

THE MESSENGER

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Mothering into Ministry



Kim Hinrichs

Three years and thirteen days ago, a transcendent event happened to me: I gave birth to a child. And

two years and thirteen days ago, on my daughter's first birthday, the moving trucks from the Swedenborg School of Religion arrived in Berkeley and I began a new role as midwife to the birth of a new institution in the Swedenborgian House of Studies. The past two years have been a frenzied blur—of program management and potty training, of student ministerial formation, of studying Swedenborg and teaching the alphabet. At times it seemed that my motherhood and my ministry were diametrically opposed to each other—each wanting to deny the other's existence—but out of this wrestling with the different parts of my identity is beginning to come, finally, a sense of integration.

So though my call to ministry began several years ago, before I was a mother, at this point in time the lens through which I understand myself is that of a mother, and this perspective deepens and nourishes my ministry.

When I considered all the coincidences coming together tonight—the theme of this convention being the faith of our mothers, the centennial anniversary of the Women's Alliance, our proximity here in Geneva to the location of the first women's congress in the U.S. at Seneca Falls, the fact that after six years of preparation I am being ordained while a mother of a young child—it seemed rather clear that I was being led to talk with you this evening about the meaning of motherhood and ministry.

In our scripture reading we heard the story of the birth of Moses, which one might also say is the story of Moses' two mothers. In the midst of a hostile social environment in which an edict has been issued that all newborn boys are to be killed, a Hebrew woman gives birth. And in a very familiar story, she creates a raft for him and sets him afloat down a river to save him. The baby happens to be found by none other than Pharaoh's daughter, who decides she wants him as her son. When the baby's clever older sister shrewdly asks Pharaoh's daughter if she would like a Hebrew woman to nurse the child, an ingenious solution is found whereby the illicit baby is allowed to be raised by his natural mother. When the child is grown, Pharaoh's daughter brings him into the royal home and raises him as her own.

In the literal sense of the passage, what we see are three women who are doing some very creative problem-solving in the face of unbearable condi-



tions. These women are caring, resourceful, crafty, and committed to sustaining human life even when it means contradicting a stringent societal law. What's more, both the Hebrew woman and Pharaoh's daughter were mothers. They both participated in nurturing a human life with immense potential—for as we know, the baby Moses grew up to play one of the most important roles in the salvation history of the Hebrew people.

Looking at the internal sense of the Word, we find that this passage speaks of the Lord's glorification process. The baby Moses signifies the Lord who began his life fully human and whose divinity grew and developed over time. In this passage, baby Moses being cared for by his mother signifies the first instance of divine truth being instilled into the Lord. Swedenborg actually notes that milk that comes from a mother's breasts corresponds to divine truth. So we see that the mothering act is very significant in the growth of the Lord. And indeed, the mothering we all received as children is key to the way we experience our growth process over the rest of our lives.

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"It Takes a Village..."

Sarah Buteux

I don't really like to travel much anymore. Leaving home often seems to be more trouble than it's worth these days, and, being the homebody that I am, I'd just rather stay put. But, as you know, every summer our annual convention rolls around, and one really ought to be there if one can. This year I thought I'd probably forgo the pleasure, as I had three weddings to perform during the first few days; but after a few encouraging words from Denyse [Daurat] I agreed to pack my bags and head up with Jackie [Lageson] to Geneva, New York. Am I glad that I did! It was wonderful to once again see so many Swedenborgians in one place, a joy to share in the various worship services, and good to catch up with old friends and make new ones as we reflected on the many contributions women have made to our church. Kudos to Martha, Kate, and General Council for making this gathering possible.

For me, the highlight of our three-day experience was the ordination of

Kim Hinrichs. Given our theme "Faith of our Mothers," and her personal experience, it was wholly appropriate that Kim spoke about mothering and ministry in her ordination sermon. She actually held her three-year-old daughter Claire throughout much of the ceremony.

My favorite part of any ordination service involves the laying on of hands. There is something powerful about that moment when representatives of our faith community physically commission a new minister. As we watched the ministers who presided, the students whom Kim has faithfully guided [as program director at SHS], and Kim's husband and daughter laid their hands on our newest minister, the whole congregation was visibly moved.

Reflecting on Kim's words and watching her daughter Claire throughout the process, I thought to myself about that phrase, "It takes a village to raise a child." On some spiritual level, we are all children in need of guidance and support. Kim knelt before us, ready to lead our faith community as a minister, because she has been nurtured by our community as a person of faith. As Claire reached up to touch her mother's cheek, I realized that this little girl will need her Swedenborgian village as much as her mother will. In

surrounding herself as she did, Kim placed her role as a wife and mother firmly in the context of her ministry to the community. My prayer is that we as a church can honor the full commitment of women like Kim Hinrichs, that we can respect her as a full person and support her as a minister who is a mother, and as a mother who is a minister. If there is any church that can do it and do it well, it is ours. In this case our small size is an asset because it is easier for us to get to know each other personally and see each other as individuals.

If our denomination teaches us anything, it is that we have so much to be thankful for in each other, and we ought to be good stewards of the gifts we have been given. On the long drive home, I gave thanks for our church, for those who encouraged me to reconnect with this body of unique individuals, and for those women and men who blaze trails that we might follow in good time.

Blessings and thanks to all.

The Rev. Sarah Buteux is the minister of the Swedenborg Chapel in Cambridge, Mass.



TO THE EDITOR

Dear Attendees of General Convention of the New Jerusalem:

Thank you to all those who worked so hard to make this wonderful convention happen.

I wanted to let you know how happy and pleased I am with our church community. My husband, Jeff, had his first lengthy stay within our confines and got to know convention

attendees over six days in Geneva, New York. I was hopeful that a few people would get to know a little of Jeff's goodness and light during this time. I was unprepared for the amount of warmth and openness that would pour out from all of you and affect my husband deeply.

Thank you for your love and kindness and your help in welcoming Jeff to our church community. We are becoming the Lord's New Church!

*God Bless You,
Rev. Nadine Cotton-Durgin*



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Mothering Into Ministry

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This passage speaks to the spiritual and theological dimensions of both motherhood and ministry. It seems to me that motherhood and ministry share at least three core values, and that the understanding of each is enhanced by juxtaposition with the other.

First, in its most fundamental sense, ministry is about attending to the growth and development of human life, and that's exactly what mothering is about as well. In ministry we recognize that all humans are in a growth process which—if they choose to embrace it—will lead them to life in heaven. The journey of life will contain trials and temptations, loss and grief, and joy and understanding. The role of a minister is to facilitate that growth and to open channels for it to move through. A minister cannot control the growth of her faith community, nor can she ever solve anyone else's problems for them. But she can be there to listen, to encourage, to teach, and to create a sacred space for spiritual growth. In the same way, a mother cannot sculpt her children or dictate their development. Rather, her role is to provide a container in which

healthy growth can occur.

As the story of Moses' birth signifies the uniting of the Lord's divine with his human, we encounter what is arguably the most transformative concept in Christian theology and one which held central importance for Swedenborg: the divine human. This is the second shared value between ministry and motherhood. The fact that Jesus Christ became both human and divine is a message to us that the place where we encounter the divine is precisely through our humanity.

Swedenborg's cosmological framework affirms this over and over again—that the natural and the spiritual, form and essence, truth and love, are inseparably intertwined. We do not encounter God by isolating ourselves in lofty piety, but only, in fact, by embracing life and love in the present moment.

In his book *Parent as Mystic*, *Mystic as Parent*, writer David Spangler speaks of how centrally this concept of the immanent united with the transcendent plays itself out in parenting. Children require their mothers and fathers to be simultaneously aware of miraculous birth and messy, everyday drudgery. One moment a mother is beholden by the beauty of the human creation that was placed in her care by God, and the

next moment she is exasperated by the messiness or the smelliness or the obstinacy of this divine creation. It is this practice that teaches us that the awareness of the divine is found in being attentive to the wonder as well as to the frustration of life in the present moment.

