

THE MESSENGER

Published by the Swedenborgian Church of North America

April 2003



Leadership that Empowers the Soul and Changes the Organization

"Leadership is congruent self-expression that creates value."

Twenty-First Century Leadership

Eric Allison

As most of you know my job was church growth consultant for our denomination for over ten years. Part of my job was to learn the newest methods for helping the church. Lately I've come across two schools of thought which I believe can really help us. If I had one wish, it would be to have known this ten years ago. I'd go so far as to say that if every convention leader took the training, they would see our church with new eyes, and leadership style would certainly change. I think we would all have a faith lift and feel that the Lord was leading us.

Last fall I took the six-day training program of Twenty-First Century Leadership. It was by far the best workshop I have ever attended. I will explain the principles on which it is based. The second school of thought, Servant Leadership, was introduced to me recently by the Rev. Gardiner Perry. Both concepts of leadership fit together perfectly, and they are in my judgment very Swedenborgian because ultimately we work in a deliberate way to have the Lord as our leader.

Servant Leadership

What is servant Leadership? The idea originated with Jesus but came alive in the modern world through an IBM executive named Robert Greenleaf. The concept steps totally away from the productivity model of business. Like most churches, we have embraced a hierarchal business model. I pushed for years that every church have a goal to accept a certain number of new members every year. I pushed that we measure the productivity of churches and give the most assistance to those that produced the most. As Dr. Phil would say "How's that working for ya?" It didn't and it doesn't. Why? Because it flies in the face of the model Jesus laid out for us. Jesus could have used his power to accomplish tangible goals. He did not. He would not use his power

because it would go against the new model he was trying to show us. When Peter cut off the ear of the soldier, what did Jesus do? He scolded Peter and put the ear back on. Look through every business management text on the planet and you won't find anything like the following:

"You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wished to be first among you shall be slave of all." Mark 10:42-44

So, the greatest leader ever was also the greatest servant. That's what I call a paradigm shift. I know everyone in every leadership position in Convention. I can say that I love all of you and know you want the best for the church and you've been knocking yourself out to make things happen. Good things have happened. We have amazingly talented and devoted people who have done and continue to do wonderful things.

It is also true that a lot of us are discouraged and fearful of the future. We are still asking, "Why isn't this working?" or "Why isn't that working better than it is?" "This is great stuff. Why aren't we growing?" I believe that the underlying angst we feel will remain with us until we clearly define our mission and have a real passion for bringing it to others to empower them to serve. It is not-enough just to bring the world truth. In the *Convention Journal* our mission is described—"to help people be open to the Lord's presence and leading, especially by fostering personal and ordained ministries which facilitate the spiritual well-being of people, and which have in common a working for the Lord in bringing in the New Age, the descent of the Holy City New Jerusalem." I believe it, but I can't say that it inspires me. I question, is that really our mission?

We have never clearly defined what the spiritual well-being of people means nor have we defined how we work with the Lord in bringing in the New Age. I'm not suggesting that we have another committee to come up with a mission statement. While we can always improve the structure, I believe that the changes we must make are not structural changes, they are spiritual changes within each of us and as a group. One place I suggest we start is in how we run our meetings. If our meetings actually are for the purpose of fulfilling our mission they

(Continued on page 51)

IN THIS ISSUE:

Voices Within • 2003 Convention Mini-Courses • Nominating Committee Report
Pre-Convention Program • Southwest Florida Update • Love's Forgiveness • Letters to the Editor

The Voices Within... Whose will We Listen To?



John Maine

John Maine

Last month I went downtown with Catherine and Joshua to attend the big peace demonstration. When we got to Churchill

Square there were already several hundred people gathered, and soon there were thousands more. All kinds of organizations were represented, and this was particularly true of the churches. I saw banners for the Lutherans, Catholics, Anglicans, Unitarians, and others. (It made me wish I'd thought to make a banner for our church, but then I wondered what it should say: Swedenborgians for Peace? War has No Correspondence to Heaven? A New Church with a Better Way? If you have any ideas, please let me know!)

But it wasn't just the presence of fellow pilgrims on the Way that warmed my heart. It was that whole magnificent mix of humanity, all come together in the name of a high ideal. Young people with faces painted in peace symbols, a sea of homemade signs with moving and sometimes hilarious messages printed on them, breathless volunteers handing out pamphlets and flyers, small groups singing, dancing, and clapping in time. Everyone sharing this public space together with an easy warmth and friendliness. And what wondrous diversity! The young and the old, male and female, black, white, yellow, and brown, with different languages spoken on this side and that—the whole place teeming with life and positive energy. All different voices, but all united for the cause of peace, understanding, and love.

All united? Well, sort of. Because I could soon see that there were people there who had quite different views from mine on peace and how to achieve it. I saw one older lady—the very epitome of

a sweet grandma, with a kind face and gray hair tucked neatly in a bun—busily handing out flyers to passersby. On closer inspection, these flyers proved to be for a Marxist-Leninist group calling for some kind of “class war against U.S. imperialism.” I looked at them and looked at her and shook my head. Oh well! I thought, I guess it takes all kinds, and there are bound to be some to whom you just have to say, “No thanks, that isn't the way I want to go!”

Soon the march itself got underway and we were off, singing and chanting with the rest or listening as some in the crowd played drums or flutes or guitars. It once again felt so good to be there, to be part of this amazing, impromptu, community of peace.

But then it happened.

A strapping young fellow just in front of us suddenly raised the bullhorn he was carrying and screamed into it: “1 — 2 — 3 — 4; We don't want yer bloody war!” His face was contorted, and his voice was like a howl of rage and defiance as he shouted out this slogan again and again. You could practically feel his fury, his lust for violent confrontation with an unseen enemy. I was shocked. It was like being suddenly struck in the face. And to hear this voice in the midst of a peace march, while people talked and laughed and made music, seemed both grotesque and obscene. I hadn't come for this, I thought to myself, to protest violence with more violence, to raise up hatred instead of love. And yet already, in (somewhat halfhearted) obedience to that voice, I could hear behind me people taking up that chant. I guess they were following along because the voice was loud and strong, and repeating what the voice said was somehow expected.

Well, I happened to look over to my left, and there was a man walking along holding the hand of a little boy. Our eyes met and I found myself saying to him with a nod towards the fellow with the bullhorn, “I don't think we want to go along with that.” The man's face broke into a wide grin and he nodded and said, “You're right! We don't!” And thereafter we (and others around us) ignored the big, loud, angry voice and instead sang or chanted other slogans.

I have since thought a lot about that

peace demonstration and about that particular episode. I don't regret for a moment being a part of the march. I believe in peace, mutuality, and understanding, and I believe it's important to join your voice with others. But what about those voices that rise up that you don't want to hear? This question has made me think about the many different voices within ourselves. Perhaps each of us is like a peace demonstration: there are a lot of wonderful voices in us, a lot of beauty to be shared and songs to be heard. But there are also some loud voices that demand to be obeyed, voices of anger, resentment, fear, and hatred. They can pop up at the most awkward or inappropriate times, times when we don't even expect them or think they could be there.

That's when we have a decision to make. We need to be aware of these voices in us and then firmly say No! to them. Of course that isn't easy. They're loud and persuasive, and they may try to shout down our objections. But that's when we can ask the Lord's help, for our desire to say no to the anger and fear in us is already proof that the Lord is there,

(Continued on page 62)

THE MESSENGER

Publisher: The Communications Support Unit
Published monthly, except July and August, by the Swedenborgian Church of North America (founded 1817, incorporated 1861 as the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America).

April 2003
Volume 224 No. 4
Whole Number 5279

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The opinions of the contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or the Communications Support Unit, or represent the position of the church. Subscription free to members of the Swedenborgian Church; non-members, \$12.00 a year; foreign \$15.00 a year; gift subscription from a member, \$5.00 a year; single copies \$1.00.

