share and be there for one another. This is so hard to find in our world at large, and to have this program available in our church means that we are cutting-edge and listening to our lay people. We cherish this time together and realize that it is rare, and we are always worried about it being taken away from us. Some of us have significant roles in the church and are fighting for these programs to stay available for future youth. I only hope that some day soon we will be able to stop the fighting because our church elders finally realize the importance of these retreats and programs, and then we would be able to focus more energy into these vital programs.

Jenn Tafel is president of the national Alliance of New Church Women and active in the leadership of Transitions. She entered the ministerial program at SHS this September. Her new address is: 2317 LeConte Avenue 6A, Berkeley, CA 94709. Phone (510) 845-5062



On October 1, the Rev. Eric Allison, pastor of the Puget Sound Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound in Kirkland, Washington, is presenting a talk at the Wayfarers Chapel in Palos Verdes, California, titled *Swedenborg and the Angels*, 7-9 p.m., donation \$5.00, reception following.

BAPTISMS

McCain—Amya and Sydney McCain, infant children of Sandy and Larry McCain, were baptized into the Christian faith July 21, 2002, at the Swedenborg Chapel in Cleveland, Ohio, the Rev. Jun-Chol Lee officiating.

Rumson—Rachel Lyn Rumson was baptized into the Christian faith July 14, 2002, at the Portland Swedenborgian Church, the Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake officiating.

Sbrocco—Angela Marie Sbrocco, six-month-old daughter of Greg and Rachael (Tukos) Sbrocco, was baptized into the Christian faith July 21, 2002, at the LaPorte New Church in Laporte, Indiana, the Rev. Carl Yenetchi officiating.

CONFIRMATIONS

Brown, Hill, Pidgeon—Arthur and Ann Brown, Jean Hill, and Judy Pidgeon were confirmed into the life and faith of the Swedenborgian Church Palm Sunday, March 24, 2002, at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario, the Rev. Paul Zacharias officiating.

Vogel—Shirley Vogel was baptized into the Christian faith, confirmed into the life and faith of the Swedenborgian Church and welcomed into membership July 14, 2002, at the LaPorte New Church in LaPorte,

Indiana, the Rev. Carl Yenetchi officiating.

Betty Yenetchi, wife of the Rev. Carl Yenetchi, transferred her membership from California to the LaPorte New Church in July 2002.

DEATHS

Feick—Harriet Eaton Feick, a member of the Urbana Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world February 24, 2002, in Niceville, Florida. Harriet's grandfather was the Rev. Russell Eaton, who was born in Brockton, Mass., and served the Swedenborgian churches in Kitchener, Ontario, Cambridge, Mass., and Urbana, Ohio. He was twice president of Urbana College (now Urbana University). Harriet and Thomas W. Feick, Sr., were married in the Urbana church, and her parents, Margaret McConnell and Jordie Eaton, were active Swedenborgians.

A memorial scholarship for students at Urbana University has been established in her name.

Giles—Pauline E. Giles, age 82, entered the spiritual world July 6, 2002, in Fryeburg, Maine. Pauline was an active member of the Fryeburg New Church until overcome by poor health.

A memorial graveside service was held August 6, 2002, the Rev. Kenneth Turley officiating.

Steadman—Olivia Loraine LaFrance Steadman, age 52, a member of the Fryeburg New Church, entered the spiritual world July 13, 2002, in Portland, Maine. A graveside service was held in Conway, New Hampshire, July 21, 2002, the Rev. Dorothy Francey officiating.

Whitehead—Harriet Whitehead, 94, longtime member of the Cambridge Church of the New Jerusalem, entered the spiritual world May 1, 2002. The memorial service was held May 6, 2002, the Revs. F. Robert Tafel and Gladys Wheaton officiating. Harriet was born in Urbana, Ohio, in 1908, where her father, the Rev. Russell Eaton, was president of Urbana College and subsequently pastor of the Urbana Swedenborgian Church for many years. He was also pastor of the Brockton, Mass. church, and our church in Kitchener, Ontario. Harriet held two degrees from Radcliffe, as well as a masters in English Literature from Ohio State. She served as the first personnel administrator at Beth Israel Hospital. She also served for 15 years at the Buckingham, Brown, and Nichols School. Harriet was married to T. North Whitehead, son of Alfred North Whitehead, in 1947. She will be remembered for, among other things, her great devotion to the New Church. Harriet loved our beautiful Cambridge Chapel, and was fiercely determined that it should remain Swedenborgian. She is sorely missed.



Samhain

(Continued from page 126)

ancestors in solitary or group gatherings. The veils between the spirit and physical worlds are at their thinnest on this night, allowing clear communication with our past loved ones, animal and human, our spirit guides and/or angels, and our own inner wisdom guides. Celebrations that include naming those passed, particularly female ancestors; gratitude

review of the past year's accomplishments, and a brief reflection on what you hope will be different for the coming new year are all good basics to start from, with plenty of room to add your own personal flare.

Samhain is a High Holiday for Wiccans, with a lot of deeper historical meanings and room for many levels of celebration and reverence. The Old Ones did many things right in their "old ways," and following the turn of

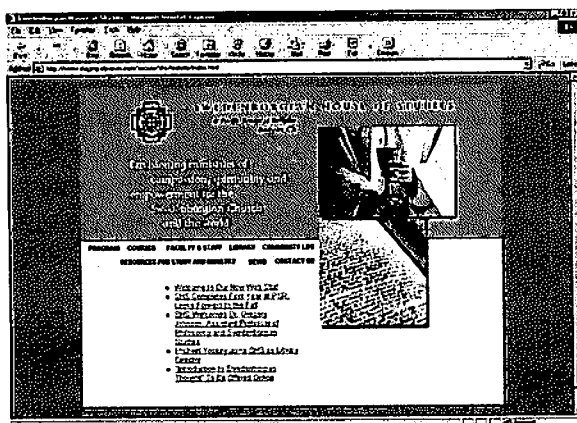
the seasons, reverence for our ancestors before us and the New Year on November 1 are a few of my favorites. Take time this season to connect with your reserves of love and compassion by remembering the true cycle of all living things—death to rebirth.

Rebecca Elliot is a member of the Portland, Maine Swedenborgian Church. Reprinted from The Appleseed, October 2000, with permission of the author.



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.

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Thinking About Seminary?

The Swedenborgian House of Studies and Pacific School of Religion will host a Ministry as Vocation conference for prospective students November 15-16, 2002, in Berkeley, California. This will be an opportunity to explore your call to ministry and to find out about the educational programs offered by the Swedenborgian House of Studies at Pacific School of Religion. The registration fee is \$20.00. On-campus housing is available for \$20 per night. For more information, please call Kim Hinrichs at (800) 999-0528, extension 1228.



Ministry as Vocation attendees at SHS last November.

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Speakers/Dialog Partners throughout the event include at this time: Dr. Wilson Van Dusen, Rev. Dr. George Dole, Rev. Dr. Rachel Rivers, Jane Siebert, Dr. Gregory R. Johnson, and Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence

This event is funded by the Teagle Foundation in order to facilitate our church's knowledge of its seminary program. Funds will be available to support one representative from each church or center in the General Convention (though all who can attend will be welcomed). Each center will select its own representative to come to Berkeley. Both lay and clergy are encouraged to attend. Funded representatives will be asked to report their experience to their church or center membership.

Look for invitations coming to your center soon!

For more information, please contact Kim Hinrichs, Program Director at SHS:
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