One night recently my daughter climbed into bed



Above: Congratulated by Paul Zacharias.

next to me and a few hours later I awoke with a start. In that moment of perceptive consciousness between sleep and wakefulness, I was suddenly startled by the fact that there was a little human being lying next to me who my husband and I had created and who had come from my own body. It is rather miraculous, but I don't often notice it. It is the same way with our very existence on earth. It is a miracle that we are all here! It is a miracle that we have all been created in love by God and that the purpose of our lives is to become angels! It is the job of both mothers and ministers to foster awareness of the divine indwelling humanity.

The third value that mothering and ministering have in common is the understanding that human life is at the same time fragile and surprisingly powerful. The baby Moses, sentenced to death before he was even born, was placed precariously in a small basket and floated down a river. A tiny human being who could have died very easily grew up to save thousands of people. Humans are weak—we get sick, we make mistakes, we lack intelligence, we hurt other people. And at the same time humans are breathtakingly beautiful. We inspire, we create, we change, we heal, we bring a new world into being. This is what it means to be human. We have the potential to bring about nothing less than the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ through our hearts and minds when we love God who brought us into being.

So I am thrilled at being ordained as



Above: (L-R) Kim's husband Bob Hinrichs, Kim, daughter Claire, Kim's mother Linda and her partner Peggy.

Right: Rev. Renee Machiniak presents gift to Kim.



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Mothering into Ministry

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a minister, because I believe in the power of spirituality to change people. Spirituality matters. As I set forward on the path of ordained ministry tonight, I hope that my "mothering" will help people grow and flourish into the angels that God has designed them to be.

I'd like to close with a word of thanks, for I would not be here tonight if it weren't for the support of some special people in my life. My mentor, Rachel Rivers, provided me an exceptional role model, and has given me enormous support and encouragement over all the years of my journey; my comrade Jim Lawrence has inspired, challenged and guided me to this point. Part of my family is here tonight too. My mom, Linda, and her partner Peggy have been my most ardent supporters and cheerleaders. I'd like to thank my daughter Claire for being a bright and shining spirit who has been resilient enough to have a mommy who has often been preoccupied. But most of all, I would like to thank my husband Bob for loving me through many, many changes, and for allowing me to stay grounded in the source of all that is, which is love. May we all find our being in the love we receive from God, and may that love make its way into all of our acts of mothering. Amen.

The Rev. Kim Hinrichs is Program Director at the Swedenborgian House of Studies on the Pacific School of Religion Campus in Berkeley, California.



Charge to the Ordinand

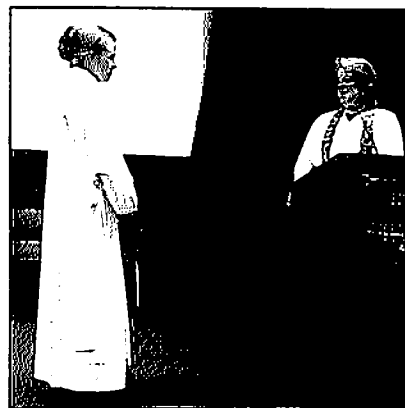
Rachel Rivers

Kim, it is such a joy to see you know—on the very brink of being ordained. What a journey it has been to this point—from having walked into the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church seven years ago looking for a place for you and Bob to be married, to becoming active members of the church, to hearing and responding to your call into the ministry, and then the years of seminary and internships and continuing study and discernment—to now!

Through these years, Kim, I have watched you *become* a minister. The minister self inside you has been coming into being. In this sense of "continuous degrees" you won't be that different a minister next week than you were last week. We can adapt the Buddhist saying about enlightenment to say: "Before ordination, chop wood, carry water; after ordination, chop wood, carry water." In this sense of continuous degrees we are, this evening of your ordination, bringing the external reality into congruence with the internal reality of who you are.

But in another sense, in terms of "discrete degrees," you know that you are right now going through a *powerful* change of state. You are poised this very moment to cross a threshold, after which you will never be the same. You are entering into a new identity, a new state of being. From now on there is a way that people will see you differently, and you will be looking through different eyes.

There are two things I want to remind you of as you take this step. They may sound contradic-



tory, but I think you'll understand.

First: You are already all that God needs you to be.

Second: At the same time, you and I and every minister are leaky vessels, cracked and flawed, and in as much need of spiritual regeneration as anyone. And God would not have it any other way. For those of us in the ministry are not a people apart—having finished our spiritual work and urging others across some imaginary finish line. But rather, we are limping and hobbling, along with those God has given us to minister to. Our task is to both remember ourselves and remind and encourage anyone who will listen that God loves each of us exactly as we are; and to remember and encourage all that will hear, that at the same time, God calls us all forward to become ever more the unique, joyous, beautiful embodiment of God's love for which we have been created.

Here's to the journey, Kim. Welcome into ministry! I love you. Amen.

The Rev. Dr. Rachel Rivers is pastor of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church.

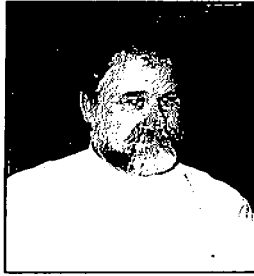


Fairy Tales, Doctrine, and the Holy Spirit

Convention Sermon

Ken Turley

Are you ready?
I mean, are you ready?
I've waited nineteen years to be asked to stand up here and tell you what I think, and as one of my favorite old blues songs says, "I'm ready, ready's anybody can be. I'm ready for you, I hope you're ready for me."



I have so many things I want to talk about today, starting with fairy tales, doctrine, and the Holy Spirit. But I'm going to quote scripture. I'm going to talk about Swedenborg, I'm going to tell stories, in fact I'm going to be all over the place! But my basic message is really very simple. As for fairy tales, things are not always what they seem and seldom what we have been told. As for doctrine, teachings must be experienced, and more importantly, applied, to have meaning. As for the Holy Spirit, to be fully alive you must be ready and willing to die to find life. Having told you what I'm going to tell you, now I'm going to tell you!

Let's start with fairy tales, those stories from childhood, stories for childhood that somehow, as silly as they may seem, have a way of persisting down through the years. And why is this? Sure they are imaginative and entertaining. But like correspondence from the Bible, they have hidden within the literal story deep truths about life that are too subtle, too sensitive to be just said plainly. Well, I'd like to share a fairy tale with you today. It's a modern version of an old familiar favorite. Some might call it revisionist, but there is a lot of truth in it. And like so many children's stories it has a message for the adult that lives within us all. Now if it were a cold winter's night, I'd invite you all to snuggle up under the covers, but today I'll invite you to

loosen your shirts, take off your shoes and get comfortable while I tell you the REAL version of a story you've heard many times; it's called *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*.

{Editor's Note: Ken then read us the entire delightful story of **The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*, a variation of the famous children's story from the wolves' point of view, which is summarized thusly by the editor with apologies to the author}:

Three cuddly little wolves were warned by their mother, as they set out on their own, to watch out for the Big Bad Pig. They met a kangaroo on the road who had a lot of bricks, and she gave them a generous amount to build a house. The Big Bad Pig came along while the Little Wolves were playing croquet in their garden, and they ran into their snug brick house and locked the door. The Big Bad Pig tried to get inside by huffing and puffing, and when he couldn't blow the house down he took a sledgehammer to it and destroyed it. The Little Wolves barely escaped. Then they built a house of concrete and the pig, after the usual requisite dialogue, smashed it down with a pneumatic drill, and the wolves fled.

Then they built a house of barbed wire, iron bars, armor plates and heavy metal padlocks, with Plexiglas and reinforced steel chains. The Pig dynamited the house, and the little wolves again barely escaped with their lives and singed tails. They were frantically trying to decide what to do next when a flamingo came along with a wheelbarrow full of flowers. He gave them a generous amount to build a new house of daffodils, roses, sunflowers, cherry blossoms and daisies, with water lilies in the bathtub and buttercups in the refrigerator.

The Big Bad Pig came along and threatened to huff and puff and blow the house down, but when he drew a deep breath to begin, the scent of the flowers was so enchanting he stopped huffing and puffing and began to sniff, deeper and deeper until he was filled with the fragrant scent. "His heart grew tender, and he realized how horrible he had been. Right then he decided to become a Big Good Pig." He started to sing and dance.

At first mistrustful of his intentions, the wolves finally came out and began to play with him. Then they all played games together and had tea and strawberries and lived happily together ever after.