Deadline for material: Six weeks before the first day of the month of issue.

Leadership that Empowers the Soul and Changes the Organization

(Continued from cover)

should be much more different from the meeting of a secular board than they now are. Every meeting we have should spiritually charge those involved, bring the people closer together and empower us in the conviction that the Lord is actively guiding us. There are many ways that this can be done but I won't go into details here. For the moment use your own God-given imagination. If the Lord ran your board what would it be like?

Lay our Burdens Down

A great first step is to lay our burdens down. We must let go of our fear about our survival. Like any person with problems we are so self-focused that we are having trouble seeing beyond ourselves. Success is not measured by how many people join our church or by how much the giving increases. Success is measured by the satisfaction we receive from serving the Lord by serving others. We can't get much more Swedenborgian than that. If we refuse to lay our burdens down, then we use others to take away the pain of our existence. Our burden becomes light when we set it down to serve the Lord as he served us. We have to let go of the ambiguous clergy-centered agenda. We have to let go of the model of decisions being made by a few and we need a more democratic Convention.

Secondly, our goal must be to serve people so that they can serve others. If they are weak, we serve them so that they can develop the strength to serve others. This is not offering "doormat theology." We do not honor God by throwing pearls before swine. We do not honor God by burning ourselves out doing programs to help. We honor God by giving in a way that empowers the giver and the receiver.

Servant Leadership is explained in detail in a book by Stacy T. Rineheart entitled *Upside Down*.

The second model of leadership which has been a great help to me is the model of Twenty-First Century Leadership. I believe it can very specifi-

cally help us discover and own our gifts, help us lay our burdens down and empower us to accept and express the fullness of our leadership. So let's shift gears and get into the nuts and bolts of what I learned last fall during six days of intensive leadership training.

Twenty-first century leadership rests on the foundation of three simple concepts. Three key ideas are at the core of leadership:

1. Most people want to help others;
2. Most people tend to help the people they think they know the best and to whom they feel the closest; and,
3. The sole job of leaders is to produce the change necessary to obtain the desired result. Despite the streak of rugged individualism that runs through all of us, leaders need all the help they can get to create the changes, and the results, they want.

The responsibility of leaders, then, is to allow their "people" to know and feel close to them." (Taken from the context associated website.)

At the very beginning of the course participants agree to accept a list of clear guidelines for communication with each other and are invited to plumb the depths with each other and reach a new level of honesty and openness as a gift to each other. There is a long list of guidelines for communication, but I will share only a few of them here.

1. I take ownership for everything I say.
2. I speak in first person present tense.
3. I say honestly what I see.
4. I report honestly how something makes me feel. For example I might say "I feel scared when you talk loudly like that. The story I made up in my head is that you don't want to hear what I have to say."
5. I hold others as able. I do not rescue but with the person's permission I offer help.

Stand and Stoop

A central dogma is that we all have a fulfilling use to perform. Tied in with this is necessary acknowledgment that we are all wounded to some degree.

Our wound from early life plays a major role in stopping us from expressing our "stand" in life and feeds the hellish energy of our "stoop."

Stand

Our "stand" is the position of strength which inspires us and others. It is not an idle wish. In Swedenborgian terms it is our "use." It is our contribution to the world, our gift. It is fulfilling. It is the best of who we are at our core when we are in our sacred place. It is our positive response to our wound as well as our contribution to the world. A process lasting several days helps each person determine their stand so it can be written in a few words which captures us at our best. My stand is Explorer of Spirit, Messenger of Insight. At my best I inspire people with an insightful New Church message. What is your stand?

Martin Luther said "Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise." While we have serious theological bones to pick with Luther, we cannot argue that he did not take his stand.

Stoop & Juice

What is the stoop? It is not necessarily the opposite of our stand, but it can be. It is not necessarily evil. It is the dark side of us that is not likely to go away, and it deserves compassion. Swedenborg says we "push it to the side." It is the position of weakness that creates separation from others. It believes that being right is more important than building relationship. It is self-sabotage at its best and often contradicts our most cherished values. You may feel embarrassed about your stoop but not repugnant about it. It should be captured in a few words; ideally others would chuckle when they hear it. My stoop is "Sir Pompous Picky - Self-Righteous Separator of Souls." What I had to admit to myself was that I got "juice" out of pointing out how others were wrong. I got "juice" out of not only being right but being in control and even getting angry.

(Continued on page 52)

Leadership that Empowers the Soul and Changes the Organization

(Continued from page 51)

What is your stoop?

What is "juice"? It is a real energy we all need. It is a certain level of intensity of interaction. It can be positive or negative. We get wonderful juice from helping someone or doing something really well which expresses our stand. Juice can be intimate or it can create huge distances between people. Everyone, and especially leaders, need to look deep inside and see all the places that give them "juice." So, there is good juice and bad juice.

What I learned is that when I am not putting enough energy into expressing my stand, I get sucked into stoop energy. For example, if I allow myself to get buried in the many administrative details that come across my desk, I stop putting energy into how I can inspire others. I stop connecting with them on a deeper level. I get all wrapped up in the externals. It doesn't take long until Sir Pompous Picky rears his ugly head.

Due to Convention financial constraints, our Puget Sound church budget was cut \$12,000. We had just a bit more than a month's notice. We could no longer afford a part-time assistant. So most of my worst nightmare was given to me. Sir Pompous was ready to take control, and it was a difficult time for me because I was pretty much stuck doing a lot of things I didn't like and was not good at. It was very hard to honor my stand and easy to get into my stoop. However, I know the territory, and it was and still is a mission to get rid of as many of the things as possible which drag me down so that I can honor God and myself with my gift. The congregation has been very supportive about helping with the details. Ask yourself what gives you juice?

Wound

We are all wounded, some more than others. It is very helpful to learn what our wound is. We all have to do mechanical things we would rather avoid. Our wound is the early emo-

tional spiritual damage that told us that we are less than we are. My wound is that my sense of significance was damaged. The result was that I have been driven to be significant. That's the good news and the bad news. When I work as servant leader expressing my stand, it's great. When I latch onto things which fuel my fears, I am in my stoop and *whoa Nellie*.

Success

I had never really thought about what makes something successful. Do you have a definition of success? I learned that success for me is when I am connecting, exhilarated, contributing, and acknowledging. Whatever I am involved in—if those qualities are present—it is successful and fulfilling my stand (use).

The Four Unworkable Positions

When I think of "laying down the burden," what comes to mind is the four unworkable positions. When we focus our energy toward serving in a way that is fulfilling, everything else disappears. But I could sure see how I had allowed myself to latch on to any or all of these positions at one time or another.

1. Being right is more important than building the relationship.
2. If it ("X") hadn't happened, I could now have what I want.
3. When "X" happens, then I can be happy.
4. The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.

The Tenets of the Leadership Covenant

Those who take the twenty-first century leadership course are asked to commit to memory the tenets of the leadership covenant. I still say them every day. My comments about each tenet are written in italics.

1. As a leader I participate fully. *Most of us are leaders in some capacity. However, even those who never lead will find life more fulfilling if they don't hold back—if they participate with their*

whole being in every event. I have found in my spiritual life that I can experience how God is present only if I am fully participating in the moment, if I am aware and acknowledging the reality of God's presence.

2. As a leader I tell myself the truth and frequently ask the question, **What am I pretending not to know?** *Swedenborg tells us that the first step in the continuing process of regeneration is to honestly examine where we are in life. What issues are we avoiding?*

3. As a Leader I keep my word and honor my commitments. *To genuinely lead, a person must have a high level of integrity. People will not follow a leader who can not be trusted. They also will not follow a person who is designated as the leader but doesn't seem to be going anywhere.*

4. As a leader I remain 100% accountable. *When things are not going well in a church or in any situation, there is always the temptation to look for someone else or some thing to blame. The success of the church (by my definition of success) is largely the responsibility of the leader.*

5. As a leader I am compassionate with myself and with others. I remember that we are all wounded. *Beating ourselves up and putting down others does nothing to serve God, others, or ourselves. When our energy goes into looking at what is wrong we see too little of what is right.*

6. As a leader I fully express the "stand" that I am in life. *If we are expressing the essence of our being, then we shine. I think it even changes our posture and we stand taller.*

7. As a leader I constructively actualize my definition of success. *I have been applying my definition of success to our Sunday service and other programs. It has amazed me to realize how I could have programs which did not meet my definition of success and then repeat the programs.*

8. As a leader I include my people in my life. I know who they are. *Leader-*

(Continued on page 53)

Drop by Drop, May We Fill with Peace

Dear Editor,

Reading the issues of *The Messenger* month by month during the past year has been a source of particular gratification and elucidation for me. Having in mind that all religion relates to life, and that so much of our daily life has been dominated by the possibility that our nation will instigate war, I think all of us have very much needed the fine articles on war and peace that have helped us think and pray our way through the issues. My thanks go to the editor and to all the thoughtful writers who have struggled to come to terms with the teachings of the Bible and of Emanuel Swedenborg, not only on peace and war, but also on related issues of Judaism and Islam, justice, and the inner consciousness that motivates us.

These explorations have not led to any black and white doctrinaire conclusions, of course. We cannot with

TO THE EDITOR

integrity arrive at claims such as the United States faultlessly represents the kingdom of good while Iraq or Palestine or Israel or the Arabs are thoroughly evil. Nor do I hear claims that it is ungodly to defend ourselves when attacked, as in the case of our current war with Osama bin Laden and world terrorists, although some means being employed are in serious question.

What, then, about the more gray issues with which we are agonizingly faced? There is general agreement, even among many Arabs, that Saddam Hussein is an intolerable, abusive tyrant. But how could we in clear conscience respond to our fear of his threat by raining thousands of bombs on his innocent and already suffering subjects in high density urban areas, especially when he has not first attacked us?

We read in *Divine Providence* 251:

It is not from the Divine Providence that wars occur, because they involve murders, plunderings, violence, cruelties and other terrible evils which are diametrically opposed to Christian charity.

Rather, wars are perpetrated as a result of corrupt free will. (*True Christian Religion* 479)

This suggests that we do well to be prepared to respond if attacked by an enemy nation like Iraq, but that we are morally bound to consider war only as a last resort, after all possible international diplomacy, inspections, and weapons destruction have failed.

And it is imperative that we avoid arrogant unilateralism and proceed only in cooperation with the United Nations. The primary reason for which the U. N. exists, according to its Charter, is "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind." (There are thirty two wars being waged in our world right now, according to Church World Service.) I believe our initiating

(Continued on page 54)

Leadership that Empowers the Soul and Changes the Organization

(Continued from page 52)

ship focuses on including. The more people that we include in our planning and leading, the more successful it will be. Jesus said "I am the good shepherd and I lay down my life for my sheep." Leaders let people get as close to them as they want and share in the responsibility and in the joy.

9. As a leader I keep my conversations constructive and aligned with my purpose. I do not gossip. It is so important to not get sucked into the funnel of negativity which devalues everyone and everything in the church.

10. As a leader I lead with cooperation. When faced with a lack of cooperation, I use the tit for tat strategy above line. Then continue to cooperate. When things get nasty and someone actively works to undermine the leader, the leader must confront the person and clearly outline the consequences for each action as it occurs. If they stop, then continue to cooperate.

11. As a leader I never take myself out of the game. The game? This isn't talking about being injured in competition and staying in stoic measure. The game is life. It is whatever program or activity which you are leading. Even if you decide to discontinue the program lead the closing-down process. Don't just walk away. Learn why it didn't work and what could have been done to make it work.

During the last several months I have worked hard at following the tenets of the leadership covenant, and it has been very helpful. What came out of all this training and reading and experimenting is that leadership is critical. Whether we want to be leaders or not we are sometimes put into that position. When we are leading we have been given a sacred trust. It is not just a job or position on a support unit or committee. It is not a place to push our vision. Leading is helping others to create a vision together. Leading is

helping others to own all the power heaven has given them and getting out of their way so they can do what God has called them to do. If we really are the Lord's servants the last shall be first, and people will be drawn to us not just because of what we believe but because of how we express our faith.

Thank you to the Ministries Support Unit (MINSU), the Boston church, The Swedenborgian House of Studies, and my local congregation for underwriting the cost of this training.

Those interested in taking the Leadership training can get details from www.contextassociated.com

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preemptive armed conflict could be seen as an expression of our own collective inner estrangement from the patterns of the heavens projected outward by us and writ large as our prevailing national spiritual state.

It is incumbent on a nation as privileged as ours to scrutinize our own motives and to find means more noble than brutality for responding to threatened violence from other nations, rather than imitating them. We could probably contribute far more to the welfare of the world through increased altruistic humanitarian projects in the Middle East than through waging a war that would destroy or maim thousands of our brothers and sisters there and might enrage our Arab neighbor nations for a long time to come, thus compromising our international legitimacy. Such aid would be crucial after we inflict destruction if we do attack Iraq, as with Afghanistan.

It has been a cause for encouragement to me to note that every statement I have seen on potential war issued by American church bodies has been along these lines, with the exception of claims made by some biblical literalists applauding the supposed current playing out of prophecy. The Christian message is a message of the Prince of Peace who is rarely served through waging war. When we become discouraged by our seeming inability to affect world movements, we should do well to hear the Buddha, who said, "Do not underestimate good, thinking it will not affect you. Dripping water can fill a pitcher, drop by drop; one who is wise is filled with good, even if one accumulates it little by little."

Our Lord, who wept over the people of Jerusalem whom he loved, also loves the people of Baghdad. I hope all of us who seek to be faithful as his agents will be steady in prayers for them and their leaders as well as for the leaders of our own land. Drop by drop, may we be peace.

—Foss Freeman
Portland, Oregon

Editor's Note: The Rev. Dr. Forster Freeman is a semi-retired Swedenborgian minister with dual clergy standing in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the United Church of Christ, and immediate past president of the Swedenborg Foundation. He lives in Portland, Oregon, with his wife Julia. He states, "By the way, it occurred to me that I've been a reader of *The Messenger* for over half a century, supposing that it's been published that long. My recollection is that Leslie Marshal edited it in Paterson, New Jersey, when I worked for him after school at about ages 12-14. He also gave me chores for the Mission Stamp Outlet and his work distributing pamphlets. I surely must have received some regeneration energy from my long-term reading of this good literature!"

Possible Swedenborgian Influence in Sebold Novel?

Dear Editor,

I am writing as one of your English readers to tell you how much I enjoy *The Messenger*. I particularly enjoyed the March 2003 number which has arrived here this week. I would like to single out for special mention Kelly Mahan Jaramillo's most moving review of Alice Sebold's novel, *The Lovely Bones*, a book which I have read recently on the recommendation of a friend who thought the author may have been influenced (perhaps indirectly) by Swedenborg's teachings. Kelly Mahan Jaramillo does not touch on this in her review, and Alice Sebold herself gives us no clue in the acknowledgments at the end of the book, but I would not be surprised to learn that there is some Swedenborgian influence here. *The Lovely Bones* has not been widely reviewed in the UK, although I found a copy without difficulty in my local bookshop. It is the kind of novel that may just send open (but enquiring)-minded readers in the direction of Swedenborg's teaching about the nature of the next world.

With regard to the Rev. Carl Yenetchi's most interesting historical article about George Frederick Root the hymn writer, I do have to point out that the portrait on the left hand side of page 40 labeled 'James Reed' is in

fact of the Rev. Frank Sewall, a powerful New Church theologian, preacher and writer of his day. Presumably, the bearded gentleman on the same page is James Reed?

Yours sincerely,

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(Continued on page 59)

DID YOU KNOW THAT?