So what can we learn from this fairy tale? Things are not always what they seem, and seldom what we've been told. There is always another side to any story. Most of us have only heard the pigs' version. How do we know that is the true one? Just because that's the way we've always heard it doesn't prove it is true. If we want the truth, we have to not only be willing to listen to and hear a perspective that is different from ours, maybe even contradicts what we know and are comfortable with, we have to be willing to seek out and encourage the points of view that are different and get them all on the table. If we are willing to do that, then we all have a clearer and more complete vision of what we are dealing with. So I don't know which version is true, the cute little pigs' version, or the fuzzy little wolves' version. But I know there is something valuable to be learned from hearing both versions.

As I mentioned earlier, the teachings of our elders have little meaning until brought to life by experience and applied. It wasn't until the big, bad pig had dynamited their third house that the three little wolves really understood what their mamma was trying to tell them when she warned them about the big, bad pig. How many times have people received the warnings of their elders with a patroniz-



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Fairy Tales, Doctrine, and the Holy Spirit

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ing, *Yeah, yeah, we'll be careful?* But by the third time around, the little wolves knew they had a problem on their hands. And they were beginning to realize that taking the same approach over and over again, even doing it bigger and better each time, was not working. If they were going to solve their problem, they had to take what they had been taught and apply it in a completely new and different way.

And now we come to the Holy Spirit and that business of being willing to die in order to fully live. This is the really tricky one, so stay with me while I digress for a moment. We already established that bigger and better was

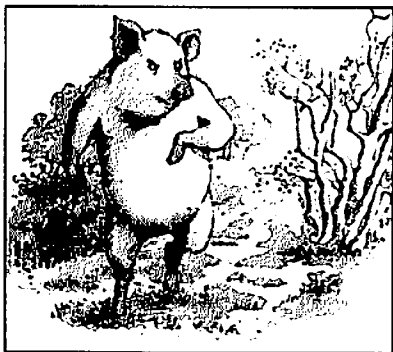
chemistry of everyone involved. The bigger and harder the stone walls, the more complex the protective security, the fiercer and more effective was the pig's attack. While trying something totally different, an idea—when judged by all traditional thinking would appear ludicrous, i.e. build a house of flowers with their soft and loving aroma and the gentle joy of colors, things that have no capacity to protect at all—touched the big bad pig and changed him and brought him into a state of love and affection and created a sense of shared community. So what did we learn? The Holy Spirit is powerful, but it has its own way of doing things. We learned, once again, that love, and the willingness to be vulnerable, conquers all; that charity is more important than doctrine; and that just doing the same thing over and over,

alone.' Yet in the greatest of ironies, it is 'faith alone' that is one of our church's most serious failings. For generations we have prided ourselves on our faith, our doctrine, our superior understanding of the things of faith through reason. And as we have held this aspect of our heritage up it has become our focus and, as a result, we have lost a sense of balance with the life of charity. As a denomination, we have fallen by the wayside when it comes to applying our faith to life in the world. And looking back at some of our mothers, it used to be that we were leading the way. But we are no longer actively engaging life with a sense of mission. We shy away from engaging social issues in any systematic or meaningful way. We resist a common accountability to the larger neighbor in the name of individual freedom. These things may be explained by arguing doctrine, but they are not consistent with the life of charity.

To be sure, there have been voices raised calling us to action, at least calling us to discussion and debate. And from time to time they have occasioned some movement, but in the main they tend to fade away in frustration from lack of response. And so we tend to go back to what is familiar, trying to improve our organizational structure, discussing the details of doctrine, tinkering with our liturgies and printing more and better pamphlets. At the risk of overstating the case, I'd say you can count on one hand the number of truly dynamic and original ideas that have come out of this church in the last fifty years. We keep on building bigger and more complex structures to protect the life of our faith, when what we really need is to risk vulnerability and even death by encouraging the flowering of new ideas that may seem wobbly and insecure but are alive with vibrant colors and pungent aromas that reach out and touch the soul.

Let me call your attention to Psalm 81. Here we have a song that is thousands of years old, yet it contains a message that is never out of date. It is a song that affirms the Lord with courage and strength and joy. But if you want the people of today's media-satu-

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We need to find new ways to reach out to today's society and change that big, bad piggy attitude intent on having its way in the world. I don't believe we do that with the stone and steel of bigger and better doctrine that serves to separate, but rather with the flowers and wood of a loving and caring community that inspires people to join in the doing of good simply for the joy of serving God.

not working. And to quote Swedenborg, stones and metal and constructed buildings have to do with truth and doctrine, animals have to do with affections. Looking at it correspondentially, bigger, harder, heavier, more complex doctrine was not protecting those cuddly little emotions from the power-hungry, destructive lust that was tearing them down. It was not until the wolves abandoned the protection of rock and stone and iron locks and complex security systems, and tried the way of gentle beauty that was delicate, yet alive; not until they were willing to stop fighting and risk vulnerability, that they were able to turn the dynamics of their situation around. By choosing flowers and wood over rock and steel they brought something into the situation that changed the entire

even if it is bigger and better, is not going to solve the problem.

Now let's try to apply the lessons of this fairy tale to our present situation. We in the New Church have a heritage and a history. We have tradition and legacy. These things need to be raised up and honored. And yet, they must not be arbitrarily accepted as the whole truth just because they are what we've always heard and they're familiar and comfortable. We are rediscovering the rich legacy of the mothers in our church history, something that is long overdue. Something from which we can all draw inspiration and motivation. Yet there are also aspects of our heritage that need a closer examination. One of our traditions is the sense of superiority over the rest of Christianity because we know the fallacy of 'faith

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rated society to get that message, you cannot present it with a staid melody and organ accompaniment. You may as well read the Psalm in the original Aramaic. And the same is true of our church—we have an old message that is never out of date, in fact it is more relevant today than ever before. But we must stop hiding behind the name of Swedenborg waiting for people to discover us when they are ready. We must open ourselves and get their attention with a little color and flash and then reach into their hearts and minds with a powerful aroma of love and joy. We need to find new ways to reach out to today's society and change that big, bad piggy attitude intent on having its way in the world. I don't believe we do that with the stone and steel of bigger and better doctrine that serves to separate, but rather with the flowers and wood of a loving and caring community that inspires people to join in the doing of good simply for the joy of serving God.

I don't mean to sound entirely negative here. The past few years have been a real turning point, and there are good signs throughout Convention:

Moving the seminary to the west coast, new ministers emerging, new churches being born and old churches being reborn. We need to nurture these new signs of growth. Yet at the same time there are going to be some things that we must let die. We need to keep taking risks and making mistakes. We have to put ourselves out there, which by definition means being vulnerable. But it also means being accessible and approachable. We must take the ideas of the past and translate them into the vocabulary of the future. And we do this by finding and pursuing the things that fill us with joy and a sense of purpose. For, more than anything, these are the things, these are the kinds of people, that will attract others who are looking for the opportunity to be part of something that is vibrant and alive.

I'm reminded of something that happened when I was minister at the church

in Portland, Maine. We had just reshingled the front of the building and it looked great. And it had really built up our sense of community as well. But we were left with the question of what color to paint the front door. The discussion began to drag on and on. Should it be white? Should it be gray? Should it be blue? Finally one of our people couldn't take it any more, and one afternoon he just went over and painted the front door

purple!

Now later on he confessed that he had done it just to force people to make a decision and paint it something to cover up the purple.

But the fact is, the door stayed purple for a long time. It turned out that people liked it and it became something the church was known for. Now I'm not suggesting you all go paint the front door of your church purple. Although that is guaranteed to get you some attention! What I am suggesting is that you approach decision-making and problem-solving with courage and creativity. Make some bold moves, risk doing something dramatic, try something really different and see what happens.