Though Easter is one of the most significant Christian events, the origin of its name is unknown. The eighth-century English scholar, St. Bede, proposed that it probably comes from *Eastre*, the Anglo-Saxon name of a Teutonic goddess of spring and fertility, to whom was dedicated a month corresponding to April.

The first Easter parade was held by the order of Constantine the Great for the commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Easter egg has a very long heritage, originating in Persia more than five thousand years ago, where they used colored eggs as a celebration of spring and a memento of good wishes. The Greeks continued the tradition, later adding the symbolism of fertility. In ancient times, eggs were sometimes left in tombs as a charm to aid rebirth, or given to children to keep them healthy.

Easter rabbits have been popular in many cultures, including those of Japan and China where the rabbit is associated with the moon. Since the full moon is the symbol of fruitfulness, the rabbit delivers eggs and is a sign of fertility.

Reprinted from the April 2001 Swedenborg Chapel newsletter, Cleveland, Ohio.




ASK **SWEDENBORG**

Question: If Jesus was God, why did he plead from the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Answer: There were times in his life when the Lord *needed* to battle with and face every kind of temptation the hells could throw at him. Overcoming them gradually glorified his humanity (bringing Jesus's Divinity and humanity into oneness). Christ returned the evil and falsity from hell (entering his being from the humanity he inherited from Mary) with Divine love and truth from his internal affections, thoughts, words and behavior.

During his spiritual battles, Jesus had inwardly *receded* inside from the depths of Divine Love and Power entering inside his soul. This put him in a state of freedom to choose, and his choices were always for the good. Like you and me, his choices needed to *feel* very real. As an incarnate human being, the Lord often referred to his Divine Essence as "the Father" or "God." During spiritually high periods, when the joining of Divinity and humanness were happening, Jesus inwardly felt like God, and could say, "I and the Father are one and the same." But during inner battles, he himself actually *felt* more distant and separate inside. On the cross, Jesus felt *very* distant from his own Divinity, and was then quite capable of expressing his pleading cry quoted above. In order to redeem us, he needed to experience the most desperate moments that people can face, and then choose to remain faithful and true.

From the Rev. Kit Billings, pastor of the St. Louis Swedenborgian Church; reprinted from the May/June 2000 *Correspondences*, the newsletter of the Virginia Street church in St. Paul. (Rev. Billings wrote "Ask Swedenborg" as a regular feature in the Virginia St. newsletter when he was pastor in St. Paul.) Readers are invited to send doctrinal questions to *The Messenger* editor, and they will be given to Kit or another of our knowledgeable ministers for response. Lay persons and ministers are also invited to send comments on the responses for discussion in *The Messenger*. 

HOW U.S. RELIGIOUS BODIES STAND ON A POSSIBLE WAR WITH IRAQ

Editor's Note: The Rev. Ron Brugler, president of our denomination, writes "*We were among the denominations in the NCCC to express concern about the U.S. becoming more and more militaristic. We signed onto their statement to slow the rush to war.*" (See statements below, reprinted from an Associated Press release, February 27, 2003.)

National Council of Churches (November):

Its assembly, representing 36 "mainline" Protestant and Orthodox denominations, was "deeply disturbed" about possible strikes. It said the United States is "increasingly militaristic and unilateral" and commended work through the United Nations to ensure Iraq's compliance "without going to war."

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (February):

Reaffirming a November statement from all U.S. bishops, the group's president said "it is difficult to justify resort to war against Iraq, lacking clear and adequate evidence of an imminent attack of a grave nature" or of Iraq's involvement in the Sept. 11 attacks.

Southern Baptists Convention (January):

Social-issues spokesman Richard Land said it is "only a matter of time" before al-Qaida uses Iraqi weapons against America, so "we have a right to defend our allies and ourselves," with or without the United Nations. But war should be a last resort and minimize civilian casualties.

United Methodist Church (October):

Its Board of Church and Society advocated peaceful U.N. efforts to disarm Iraq and concluded, "We do not believe that war would achieve a safer or better world."

Conservative Judaism (November): The United Synagogue supported eliminating Iraq's weaponry through continued U.N. diplomacy.

Orthodox Judaism (February): The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations' chief executive said it would fully support as a "just war" any U.S. military action "required to eradicate this evil."

Reform Judaism (September): Union of American Hebrew Congregations leaders said the United States should pursue international support and nonmilitary options but—if necessary, and if Congress approves—it would "support unilateral military action."

Islam (January): The American Muslim Alliance, American Muslim Council, Council on American-Islamic Relations and Muslim Public Affairs Council jointly urged Saddam Hussein to resign and President Bush to bar military action, which would destabilize the region, build support for terrorism, fuel anti-Americanism, endanger soldiers "for no convincing reason" and cost "many innocent Iraqi lives."



News Flash from Southwest Florida

At its annual meeting on March 2, The New Church of Southwest Florida received and accepted the resignation of the Rev. Dick Tafel as its minister, effective August 31, 2003. The church members then voted to issue a call to the Rev. Nadine Cotton to become its new minister, effective August 1, 2003. Nadine has accepted the call verbally by phone, and a written contact has been mailed to her.

Nadine and her husband Jeff had spent a week here in January exploring the possibilities of her serving as minister for this community-based church. She has a good understanding of our ministry here, as she was immersed in the Kids' VIP After-School Program and the distribution of the free daily bread. We look forward to her leadership as our young church begins a new chapter. Dick had indicated earlier that if a new minister so desired, he would stay around as a volunteer and help with community presence, publicity, and fundraising. Nadine did in fact request that Dick be available for a few months to help with these behind-the-scenes contacts and processes that are so important to the unique situation

here. Then Dick and Linda will be off on their retirement adventures.

Block Grant Awarded

On March 13, after many months of hard work, The New Church of Southwest Florida received a signed commitment for a Community Development Block Grant from the Town of Fort Myers Beach in the amount of \$12,000, beginning in March of this year. This effort, begun early last fall, has finally come to fruition. This is another important and successful step in our church's march to balancing our budget.

To be self-sustaining, churches must have a large contributing membership, or a large endowment fund, or a huge yearly fundraiser, or building rental income, or a large, successful wedding ministry, or other outside source of income. Since our programs focus on community needs, we have turned to the community for financial support. Our income is derived from pledges from our small committed core group, sales from our thrift store, fundraisers, targeted corporate and community giving, Kids' VIP-generated income, gifts

in kind, and denominational support that continues in a sunsetting process. We now have added grants as a fundraising tool. Another grant proposal has been submitted that we are waiting to hear about from the Southwest Florida Foundation. We are also in dialogue with another Southwest Florida governmental agency, and hopefully we will be asked to submit a formal application.

Regardless of the outcomes on these other requests, we have landed our first grant, which you know is the hardest to get. Our motto of "We walk amongst the people" has proved prophetic as we have brought the ministry of the Lord's redeeming love to the byways and back alleys of the Beach. This has brought acceptance of our ministry, trust in what we do and say, and a community financial response in return. We do not know what opportunities tomorrow may bring but we are positioning ourselves to be ready to respond!

—Rev Dick and Linda Tafel
Ft. Myers Beach, Florida



Love's Forgiveness has the Final Word

Renee Billings Machiniak

"In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart. I simply can't build up my hopes on a foundation consisting of confusion, misery, and death. I see the world gradually being turned into a wilderness. I hear the ever-approaching thunder, which will destroy us, too. I can feel the suffering of millions, and yet, if I look up into the heavens, I think that it will all come right, that this cruelty will end, and that peace and tranquility will return again."

—Anne Frank

The words of Anne Frank inspire and challenge us still today in our changing and uncertain world. Her faith and vision coming out of the darkness and torture of WWII encourage us to pause and reexamine our own faith and trust

in God's higher providence for our lives and the lives of everyone today.

Anne Frank (1929-1945), a German-Jewish girl, wrote an honest and powerful diary while hiding with her family from the Nazis during World War II. Eventually, Anne died in the Nazi concentration camp at Belsen in March of 1945. We continue to learn much from her writings about the triumph of love over hate and death.

We understand by looking into the lessons of the past that, at different times, confusion, misery and death indeed have had their day; hatred, pride and cruelty continue to find a temporary home in the cellars of unchecked appetites and motives that, if left unattended, grow cold and contrary to Life itself. But history also teaches us that confusion, misery and death are temporary condi-

tions; that Life prevails in the long run and Love is the strongest force in the universe and always will be.

During this Lent and Easter season, we try to reframe our lives, to position them inside a new picture frame, one that moves us to see the power of God, the power of Love itself moving wisely according to the colors and contours of our experiences and fears, our strengths and gifts, and our God-given purpose.

Lent is a good time to pause, to eat the bread and drink the wine of God's presence, whether in solitude on a late-winter evening or in the sacrament of Communion with others on Sunday morning.

Communion is a ritual that helps us remember the Lord with us; it helps us

(Continued on page 60)

Editor's Note: *The Rev. Ken Turley, pastor of the Fryeburg New Church in Maine, wrote this article for his church's April 2002 newsletter, a few months before the Maine Association hosted the annual convention in the Portland area. It is such an interesting and inviting description of what takes place at convention—tangible and intangible—that we have reprinted it here to encourage new members to take the plunge and attend their first convention.*

Try Convention— You May Like It!

Ken Turley

It may not seem like it when you look out the window, but with the celebration of Easter we have turned a major corner in the church year. From this point on we look forward to spring, the end of the school year, the coming of summer. And right at the juncture between spring and summer comes the annual convention.

I know for some of you that word "convention" brings up many memories of travels to new places and visiting old friends, of meetings and mini-courses, of fabulous outings and deeply moving worship services. And yet for many of you the word brings up nothing but a big question mark. Well, it is my hope that by July that will have changed.

Each year the denomination of which our congregation is a part holds a get-together. For those who don't quite get the terminology think of it this way: the people of our little church here in Fryeburg make up a congregation, while our church and the people in similar little churches all across the country together make up a big church called a denomination. So, our convention is a denominational gathering of representatives from our sister congregations all across the continent. That get-together of people from congregations all across the country helps keep our denomination going. It keeps the organizational wheels spinning as groups like the Council of Ministers and General Council meet; support units, which are small committees doing work in a variety of areas within church life, have a chance to cross-pollinate

The Swedenborgian Church's Nominating Committee Report for 2003

The Nominating Committee is pleased to present this year's slate of nominees. In addition to the officers, General Council, support unit and board members, we are charged this year with presenting a nominee for president-elect.

The president-elect will be voted this year to take office with the conclusion of the annual convention session in 2004 for a three-year term. We are presenting as nominee for president-elect Christine Laitner.

We are taking this new step in accordance with the provision in the Constitution and bylaws that the president of General Convention may be a lay person, in which event the chair of the Council of Ministers is to serve as ordaining minister.

It will be evident from her autobiographical statement (to be published in the May 2003 *Messenger*) that Chris Laitner is eminently qualified for this position. We are also again nominating Chris for vice-president, to serve from 2003 through the conclusion of the 2004 convention.

Nominating Committee:

*Chair: Rev. F. Robert Tafel, Mass. 2003
Linda Kraus, Kansas, 2004
Steve Thomas, Canada, 2005
Mary Crenshaw, Nevada 2006
Laurie Turley, Maine, 2007*



ideas with other committees and folks that they otherwise would never see; and the delegates and representatives from each congregation attend business sessions where questions and issues are presented and discussed, and decisions are made that plot the course of our church and our churches.

But besides the business of the church—and perhaps even more importantly—something else takes place at our convention. It is during this week-long event that people from all around the continent have a chance to meet

(Continued on page 58)

The Slate

President-elect: Elected 2003 to take office 2004 for a 3-year term ending 2007

•• Chris Laitner

Vice-president: 1-year term

•• Chris Laitner

Recording Secretary: 1-year term

•• Gloria Toot

Treasurer: 1-year term

•• Lawrence Conant

General Council: 3-year terms

Lay persons: (two to be elected)

•• James Erickson

•• Sandy Siebert Degi

Minister:

•• Rev. Lee Woofenden

Communications Support Unit

(COMSU): 3-year term

•• Nancy Apple

Education Support Unit (EDSU):

3-year term

•• Katie Shelley

Financial & Physical Resources Support Unit (FPRSU): 3-year term:

•• Leo Serrano

Ministries Support Unit (MINSU):

3-year term (two to be elected)

•• Mark Allen

•• Rev. Richard Tafel

Information Management Support Unit (IMSU): 3-year term

•• Rev. Lee Woofenden

Nomination Committee : 5-year

term (2 nominated, 1 elected)

•• Rev. Jonathan Mitchell

•• Patte LeVan

Committee on Admission into the

Ministry (CAM): 1-year term

Minister

•• Rev. Susan Turley

Lay Person:

•• Rachel Lyn Rumson

Swedenborgian House of Studies

(SHS) Board: 3-year term (two to be

elected)

•• Robert Leas

•• Herb Ziegler



2003 Convention Mini-Courses

Swedenborg, Freemasonry, and Jewish Mysticism—

Gregory R. Johnson (2 sessions)

In recent years, there has been scholarly debate on whether or not Swedenborg was a Freemason and whether or not he knew of, and was influenced by, the Jewish mystical tradition. This course provides an introduction to these controversies and reviews the evidence and arguments offered by both sides.

Feminist Theology, Swedenborgianism and the Goddess Tradition—

Kim Hinrichs and Jennifer Tafel

What elements do Feminist Theology and the Goddess tradition share with our Swedenborgian roots? Join Kim and Jenn for a fascinating dialogue that explores the true faith of our mothers.

Serving the Church: Training for Lay and Ordained Ministry—

Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence and Kim Hinrichs

We are all called to serve God in our own unique way. Join this discussion to find out about ways in which you might serve your church or denomination by developing your own gifts. The Swedenborgian House of Studies has a wealth of information to share on how you might further your education in Swedenborgian theology, spirituality and ministry for lay and ordained positions.

Safe Youth Worker Practices—

Kurt Fekete

This course will focus on practical steps to improve the safety and security of your church environment for youth and youth workers. We will look at basic policies and practices to put in place to allow you to safely and confidently work with children in youth groups, Sunday School, youth overnights, outings, and retreats. We will also discuss some actions that can be immediately implemented at your church to help strengthen the safety of

your youth programs and minimize the risk associated with youth work.

Church risk assessment, risk management, and liability will also be briefly covered. All those individuals with questions or concerns about the safety of working with youth in the church or those who are interested in learning more about the risk and liability aspects of youth work should definitely attend.

Youth Retreat Organization and Planning—Kurt Fekete

All the basics of how to plan and organize a youth outing or retreat including event facility selection, theme, staffing, forms, promotion, cost, food, schedule and logistics. Emphasis will be on the pre-event nuts and bolts, not on how to directly facilitate a youth program and/or work with children and teens. If you are interested in leading or participating in youth overnights or extended events outside of the Sunday morning church environment, then this course is for you!

Spiritual Regeneration in the Music of the Beatles: How Popular Music Can Make For Popular Worship!—

Members of the Committee on Worship

Our churches in Fryeburg, Maine, and West Chester, Pennsylvania, have shared in worship using the music of the Beatles to illuminate the spiritual process of regeneration. Come join the Revs. Susannah Currie, Ken Turley, and others in exploring how popular

styles of music—both live and recorded—can bring new life to your worship.

POOHSU

Join Jenn Tafel and other A.A. Milne devotees in this annual meeting to explore the spirituality of Pooh (sponsored by the Sunday School Association).