I want to speak for just a moment about our second scripture passage, the one where Jesus speaks to the disciples with the metaphor of the door. Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. Blessed are they who answer." Then he says, "Behold, I am the door." I believe he is trying to tell us that the opportunity to encounter the divine is always trying to make itself known. And at the same time he is saying that to experience the divine we must act by following his example. Jesus was motivated by deep caring. Jesus was guided by a committed faith. But above all things, Jesus was a doer. Jesus took risks. He made himself



available and accessible and thereby vulnerable. He taught people, he healed people, he fed people, he sang, he traveled, and he lived with people. He supported tradition and challenged convention. He was passionate yet well considered; at times gentle, at times confrontive; but from the beginning he was willing to act, facing even death for the sake of true spiritual life. To live in this way is to worship Jesus, whether you call yourself a Christian or not. And if you call yourself a Swedenborgian and do not live in this way, then you are missing the point of what this tremendous doctrine is intending to communicate.

We must not accept blindly, let alone live in, all the fairy tales we have been told. Yet we must not miss the truths and wisdom they contain. We must apply this great doctrine we have at our disposal if it is to have any real meaning at all. And most importantly, we must engage the Holy Spirit with a passion and a commitment that is willing to face and accept even death. We must remember that Swedenborg is not an end in and of himself. All of his writings were intended to open our hearts and minds to the Bible and to God whether your image of God is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Mother, or "the Force."

As I look around Convention today, I think we are all beginning to hear the knocking. The question is whether or not we are going to get up out of the comfort and safety of our familiar seats in our familiar pews, open the door and then step through that door into the new life that waits beyond. I think that behind the knocking at the door we are hearing the Lord singing, "Are you ready? I'm ready for you, I hope you're ready for me!"

You are now going to hear a song offered as a meditation that celebrates what it means to be a mother. It is called *Magnificat* and is inspired by Mary's outpouring of her soul when she fully acknowledges that she is to be the mother of Jesus. She expresses her joy at being lifted up by the experience and at the same time confirms her deep commitment to all that giving birth means. She is willing to endure the pain

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July 5, 2003

Entering the Transition Year

Ron Brugler

Welcome to Convention 2003 here in Geneva, New York! It is great to see all of you here, and knowing that many of you have given up your Fourth of July family gatherings in order to come makes your being here all the more special. On behalf of General Council, your official hosts for this convention, thank you all for coming.

It is amazing to me that we are even having convention this year. Conventions that are hosted by General Council instead of a local congregation or association really means that Martha Bauer and a few other folk end up doing pretty much everything. Sometimes that has worked quite well. But not this year. Many of you know that Martha's medical condition got worse toward the middle of May, and she ended up being in hospital for several days two weeks ago. As a result of this, Kate, our Central Office secretary, ended up feeling swamped. And then, our secretary Gloria Toot ended up in the hospital, and for a while it looked as if I might be there too, due to some other problems. Gloria came up with an excellent suggestion at one point. She wanted us to see if we could move this convention to the Mao Clinic! But, we didn't. We are here. Praise God!



Ron thanks Laurie and Ken Turley for their splendid musicmaking.

There are several people who need to be given special thanks for the help that they have so generously offered. First, Ken Turley who has done a yeoman's job with our music and worship preparations (and Laurie Turley for her work with the choir). Next, I want to thank Susan Wood and David Ashton, who have stepped in to fill Martha's shoes for us with registration and other details. (And thanks go to all of you who have volunteered to help out at the registration desk). Thanks to Jane Siebert and the Kansas folk who are helping with worship preparation. And then lastly, thanks go to my mother. Why, you might ask? Two reasons. Our theme, "Faith of Our Mothers," and simply because she's my mom!

I also need to add something else here at this point. I spent two weeks at Central Office this past month trying to pull everything together in Martha's absence. This proved impossible, since we all know how much Martha does for us, but I tried. This meant that I was reviewing and finalizing plans with Hobart & Smith, preparing the programs and

worship folders and Advance Reports, packing some of the boxes, and answering numerous phone calls and hundreds of emails. I was in over my head with communications, at times

so frustrated that I pulled out what hair remained on my head and so stressed I often just wanted to say, "Stop bothering me!"

I share this with all of you because it makes a good point about where we find ourselves at this time with my presidency. Five years ago, I set out with a goal that our denomination sorely needed. My goal was to help us to reconnect and attempt to live out one of the visions that we have for this church, which is open, honest and caring communication. We might not remember it, but five years ago, we weren't really talking to each other, and when we did, it was often rude and insensitive and downright abusive at times. There was what seemed to me to be an unfortunate sense of mistrust and we all seemed to just want to do our own thing.

I asked General Council if I could try to do something about this. And so I have traveled, and traveled and traveled. I've now visited more than once with almost all of our centers and churches. I've attended more meetings than I care to count. And I am pleased that it has brought what I believe are some very good results. I believe that our Support Units are aware of each other's goals and there is a sense of cooperation instead of competition. I believe that our churches and centers feel connected to the larger whole. And I believe that we can talk about issues and concerns and hopes and dreams, and we now trust that we will be heard.

But I am also aware of something else. For as we enter this last year of my presidency, we are nearing the point that when you see me coming, you're probably thinking, "Stop bothering me!" As I mentioned, I can easily feel this way too when I am tired and working hard to make a deadline. So I need to say to all of you, let's bear with each other for 362 more days. We are entering the transition year. And come next year's convention, I hope that we will lift up words of rejoicing—not that this has come to an end, but for what we have accomplished together. Bob Reber, the new chair of the SHS Board once told the board, "the way a church or organization says goodbye to each other is just as important as the way we say hello." Both are sacred occasions. But so are the times between. So I look forward to this year, and pray that it will be a sacred blessing to us. After all, we do have many blessings to lift up and celebrate and



Ron thanks Susan Wood and David Ashton for their hard work at Convention.

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PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

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offer thanks to God. I am thinking of many things:

- I am thankful for the work of Wilma Wake, our new Spiritual Ministries Consultant, and for the work of Kurt "Daddy" Fekete, our new Youth Director.
- This year at our Council of Ministers meetings we approved Kim Hinrichs for ordination. You recall that there were no ordinations last year, but next year we expect to have five new ministers! These numbers will not exist every year, but recruitment at the Swedenborgian House of Studies remains strong, and interest in our ministry seems almost contagious at this point. The CAM meetings are getting to last so long that Paul Martin and I are thinking that it might be easier if we moved to Berkeley.
- This year, two of our ordained clergy returned to employment within our church. Let us rejoice that Eric Hoffman and Nadine Cotton are serving us once again.
- This year for what I believe is the first time in our church's history, one of our centers has received a grant from their local county government. I speak of the New Church of Southwest Florida, and we will be hearing more about this in one of our business sessions.
- This year, we are continuing what I believe is becoming steady growth in several of our churches. I speak of St. Paul, Kitchener, Boston, Edmonton and Royal Oak. We are also on the verge of giving birth to a new congregation in Lansing, Michigan.
- In several areas I am deeply impressed with the renewed sense of vision and outreach. I speak of Portland, Maine; Wayfarers Chapel; Washington DC; Temenos; Bridgewater; Cambridge; and others.
- This year I had the pleasure of conducting Easter Sunday services in Pawnee Rock, with 62 people attending that service. I also took part in Maundy Thursday services in Pretty Prairie, and Good Friday services in Pawnee Rock—joint services with the local Methodist congregations. The sense of community that is present in these churches is a wonderful blessing indeed.
- Just this past month, the Urbana University Board voted to build another new dormitory because they simply cannot house all of the students who want to attend. This September, the newly renovated Barkley-Bailey buildings will be rededicated—buildings named after two members of our church. The growth there is amazing!
- The Almont New Church Assembly is studying ideas for expanding their housing capacity. They are so crowded that we might have to start eating in shifts.
- And lastly, I want to lift up the work that is being done by the New York Church in working to identify congregational goals and seeking the assistance of a trained interim minister to help them resolve various problems. And let me just add too, that Robert, you have served them well! God be with you.

But I also must note that this year we have some concerns that need to be addressed on a denominational level.