An Overview of Swedenborg's Theology—Students from the Swedenborg House of Studies at PSR

Some of our theological students will discuss COMSU's new J. Appleseed publication written by the Rev. Dr. Robert H. Kirven. Some of the questions considered will be: Where does evil come from? In what sense did the Lord save the world? Where is the spiritual world?

Nurturing Ourselves: Using Aromatherapy to Care for Body, Mind and Spirit—Pat Sommer

Put the ancient art of using essential oils to work for you in this hands-on workshop. You will come away with a new understanding of this alternative therapy and its applications, informative handouts and recipes, as well as an aromatherapy product that you will create to fit your personal wellness needs.

Editor's Note: There may be additional mini-courses listed in the upcoming May Messenger. Watch for them!



Try Convention—You May Like It! (Continued from page 57)

and share experiences and ideas and feelings and take what they have learned back to their home churches. Meeting someone from Kansas who has been a lifelong member of the church, or meeting someone from Seattle who has only just started attending the church there, or sitting next to the president of the denomination at lunch, or getting into a conversation with someone who turns out to be the minister's spouse from the church in Florida—these are the kinds of experiences which keep the church, at the denominational and the congregational level, and even at the individual level, alive and growing. It is a wonderful and uplifting event and I hope each of you will come and experience it for yourself. It could change your life. At the very least it will leave you with some pleasant memories.



From SHS Open House to Meditation for World Peace

Ann V. Graber

Proudly I wore my name tag that stated I was representing the St. Louis church at the Open House weekend hosted by the Swedenborg House of Studies (SHS), November 8-11, 2002, in Berkeley, California. It was personally a very meaningful experience to see the beautiful campus of the Pacific School of Religion where SHS is an integral part; to listen to Wilson Van Dusen, George Dole, and a distinguished panel; and, to participate in discussions with many who have fond recollections or have had former connections with the Church of the Open Word, such as the Rev. and Mrs. Garrett, Diana Kirven Stickney, Rachel Rivers, and Jim Lawrence. Upon my return there was an immediate opportunity (during our annual meeting in late November) to give an oral report to our congregation, and to convey the greetings sent by many.

Since the January issue of *The Messenger* carried such detailed and excellent coverage of the event, instead of reporting on the program, I would rather focus on the issues that were less explicitly stated, but implied throughout the weekend. The overarching theme of the event and the challenge posed to the participants seemed to be: How do we make religion real to people today? How do we nurture a living faith? How do we foster the experience of an inner reality that is deeply meaningful? These were seen as the task of the church now. In the past, the aphorism was, "Swedenborg said..." The teachings themselves seemed enough. Now and in the future, it will have to be, "What are we going to do with what Swedenborg said?" Today people want more than to be taught about God or to be told what to believe. They want to experience God. In this regard Wilson Van Dusen is historically positioned as an excellent interpreter of Swedenborg to us. Not only is he the most widely read author on Swedenborg, but also his personal experiences further vali-

date that the "inner world" is real.


Swedenborgian theology is uniquely able to address issues of "inner" and "outer" authority, as well as ecumenical issues. It is inclusive in its stance toward all religions and their faithful. It speaks of the *Church Universal* of which all are members by virtue of their humanity; and it speaks of the *Church Specific* to which individuals may choose to belong for their spiritual growth—according to their particular spiritual developmental needs. These needs will also be apparent in the approach to worship different people have. Most of us are very familiar with the more active form of worship consisting of prayer, song, reading of the Word, and teaching delivered through a sermon—our Sunday worship service. We are less familiar with reflective forms of worship—called meditation by some. It is a way of cultivating inner stillness where we can hear the answers to our prayers. We worship in order to experience nearness to God and to gather strength and wisdom so we can serve our fellow human beings. One form of worship complements the other. Some temperaments need active worship, while others prefer the reflective way. Scripture records many instances in the life of Jesus when he withdrew from the crowd (or the companionship of his apostles) to be alone in order to commune with the Father. He also worshiped in the Synagogue and the Temple.

Inspired by what I saw, heard and experienced at the SHS Open House, I hoped we would be able to implement some of the visionary ideas in our St. Louis church. An opportunity arose when we learned about the Meditation for World Peace. It was hoped that one billion people worldwide could be motivated to hold the focus for peace (synchronized throughout all 24 time zones for the world) on December 30th. This was a global community event to which the Church of the Open Word opened its doors gladly and invited everyone to participate.

Encouraged by our good turnout and the wonderful ensuing atmosphere of peace and joy experienced during our Meditation for World Peace, I am happy to know that henceforth our church will offer both the traditional Sunday morning worship service and, in addition, a reflective worship (meditation) once a month on a regular basis.

Thank you, Open Word friends, for allowing me to represent you at the SHS Open House. I feel our consequent spiritual outreach through the Meditation for World Peace was directly inspired by the prevailing spirit at the Open House. I am deeply grateful that enthusiastic action was taken (on very short notice) by our dear pastor, Kit Billings, and some church members to make this a meaningful event for many participants. And, most particularly, for incorporating the "reflective worship" as a standing feature into our church calendar. May the grace of the Lord be upon us.

Ann V. Graber is a Ph.D. diplomate of the Viktor Frankl Institute and a member of the Church of the Open Word, our Swedenborgian church in St. Louis. Ms. Graber is also the author of a new book, Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy: Method of Choice in Ecumenical Pastoral Psychology, published by Wyndham Hall Press.

Reprinted with permission from the February/March Newsletter, a bi-monthly publication of the Church of the Open Word: The Garden Chapel. 


TO THE
EDITOR

(Continued from page 54)

Dear Patte,

Steve Koke's article in the March *Messenger* was very interesting to me. I felt he did an excellent job with an overview of illusive Truth. I also appreciated your human interest story about the handyman. One wonders why some people just refuse to "get it together," no matter how many chances they get. I hope, and pray, that this opportunity sticks for him.

Thank you again for the wonderful job you do of *The Messenger*. It is a true gift that you have and share with all of us.

Jane Siebert
Pretty Prairie, Kansas 

Love's Forgiveness has the Final Word

(Continued from page 56)

remember the power of Love Incarnate. Just a little bread, a little wine—but they are a powerful reminder to those of us who still confuse bread with stones, who think that even free gifts involve some kind of price tag. These symbols remind us that God is present with us, even after we have gone astray and even as we stray. We may push love away, but love doesn't give up; it strives and strives to reach us, to welcome us back, back to ourselves. Easter's message is this: that Love's forgiveness has the final word, suffering and death do not. Love, though quiet and gentle, is infinitely stronger than its opposite.

So, when we take time to quiet our minds, to reexamine our lives and face the darkness—we pray for divine help and tap into a Presence that gives us the faith, vision and hope we need, the very same Presence that touched Anne Frank in her life and circumstance.

Our prayer can be this season:

O God, at this time, let us not be afraid to open ourselves to you. Let us have courage to sit with you quietly and face what we must, to admit our need, and to then receive the gift of Life freely given. Only when we seek you intentionally, reverently, can we know you and fulfill what we must to bring about your peace and purpose. O God, though we, like generations before us, hear the ever-approaching thunder, help us in these times to indeed look toward the heavens, to see in that light the things we must do to change and yet to see, at the same time, the inherent goodness in the hearts of all. When we change, the world gradually changes. With your angels of highest intent help us to commune with you and minister to that which brings about HOPE and NEW LIFE.

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

Reprinted from the March/April 2003 Church of the Holy City newsletter.



Being Different Is The Real Ride

Connon Barclay

Five of us in the early stages of employment at the same address lived some sixty miles from our workplace. Magically, after we watched each other driving alone down the same stretch of highway, we decided to carpool.

We were of different backgrounds and different cultures and perhaps an age range of fifteen years. We had in common that all of us hated the expense of such a wearing daily commute. Still, could a mileage-sharing merger be successful without mandates or some legally controlling mediation? We had no experience or any manual for proven accepted carpool procedure.

Could five totally different personalities achieve fluid and common goal travel using only common sense?

In a simple and practical way we discovered our survival stimulus was music. Yes, we found honorable car communion and fellowship listening to the other guy's music.

At first some droll, but not fatally wounding, observations were transmitted from our revolving cast of passengers. Nevertheless, within several odometer changes we settled into this fascinating first-string empathy.

Our only rule: the driver would select the music for the ride without exception or veto or any pre-drive mutiny.

One fellow played his favorite variety of rock music. We entered work and returned home with a peace and energy. We looked forward to hearing his selections.

One fellow played his favorite variety of country music. We entered work and returned home with a peace and energy. We looked forward to hearing his selections.

One fellow played his favorite variety of inspirational music. We

entered work and returned home with a peace and energy. We looked forward to hearing his selections.

One fellow played his favorite variety of blues music. We entered work and returned home with a peace and energy. We looked forward to hearing his selections.

The fifth fellow was me. I was not always capable of driving without drifting into sleep and perhaps a tree. Several had witnessed me actually drifting into a tree on the way into the employee parking lot. This strange malady struck only when I was driving and rarely happened when I was a passenger. Due to my damaged chauffeur reputation I was allowed to pay extra for gas and reward a driver with a total car wash on payday.

While some might find the list of artists and the songs used in our carpool far too dissimilar for such mutual comfort, I discovered that our music horizon became so broadened that to this day I smile when I hear those songs from the carpool days. I do not change the station or leave a room, nor do I fall into a shallow judgmental mode—and I suspect our old team members feel the same.

We found some education and some music appreciation and the pleasant detours possible if one takes time to listen. Just listen. The enlightening result was a safe and companionable everyday enjoyable ride for us all.

After such a musical journey, I would agree with the words of Berthold Auerbach (1812-82), the German novelist, "Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life."

Connon Barclay is a free-lance writer and retired corrections officer whose work has appeared several times in The Messenger. He lives in Holland Michigan.



CONVENTION 2003 REGISTRATION

HOBART & WILLIAM SMITH COLLEGE

"Faith of our Mothers"

Saturday, July 5 – Wednesday, July 9, 2003

Hosted by the Swedenborgian Church in the United States and Canada.

Transportation: The nearest airports are in Syracuse and Rochester, each about one hour's drive. Transportation from the airport to Hobart William Smith is not provided, but Central Office can match arriving delegates with one another to share rental cars. If you are renting a car anyway, you might investigate fares to Buffalo which is reputed to be less expensive.

Children's programming: We will provide separate care for children ages 0 to 4 and a more structured program for children from 5 to 12 during scheduled activities from Saturday evening through Wednesday morning.

Social Events: Free time will be scheduled when individual outings in the area can take place. Hobart is on beautiful Seneca Lake in the heart of New York's famous Finger Lakes district, known for its wineries and lovely scenery. This part of New York State has been a popular vacation destination for generations.

Payment: All registrations and full payment must be received by June 1, 2003.

Accommodations: The weather in upper New York State during Convention may be anywhere from cool to downright warm. Come prepared for both. Housing is in new townhouses, each with four single rooms and two full bathrooms, plus a kitchen. We suggest that anyone who drives to convention bring a fan in the car just in case the weather is warm the week we are there. For the handicapped, accessible accommodations can be arranged. There are several pleasant motels in Geneva for those who wish more private accommodations.

..... (Detach here)

Names: _____

Names and ages of children accompanying you: _____

Street address: _____ city and state: _____ zip: _____

Phone: _____ Arrival: _____ Departure: _____

email _____ Home Church (for your name tag) _____

For transportation match-ups, please tell us when you will arrive at the airport and on which flight:

Adult registration	@ \$65.00	x adults	_____	=	\$ _____
Teen registration (13-17)	@ \$50.00	x teens	_____	=	\$ _____
Child 5-12 registration	@ \$35.00	x children	_____	=	\$ _____
Registration family maximum	@ \$180.00			=	\$ _____
Late fee if mailed after May 15	@ \$35.00	x adults	_____	=	\$ _____

Pre-Convention Workshop 7/2 to 7/4 (see description on page 62)

Room and Board (Please take one option)

July 2 through July 9 (seven nights)	@ \$266.00	x persons	_____	=	\$ _____
July 4 through July 9 (five nights)	@ \$195.00	x persons	_____	=	\$ _____
July 5 through July 9 (four nights)	@ \$156.00	x persons	_____	=	\$ _____

Total \$ _____

All charges are in US dollars. All bills must be paid in full by June 1. No registration refunds after June 1. Bills may be paid by VISA and MasterCard. Provide number and four-digit expiration date.

VISA _____ MasterCard _____ Number _____ Expiration _____

*Make check payable to **The Swedenborgian Church***

Send Form with checks to: Central Office, The Swedenborgian Church, 11 Highland Ave., Newtonville, MA 02460

Special needs: (dietary, handicapped access, housemate requests, etc.) _____

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact Central Office at 617-969-4240.

Deep Listening: An Everyday Opportunity for Spiritual Growth

Wish your spiritual practice embodied the rest of your day—at work, at home, or whatever you are doing? Join us as we learn to listen below the layers of everyday stress. This practice begins with a simple and yet profound method, a way of listening with the whole of who you are. This involves a depth of presence that brings a sense of calm and peace in your trip to the grocery store, and a deeper connection while conversing with others. It allows you to listen more openly to your body, your intuitive Self, and Spirit. This workshop is an invitation to become aware of the many opportunities to listen deeply every day, to practice being fully present to your feelings and your body, and to

avail ourselves of the love and wisdom that comprise our true nature.

Experiencing the Gift of our Dreams

Every night we are presented with the gift of our dreams, an invitation to engage in the language of metaphors and symbols. If we choose to unwrap these gifts with an open mind and a willing heart, we are choosing to look into and through our psychological layers, and to touch our spiritual essence. Even nightmares are valuable, coming to us with greater energy and demanding our attention. Emanuel Swedenborg accepted these gifts and received the blessings they offered to his life. In this workshop, we will explore the gift of not only our own dreams, but also those of others in a sharing community. We will experience a greater awareness of their depth and spirituality in our lives, and the blessing of our interconnectedness on this

journey of life together.

Facilitator Rodrigo Marcus is a graduate student at JFK University where he is a candidate for an M.A. in Consciousness Studies and a Certificate in Dream Studies. He is passionate about helping others engage in the language of their dreams and experience more of the divine in their lives. His practice and training as a spiritual director, experience as a hospice volunteer, 13 years as a high tech engineer, experience as a stay-at-home dad, and attention to his own dreams have been the seeds from which these workshops germinated. For more information, contact

Rodrigo Marcus at
rigomarcus@aol.com.



The Voices Within... Whose will We Listen To?

(Continued from page 50)

leading us. We need to join with the Lord in quieting and disarming the violence within, and let his light flow into our darkness.

This is the work of our spiritual journey, and there is no better time to do it than now. Why? Because almost all of this month, and most of the next, is given over to the season of Lent, the time for reflection, repentance, and renewal. Our Lenten task is to thank the Lord for where he dwells within our lives, in the peace and music and laughter, and to make more room for Him still, by choosing His way over that of our own angry, fearful self. In other words, by living more as the Lord would have us live, as gentle, loving people, in all that we say and do.

And on our Lenten journey together, may the Lord bless each and every one of us with His healing and peace.

The Rev. John Maine is pastor of the Swedenborgian Church of the Holy City in Edmonton, Alberta.

Reprinted with permission from the *Edmonton Newsletter*, March 2003.



A New MINSU Program Through the Spiritual Ministries Consultant

(Continued from page 64)

NOVEMBER: *Divine Providence:* A chance to read this classic and pivotal Swedenborgian work in its newest translation newly released in its New Century Edition. Even if you've read it before, let this new translation speak to your heart in modern language!