- Where are we going to put all of these new ministers? How are we going to pay them? Where do we want new churches and ministries to take root? I say this also thinking of Stonehouse—a ministry that was attracting hundreds of people, yet we could not work it out. We must try to learn the lessons it can teach us. (And to Paul, Erni, and Eric—thank you for your vision and dedication). And know too, that I have brought the matter of funding additional ministries to General Council's attention.
- I am also concerned about our church membership records and confirmation procedures. Our confirmation classes and membership records lack any common denominator across the denomination. I believe that General Council should set some common standards and procedures for our churches to follow. This matter will be on our fall General Council agenda.
- And lastly, I sense that if we are growing, we need to have a way of reaching out to our new members—welcoming them to a local ministry but also our North American denomination. It too often is said that we have a talent crisis. I don't believe that at all. The crisis stems from our not tak-



Executive Branch (L-R) Gloria Toot, Ron Brugler, Chris Laitner, Larry Conant.

ing the time to learn of people's talents. Toward this end, Chris Laitner and I are going to work on a letter and questionnaire to be sent to all newly confirmed members, so that we have a sense of their talents and skills that we can draw upon for boards and committees. We hope to have this completed in September.

But even in these problem areas I see an opportunity to make our church healthier and more useful. I believe that as we work together this coming year in building on the positive and resolving various issues, we will likewise be stronger and more useful in our Lord's service.

In closing, I have one final thought to leave you with. This past year on one of my rare trips home to Zanesfield, Ohio, I stopped by my mother's house for a visit. As we sat in her living room catching up on how Val and the kids were doing, she leaned closer to me and said, "II Timothy 4:6-7."

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Windows and Doors

Jim Lawrence

We have completed our second academic year as a House of Study within the theological realm of Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. As you will hear in the upcoming reports, the Swedenborgian House of Studies has continued to be built not only stone by stone, but also windowpane by windowpane and doorway by doorway. For, in this House, we live as the scholarly Swedenborgian community amid a bustling interdenominational and interfaith center where our visibility is high and where we find ourselves daily crossing over into one another's faith spaces.

We are now in most respects a fully established faith community in one of the top centers of theological education in North America. We have really settled in at this point, and for the first time in the history of New Church theological education we have a program that operates as a part of a larger institution, even as we create and maintain our own unique faith-space in which we spend a large amount of our time in strictly Swedenborgian seminars, classes, and gatherings. Being a constituent part of PSR, however, also presents that opportunity and the necessity for dialog and exploratory discourse with other scholars and students as a week-in, week-out business. This historic partnership is beginning to deepen into some very good conversations that amount to what I call scholarly outreach. Some examples:

Rosemary Radford Ruether is perhaps the foremost feminist theologian in North America. She came to PSR a couple of years ago about the same time we arrived on campus. She identified Swedenborg in her 1983 landmark work, *Sexism and God-talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*, as a potentially healing theologian for his androgynous view of God as love and wisdom, as much feminine as masculine in essential attributes. However, in a new book on which she was working this year, she had returned to Swedenborg twenty years later and was reacting with a much more negative interpretation of Swedenborg as a masculine-

dominated theologian who was not balanced between the two genders. (She also has a newer critique against gender-based categories in general.) At the same time this spring, we had been studying feminist issues in Swedenborg's theology in an extended segment of our weekly Contexting Seminar, led by Kim Hinrichs, and we invited Dr. Ruether to lead a session with

our community on Swedenborgianism and feminist theology, which resulted in a wonderful session. Afterwards, Rosemary offered her almost-finished manuscript to me for a critique of the several Swedenborg pages. I saw immediately that her new view was the result of the slant in the sources she was using, and I was able to share a balancing perspective from within our tradition that supports the fully equal feminine-masculine complementarity in Swedenborg. Meanwhile, she provided a guideline on how to do feminist theology within any tradition, and Kim Hinrichs used Dr. Ruether's methodology for a major paper in a tutorial with Professor Greg Johnson. It now ap-

pears as an outstanding article, "Distinctly One: Envisioning a Confluence of Swedenborgian and Feminist Theology" in the new *Studia Swedenborgiana*. So, Professor Ruether affected our work, and I think we perhaps also affected her work; we had a conversation which might bear more fruit in the future.

Another example: We have a very gifted and versatile teacher who joined the SHS faculty this year, Greg Johnson. From the beginning, there has been a lively chemistry between Greg and a nationally renowned professor of religion and the arts, Doug Adams. Doug was already well acquainted with Swedenborg's impact on 18th, 19th, and 20th-century artists and with Swedenborgians' flair for architecture, and Greg has a love for the arts. They have been considering co-teaching a class that delves into the realm of Swedenborgian theology and aesthetics.

Another example: Our students take many classes outside of SHS, and most classes at PSR involve a fair amount of classroom discussion. I'm hearing over and over again from other teachers that the Swedenborgian-affiliated students are articulate in class. Some know that one of our newer



Jim Lawrence, SHS Dean.



Robert Reber, incoming SHS Board president.

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SHS Board Treasurer, Garfield Byrd, gives his treasurer's report. (Why is this man laughing?)

students, Doug Moss, converted as a Presbyterian-connected PSR student to a Swedenborgian-affiliated student, because after a year of being in classes with Swedenborgian students, it was his experience that the Swedenborgians consistently made sense. After journeying into Swedenborgian theology for a time, he has found it to be a happily congenial home.

Another example: As far as I can tell, Swedenborg is so utterly absent as to be unknown in many quarters of theological education. With few exceptions, Swedenborg doesn't warrant a single reference in history textbooks. At PSR, Randi Walker, professor of church history, decided that it was time to include Swedenborg in her required Survey of Christian History class, which she did this past year. Due to a growing collegial friendship with the Swedenborgian House of Studies, she has come to a greater appreciation of Swedenborg as a historical figure, and at the same time she has become an excellent dialog partner in asking important questions about the Swedenborgian legacy that Swedenborgians don't often ask.

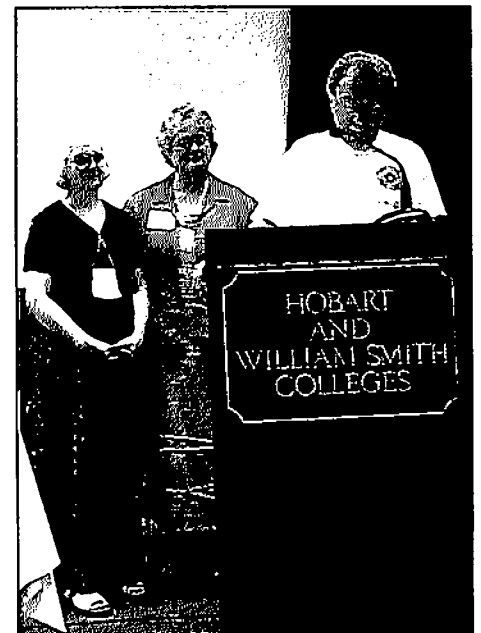
One last example, though many more such windows and doorways could be described: in my doctoral program, I have been working a fair amount on biblical studies. I just spent

two semesters working with Barbara Green, professor of Old Testament at Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology (one of the nine seminaries of the Graduate Theological Union and directly across the street from PSR). We had a rather continuous discussion over the year regarding the prospect of an inner sense within scripture and whether such a discerned phenomenon could possibly exist as God-inscribed or whether the meanings discerned are actually human constructions in a universe of multi-valent language rife with possible "meanings." It was a nice moment when she announced during a class session that "I'm starting to come around to Jim's view about the ancient inner sense." (To be fair, I know from further discussion that she is impressed with the spiritual intelligibility and moral sense of much of the inner sense interpretation, but leans against the possibility of it being God-inscribed.)

I would be remiss if I left the impression that scholarly outreach in this House of windows and doorways is at all a one-way affair. Not only does the life flow both ways, but personally I have felt blessed a thousand times over by the gifts of insight, spiritual acuity, and plainly brilliant critical thinking about faith matters that have come into my experience through relationships with faculty and students at PSR and the GTU. What is being added to the SHS curricular offerings by PSR and the GTU is helping us train strong, mature, and wise ministers for tomorrow. The pedagogical picture at SHS is much richer than what I can suggest in a seven-minute report, but I am pleased to share my view that this model holds benefits beyond economic

efficiency. As Swedenborgians, we are offering this community of communities something substantial and challenging; and, we are receiving life and light (not always, but often and often intensely). We have a lot of hard work in front of us, and we're going to need a lot of help, but this model for theological education is proving sound for our students and enlightening for our community. Just maybe it is exactly where we need to be at this time in our historic journey: an integral part of a holy-seeking city with twelve gates leading into it.

The Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence is Dean of the Swedenborgian House of Studies on the Pacific School of Religion Campus in Berkeley, California. ☩



Diana Kirven Stickney, outgoing Development Committee chair and Jane Siebert, outgoing Board president, receive recognition from Robert Reber.



SHS Board

Fun, Inspiration, Appreciation,



Barbara Boxwell, leaving FPRSU, receives certificate of appreciation from treasurer Larry Conant.

Trying to raise Bill Woof—Lee waits to congratulate his dad as Ron struggles with the technology.



Rev. Erni Martin awarded plaque for 50 years in the ministry. (The Revs. Bill Woofenden and Erwin Reddekopp were also recognized for their 50 years as Swedenborgian ministers, but were not present. They were phoned on the floor of Convention and a number of special people in their lives congratulated them long distance on speaker phone.



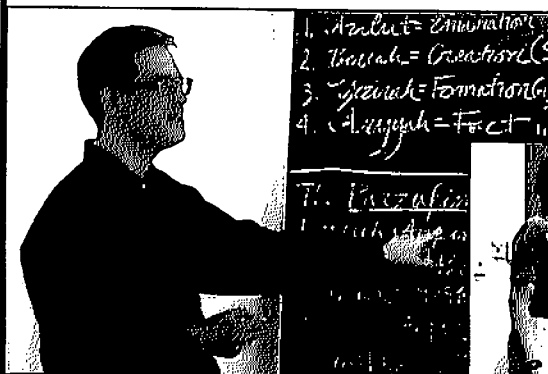
The Revs. Robert McCluskey and Young Min Kim (New York) conducted worship service together.



(L) Farren Maillie passes Mite Box shaped like a bus. This year's Mite Box collection will go to Youth Director Kurt Fekete to fund young people who can't afford to go to camp.

Mini-courses

(R) Jim Lawrence and SHS student Kevin Baxter discuss A Concise Overview of Swedenborg's Theology, answering questions from participants.



SHS Professor Greg Johnson presents Swedenborg, Freemasonry, and Jewish Mysticism.

(R) Rev. Rachel Rivers talks of Science and Consciousness to a packed room.



Susan Hemmerich and Cathy Lauber, Kitchener, show off the tie-dyed tees made by the SCYL.

and Music Music Music!



*Kurt Fekete
on drum.*



Singing group directed by Laurie Turley: (L-R) Renee Machiniak, Kathy Speas, Sage Currie, Rebecca Eliot, Carol Anne Fusco.



SCYL band and singers.



Emily Turley on flute.

(L-R) Emily Turley on guitar, Susannah Currie, Ken Turley, Eric Allison, Kit Billings, John Titus, hot new lead singer Eric Hoffman, Deane Currie.

Robert McCluskey doin' the DEADSU.



"A Will to Excel"—

Robert Head

I am delighted to have the opportunity to once again share this wonderful event with you. This has been another great year for Urbana University, *your* university. On May 4th we held our 103rd Commencement ceremony where we conferred degrees upon 270 graduates.

These ceremonies cause me to simultaneously feel joy and sadness. Joy because of accomplishments of our graduates and the positive impact Urbana University has had on each one of them, and sadness because, as I stare into their awfully young faces, I have this momentary feeling of severe old age.

Know that this year's traditional-aged graduates at Urbana were:

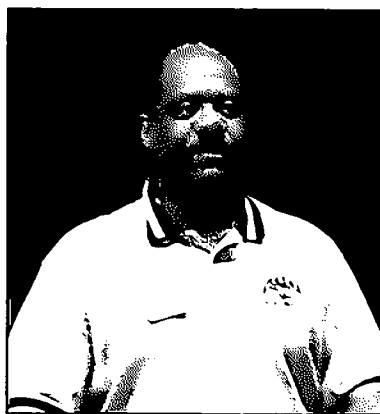
- Born in 1981;
- Have no meaningful recognition of any U.S. president before Bill Clinton;
- Have only known one Pope;
- Were 12 years old when the Soviet Union crumbled; and they
- Believe that there has always been MTV, Sony Walkman, Cable, and home computers.

If that isn't enough to depress you, know that the freshman class for this coming fall is comprised of students born in 1985! To them, watching John Travolta in *Saturday Night Fever* or the first few episodes of *Star Wars* is like me watching one of the silent films from the early 1900s!

Last year, I stood before you in Maine and said that the University would focus on four priorities during the upcoming year.

The first priority was to enhance our academic programs by beginning to offer an MBA program and a BS in Nursing program. I am delighted to inform you that the MBA program was accredited in January and classes started in March. As for the BSN program, it was accredited in February with classes starting next month.

The second priority reported last year was to enhance the learning envi-



Dr. Robert Head, president of Urbana University.

ronment for our students. There were two major initiatives under this priority. The first was to improve upon the overall success and retention of students, particularly from the freshman to sophomore levels. Again, I am pleased to say that student performance in this area rose by a full ten percentage points. While we still have much work to do in the area of student success, our performance is headed in the right direction.

The second initiative under improving our learning environment was to completely wire the campus and all of our buildings for technology. This was a major undertaking, totaled \$750,000, and was completed in March. This level of technology will provide a more sophisticated means of teaching and learning.

The third priority was to enhance our physical plant. We committed to completing a campus master plan to guide the development of the campus over the next 20 years; to upgrade student spaces including the development of a cardiovascular fitness center; and to renovate historic Barclay and Bailey Halls. Please note that with the completion of a \$1.7 million renovation of Barclay and Bailey later this month, all of our initiatives in this area will have been accomplished.

The fourth and last priority was to expand partnerships for the University. Our approach was to do so within the community via our new Service Learning program and to do so abroad with international universities. Through

Service Learning, we had over 600 students and employees engaged throughout the year in volunteerism in many community agencies and businesses.

Later this month, the Job and Family Services Division of the State of Ohio will announce a major new program that they are funding with over \$100,000. The program is designed to create a curriculum and course outlines for pre-kindergarten students who are children of parents leaving the welfare system and returning to the workforce. On July 25th, they will announce that the Education Division of Urbana University is their sole partner throughout the state of Ohio. Our students will be engaged in writing these educational programs, not only benefiting from the experience, but also growing in character because of it.

Last year, I concluded by sharing with you our intention to form partnerships overseas. In this we succeeded by creating exchange agreements with ten institutions in Asia, and four others in Poland. Unfortunately, our planned enrollment of 30 teachers from a Chinese University, who would be enrolled in our masters in education program, was deferred from this summer to next due to the SARS epidemic.

So, what must we accomplish in the upcoming year that will help to assure the University's success well into the future? I propose that there are dozens of enhancements required to make our university the university of choice for our region, and that remains my goal. However, there are three enhancements that I deem to be the most crucial for the upcoming year.

The first objective is to develop an academic program or programs of distinction. We are currently reviewing several possibilities for program expansion. One might be a Center of Applied Business and Technology, where our best students would be available as resources and consultants to small businesses in West Central Ohio. This would be a structured program, for credit, where our students would have the advantage of significant

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"A Will to Excel"—

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real-world experience upon graduation.

Another program might be one that we jointly create with the Swedenborgian Church that reflects our joint values. This could take the form of a Center for Ethics, Ethical Leadership, Service, or Social Justice. We will work with leaders of the Church to co-create a program that we can mutually be proud of.

We are confident that next month will result in a record high enrollment for Urbana University. Even still, our second objective is to foster the continued growth of the University through recruitment and student success. Points of importance in this area are expanding the markets from which we attract students; improving student orientation and academic support; and improving graduation rates.

Our third major objective is to make significant inroads to providing the facilities needed to support student learning and student life. In the next couple of months, we will break ground on a new residence hall that should be completed by the fall of 2004.

We will also begin the advance gifts phase of capital campaign designed to build endowment, increase our annual fund, build a student center, and a very modest football field.

Your university continues its movement towards excellence. As my favorite high school teacher told me day after day "Good enough is not good enough!"

I am often asked why I am so positive about the future of Urbana University. A parallel story might be that when I was deciding to go to college, neither the University of Dayton nor Cedarville University stood out as exemplary institutions. Today, both are high quality educational institutions.