JANUARY: *Chances Are: Providence? Serendipity? Or Fate?* Having just read DP, you may have new insights to bring to the fascinating 2002 *Chrysalis Reader*. You and your group can delve into questions about chance, coincidence, and DP.

MARCH: "The Supreme Doctrine in Swedenborg, Hinduism, and Buddhism." Read Wilson Van Dusen's most recent publication, a pamphlet

that addresses mind-boggling ideas on the relationship between Swedenborg's writings and two prominent Eastern religions.

MAY: *Divine Love and Wisdom.* Read the new translation from the New Century Edition, and see how your understanding of Swedenborg can be enhanced. As an added bonus for book club members, a mini-course will be available at Convention to discuss this selection more fully.

JULY: Susan Poole's latest publication. Be among the first to read about Helen Keller's insights and discuss these fascinating ideas! On Helen Keller's insights.

There will be more information and alternate selections in upcoming *Messengers*.

There will be information at the MINSU table at Convention.

*Send requests to Wilma Wake, SMC, c/o Central Office or email to Wakewil@aol.com.



BIRTH

Please join us in welcoming Ava Charlotte Willow Dolley to the world. She was delivered to us February 22, 2003, at 12:19 p.m., safe and sound at 8 lb. 4 oz. and 22.5 inches. Ava and Shelley are resting and recuperating after the long journey. Thank you for keeping us in your thoughts and prayers.
Shelley Dolley and Kurt Fekete

BAPTISM

Milne—Emily Ruth Milne, daughter of Michael and Emily Milne, was baptized into the Christian faith December 22, 2002 at the New Jerusalem Church in Bridgewater, Mass., the Rev. Lee Woofenden officiating.

DEATHS

Hill—John (Jack) Hill entered the spiritual world March 3, 2003, at Covenant Hospital in Saginaw, Michigan, after suffering a massive stroke. John was a member of the Royal Oak,

Michigan, Swedenborgian Church and a member of the Michigan Association for many years. A funeral service was held for him at his local First Presbyterian church March 5, 2003. He is survived by his wife, Betty, and their three children, Amy, Marjie, and Doug.

Parker—Virginia R. Parker, 85, formerly of Easton, Mass. entered the spiritual world December 29, 2002, in Potterville, Michigan. Virginia was a lifelong member of the Swedenborgian Church, especially active in the Cleveland church when she lived in that area. A memorial service was held January 2, 2003, at Peters & Murray Funeral Home in Grand Ledge, Michigan. Mrs. Parker is survived by two sons, Robert and Richard, two daughters, Jane Moore and Julie Viges; a brother, Charles Buck; a sister, Esther Buck; seven grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews. (Among her surviving nephews is the Rev. Erni Martin of Duvall, Washington.)



Central Office of the Swedenborgian Church
(manager@swedenborg.org
617-969-4240) for more information and a registration form.

Do this now because the deadline for registration is May 15, 2003.



HELP!

The Rev. Ron Brugler is trying to find some copies of Paul Zacharias' booklet titled *Celebrate Life*.

Please contact Ron if you have any copies available.

Rev. Ronald Brugler
489 Franklin St., N.
Kitchener, ON N21 1Z2
(519) 748-5322

Email: goodshelp@sympatico.ca



CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

The Rev. Eric and Betty Zacharias will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary over the Memorial Day weekend in May at their home in Pretty Prairie, Kansas, with their five children. Eric and Betty were married May 29, 1943 outside Ayr, Ontario on Betty's family farm. Cards of congratulations may be sent to them at route 1, Pretty Prairie, KS 67570.



BELIEFNET UPDATE

Regarding the Swedenborgian discussions on Beliefnet (see the March 2003 *Messenger*) they've moved the Swedenborg 101 thread to a forum that is specifically for the New church. Link is below.

http://www.beliefnet.com/boards/discussion_list.asp?boardID=51976



USES OF POWER

Transitions Retreat:
April 25-27, 2003
(Friday evening to Sunday noon).

Almont Retreat Center in
Allenton, MI (ancarc.com)

Rev. Ron Brugler
will facilitate on the theme:
Uses of Power.

Please contact Fawn Lange for
registration or questions:
(517) 393-5523 or
fawnlange@netzero.net

Retreat cost is \$50 and some
limited scholarships are available.

*Please note that child care will be
available during the sessions.*



One More Chance... GREAT OPPORTUNITY!! Camp 2003

If you are 18 - 24 years old and would enjoy the opportunity to gather together with people of the same age from various countries and explore Swedenborgian ideas in relation to living in our diverse world, formulating a working faith, and growing spiritually, then consider coming to Temenos for the Camp 2003 experience this summer, July 27 - August 2.

There will be five Swedenborgian ministers making presentations, and there will be opportunities to work, learn, and "play" with young adult Swedenborgians from a variety of backgrounds. A great opportunity for interaction and creating new bonds!

Contact Chris Laitner
(kiplingcat@juno.com
989-636-7674) or the

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.

A New MINSU Program Through the Spiritual Ministries Consultant

Wilma Wake

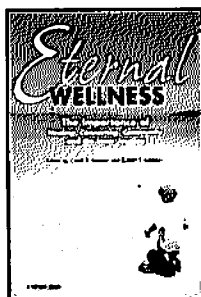
Do you ever feel that you'd like to do a better job of keeping up with the terrific new materials coming out about Swedenborg and his ideas? Do you long for more focused, in-depth discussion with your friends about Swedenborg's approach to spirituality, and how you can apply it to your own life?

This Book Club Is For You!

The Swedenborgian Book of the Bi-Month Club [SBBC] is scheduled to begin in September 2003!

Here's how you can join:

1. Find a few members of your church or interested friends who would like to meet once every two months to discuss a new Swedenborgian book.
2. Send the name of a contact person for your group and the number of members.*
 - a. Give us a church to send all of the books to, and you will have no shipping charge. There will be one bill for the books. The contact person will collect the money and pay the bill. OR
 - b. Give us individual addresses for the participants, and they will be billed for the books and the shipping individually.
3. Your first book will arrive in September. We suggest you have your first group meeting in October, to give everyone time to read it.
4. In the September *Messenger*, you will find a list of questions to assist you in reading the book in a way that helps enhance your personal spiritual growth.



There will be questions specifically for women and for youth as well as general questions for everyone.

5. In the October *Messenger*, you will find a list of discussion questions for your group to use to help focus the discussion on personal spiritual growth. There will be a book review in the October *Messenger* of the club selection.
6. Your next book will arrive in November for a holiday party and discussion group in December—and then one will arrive in January to pick you up from post-holiday doldrums for a great discussion in February. And one in March for April discussion. And one in May for June discussion [which you may wish to have in a mini-course at Convention where all group members are invited to come together!]. You'll get a final book in July to read on the beach for a relaxed end-of-summer discussion in August.

CLUB MEMBERS GET A 25% DISCOUNT ON ALL BOOKS. FOR THREE OR MORE BOOKS SENT TO A U.S. CHURCH ADDRESS, THERE IS NO POSTAGE!

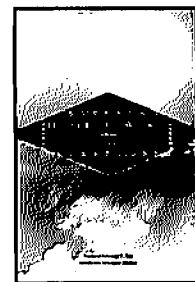
Are you too isolated to have others nearby to talk with? **NO PROBLEM!** Stay tuned for information on the web chat that will also be started!

Each group is invited to send comments on the book to *The Messenger* for a new section on Book Discussions.

For the first year of the program, all books will be either from the Foundation or J. Appleseed & Co.

These are the tentative titles selected for September 2003 through August 2004.

SEPTEMBER: Chrysalis Reader on *Spiritual Wellness*: How is your spiritual wellness? How Could it be improved? What tools from Swedenborg could help with this? Be among the first to read this September 2003 Chrysalis Reader full of essays, short stories, poetry, and art.



(Continued on page 62)

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The Messenger
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