Brother Ray Fitz, who retired last year after 23 years of service as president of UD, and Dr. Paul Dixon who retired this year after 25 years as president of Cedarville, are two examples of leaders who energized communities



Urbana University Swedenborgian Alumni at Convention.

and received a great deal of support in transforming their institutions.

With your help, I see no less of a bright future for Urbana University. I have used as a bumper sticker since my arrival that Urbana University must have "A Will to Excel."

I want to thank you all for listening. Special thanks go to all who have contributed to the Alicia Titus Memorial Peace Fund, and to General Council, the Ohio Association, the Boston Society, the New York Association and the

Michigan Association for your continued financial support.

I would also like to thank those active members of our Board of Trustees for your guidance and council: Betsy Coffman, Frank Doyle, Rev. Ron Brugler, Chris Laitner, Chuck Winter, John Titus and Bobby Buchanan.

It's been my pleasure to join you this morning.

Dr. Robert Head is president of Urbana University.



PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

(Continued from page 105)

I looked at her for a moment, and at first thought that this must be one of Mother's Methodist Moments, as her seven offspring call them. But then, as if realizing what I was thinking, she said, "You're to read that at my funeral."

"Well," I responded, "I hope that it's a long time before I have to do that."

"Me too," she said and smiled. "But you're to read it just the same."

It's been a long time, about 30 years to be exact, since I was a Methodist, and I can assure you that I did not have a clue what II Timothy 4:6-7 says. Luckily, she left the room for a few moments and I quickly stepped over to her bookcase and took out a Bible. Those verses say, "The time for my

departure is drawing near. But I go on rejoicing. For I have run the great race, and have fought the good fight. And I have remained steadfast in my faith."

I smiled as I read those words, and although it will be hard, I will be pleased to read them when the time comes. For they do sum up my mother's faith and the way she has lived her life.

I also want you to know that I carry these same words as a prayer and hope into this final year of this part of our journey together. Yes, let us go on rejoicing. And let us run this great race. Let us fight the good fight. And let us remain steadfast in our faith.



We're Liberated—Sew What?!

Alliance President's Farewell

Jenn Tafel

Wouldn't you know—as luck would have it, this is my last message and final chance to run a successful luncheon, and I think I finally understand what I'm supposed to do as president of the Alliance of New Church Women. Ah well, at least now I can help the future presidents (far removed and along the sidelines of course)! I would like to head off on a bit of a journey, and I hope you will accommodate me. This is relevant to the Alliance hundredth anniversary celebration as well as our Convention theme, "Faith of Our Mothers."

The biggest challenge for me as president has been to define my office/job description. What exactly does the president do? Since I really didn't receive a clear description when I accepted the job, I've been taking some license when people ask for a list of my duties. I often thought that the vagueness and lack of definition were due to the fact that no one really knew, and they figured I would stop asking after awhile—like *that* would happen! Maybe the women of yesteryear just wanted at least one really good meal at Convention and an excuse to get away from the men and children! Is that casting gender biases or what? I happen to know from reading the history of the Alliance that the founding mothers of this group were no slackers and they knew what was happening—the bonus just happened to be a good meal and good company.

So what was happening back at the beginning of this group of women, and is this group still necessary for us, given the complexity and pluralistic nature of our current society? We are liberated women, aren't we? Why do we need this "antiquated" group—and is it really antiquated? These questions spurred me to read the entire history of the Alliance (by Ethel Rice) and I found out some amazing facts. The founding mothers were daring,

courageous, spunky, and inspired to devote themselves to the Word and the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. Not so different from some of us, right? Some of the women were more vocal than others about what needed to be accomplished. From *Rices History of the Alliance*:

Mrs. Frederic Schoff of Philadelphia spoke briefly of the tremendous opportunity for women in philanthropic fields, where men and women work together in the legislative as well as executive branches; she pointed out, however, that in the General Convention—where women outnumber men five to one—the women were not doing their share!

(Surely a forerunner of the Women's Liberation movement here, but with what a difference in emphasis!) (18)

Schoff's point was made at the 1910 meeting. Women wanted to pull their weight, and so the grass roots campaign began one hundred years ago for them to achieve their goals. These goals include but are not limited to: meeting once a year (at the national level) for "the work of women's organizations of the New Church; the promotion of intelligent methods of work within the church and recognition of the field for New Church influence outside of the church organization." (6)

Swedenborg states that "in every idea a multitude of ideas is lying dormant." This is definitely the case with



Jenn Tafel, outgoing Alliance president.

this group of women. Another progressive opinion from these women came from the Illinois Council of Women. Rice states,

"The January meeting...had focused their attention on the topic, "Woman's Place in the New Church Organization" and had produced this recommendation: Resolved: That it would be useful to have the feminine element represented in the Executive bodies of the Church. The National Alliance voted to concur in this resolution." (20)

As I stated earlier, the founding Mothers were no slackers! Throughout the course of history the women in our church have supported ministries of all types—from the traditional parish setting and those that are cutting-edge, to various ministries around the world. They have been completely supportive of new ventures and understand the necessity of financial support and have always been generous in that department. When unable to give financial support they have called the group to action to collect clothes, food, or other resources in order to show that they care and value the ministries of our church. Such generosity may be taken for granted but not in this group—we may be small in number but not in spirit!

So now when people ask me what the job description of president of the



Mite Box Chair Rev. Susannah Currie presents a check for \$1,017.70 to Rev. Dick Tafel for the Church of Southwest Florida Kids VIP Program.

(Continued on page 113)

We're Liberated— Sew What?!

(Continued from page 112)

Alliance of New Church Women is, I can tell them that it includes being in charge of the most dynamic group in the General Convention. The job may appear easy, but it really means making decisions that will last a lifetime and it means that future presidents must ask themselves, What sort of history does one want to leave behind?

I feel honored to share in such a progressive history of the women's involvement in our church. I will no longer tolerate sentiments that this group is antiquated or useless. I may not have children at this point in history, but I hope that people understand the faith of *this* woman. Thank you for entrusting me with the leadership duties of this group for the past three years—I appreciate the faith you have shown me!

Jenn Tafel is currently a second-year ordination track student at the Swedenborgian House of Studies on the campus of the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California.

Editor's Note: Rev. Renee Machiniak's Alliance sermon will appear in the October Messenger.



Alliance Election

New Officers for 2003-2004

President	
Miriam (Mimo) Allen-Maine (1 st year)	
1 st Vice-president	
Amy Little-Vermont (1 st year)	
2 nd Vice-president	
Katie Shelley-Pennsylvania (1 st year)	
Secretary	
Jeannette Hille-Minnesota (2 nd year)	
Treasurer	
Margaret Kraus-Kansas (9 th year)	
Mite Box Chair	
Missy Sommer-Ohio (1 st year)	
Religious Chair	
Rev. Sarah Buteax-Mass. (1 st year)	
Publication Chair	
Nan Paget-California (3 rd)	
Round Robin Chair	
Merilee Phinney-Mass.	
2008 Nominating Chair	
Betsy Coffman-Ohio (1 st year)	

Meet Mimo Allen, New Alliance President

Mimo writes:

When Rev. Susannah Currie nominated me for Alliance president in July 2002 in Gorham, Maine, I was both surprised and excited. Here was a call to serve the greater community. The door opened and I walked through, guided by Divine wisdom.

I was encouraged and supported by the Alliance officers at Convention 2003 in Geneva, New York; everyone was patient with me and answered my questions. Even though my church, the Portland church, doesn't have an Alliance chapter currently, I will ask our church council to support a monthly Mite Box collection.

At Convention '03 I made many personal connections, meeting people whose names I'd already heard or whose faces I'd seen on programs or in books. I am a "people" person—I prefer face-to-face

meetings and telephone calls, as opposed to e-mail. However, I am checking my email more often these days!

My message is about service. I grew up on a dairy farm on the banks of the Connecticut River in New Hampshire. My early years contained phrases such as, "Do unto others that which you would have done to you," and "'tis better to give than to receive."

While attending college in Massachusetts, I started donating whole blood to the American Red Cross and continued this for 33 years. More recently I received training from Hospice of Maine and am currently an active volunteer with this organization.

I served as co-editor of a regional newsletter for five years and as coffee hour steward at the Portland Church for five years also. Presently I serve on the Community Caring Committee and the Parish Relations Committee. In addition I teach meditation classes and lead retreats, both personal and group.

While I believe it's about the Message, not the messenger, I am grateful to give something back to the community which supports me.



New President-elect Christine Laitner, first woman and first layperson to become president of the denomination.



New Alliance officers Mimo Allen, President; Sarah Buteux, Religious Chair; Missy Sommer, Mite Box Chair.



Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey, first ordained woman minister in the denomination.



Rev. Gladys Wheaton, the first African-American woman ordained in Convention.



Sculpture of Elizabeth Blackwell, first woman physician in the U.S., on Hobart Williams Smith Campus. Blackwell had Swedenborgian roots.

Name Change for the Alliance? Let Us Hear Your Views

Should The Alliance of New Church Women change its name to The North American Alliance of the Swedenborgian Church? Does this group need to be more inclusive in its name? At least one Alliance chapter has a man attending meetings regularly and contributing to the group.

What are the pros and cons of making our name more inclusive? Why not keep the name as it is, thus honoring the sacredness of women together?


Please consider all aspects of this proposal and let your elected officers hear your views. This topic will be up for discussion at our Convention 2004 meeting in Kitchener, Ontario, which takes place July 6-14.

Mimo Allen

1106 Highland Ave.

S. Portland, ME 04106

email: basirrahima4@yahoo.com

Editor's Note: Speaking of name change—the old Ladies Aide Association of the former Philadelphia Church (now the Swedenborgian Church at Temenos) has re-emerged this past year under a new name—the Swedenborgian Women at Temenos (the SWAT Team!) However, the activities remain reassuringly familiar—the team is fundraising, assisting at the Temenos flea market and open house, holding a retreat—and making Thanksgiving and Christmas a lot brighter for some needy families. *Go get em!* 

pression of the integration of love and wisdom in the natural realm of uses.

The historically traditional women's role, focused in the sphere of love, is expressed in this poem from the *New Jerusalem Magazine*. (42. pg 31.)

"Hers to make home a shadowing
forth of heaven;

To sit, home's angel, in the hearth
flame's glow;

To make man better by her loving
presence,

And faith's calm beauties in her own
life show."

Living our Theology's Intention

Remembering always the importance of their influence on their families, as the 'heart' of the family, these women, while contributing energy, enthusiasm and talents to their churches, worked throughout the ages of their lives as daughters, sisters, wives, mothers, and grandmas. Their lives have manifested various forms of love and wisdom in the good and truth that they have lived on earth and continue to shine down on us from the heavens.

"Good and truth are in created things according to each thing's form. The influence (of good and truth) is the same for all, but the reception is according to form. The truth in good, or the truth that comes from good, is masculine, and the good in truth, or the good that comes from that truth, is feminine." CL 86 & 88

Pictures and brief introductions celebrated the love that has been poured out over the years in the form of welcome, celebration, outreach and hospitality through the ministries of women involved in...hospitality, music and worship, community involvement, wedding ministries, reaching out to isolated members, and community building.

Living our Theology's Understanding

Over the years, women's contributions in the sphere of understanding has grown and the influence of their wisdom has been felt in the education of children and adults and

(Continued on page 115)

Faith of Our Mothers Slide Presentation

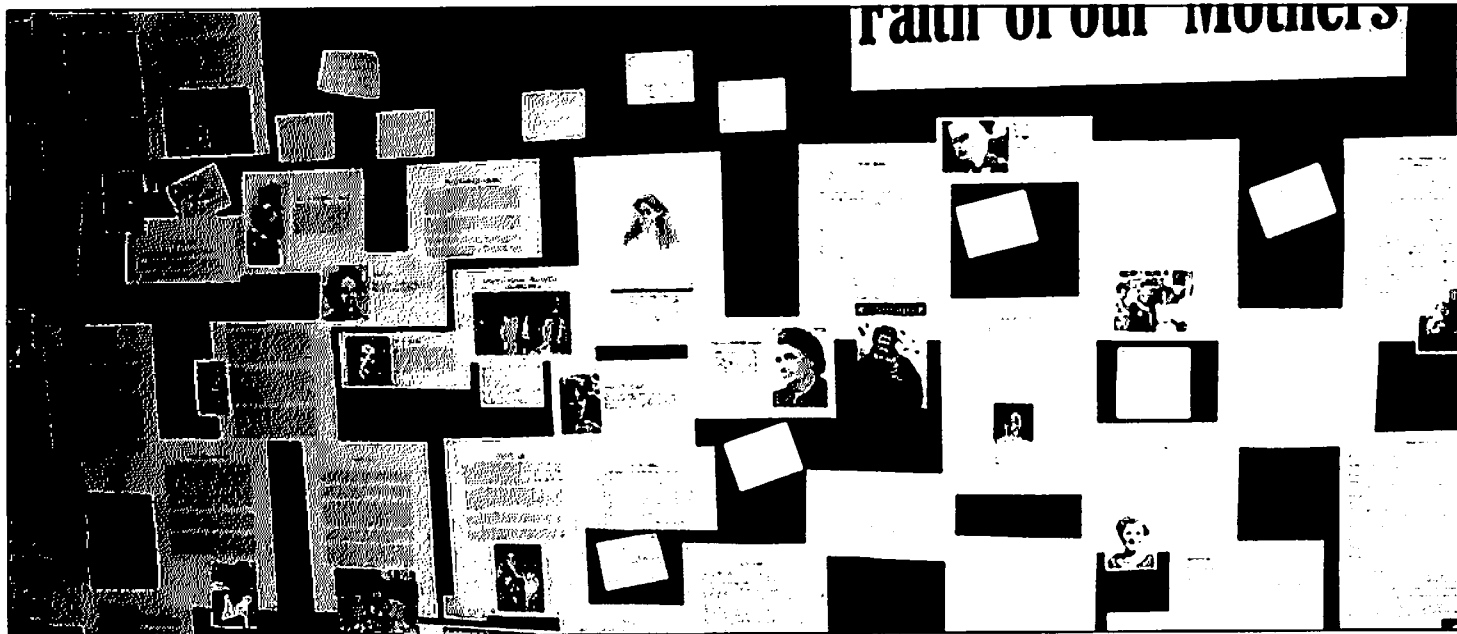
Susannah Currie and Kevin Baxter

In celebration of the theme of this year's convention, "Faith of Our Mothers" and the 100th anniversary of the founding of the National Women's Alliance, a slide presentation was offered to highlight some of the many contributions women have made to the Swedenborgian Churches of the General Convention. The onstage narrators were Susannah Currie, with Margaret Kraus, Mimo Allen and Emily Turley, representing past, present and future members respectively.

The many contributors who had sent in pictures and stories of some of the important women in the lives of their churches were thanked. The presenters acknowledged that the collection was nowhere near complete and couldn't even begin to come close to including all the women whose lives have positively affected our church.

Humble gratitude and sincere appreciation were extended to all those whose stories were not submitted. As is true of the many women of all countries and all faiths who have kept their churches going throughout the centuries, women are the backbone of our organization and what keeps the church's posture strong and proud. Women's contributions can never be numbered, as they are like the stars; extensive, vast and unknowable!

Over the years, as the role of women in society has evolved, the women of the Swedenborgian Church have broadened and deepened their support of their churches in an ever-widening variety of ways. And they have expanded their roles in a truly 'Swedenborgian' fashion; from the celestial, in roles centered in love, to the spiritual, in roles centered in wisdom, and have today grown into a full ex-



Wall of Women

Faith of Our Mothers Slide Presentation

(Continued from page 114)

through their leadership and participation in increased scholarship in our theology. The growth in women's scholarship is not only in its quantity but in its quality as women express their 'love of the truth.'

"Good without something else is nothing you can express, so it is unrelated to anything. Various things illustrate that there is no good alone nor truth alone. There is no essence without form nor form without essence. Good is essence or being, and it is through truth that essence or being takes form." CL 87

Pictures and brief introductions celebrated the wisdom that has been poured out over the years in the form of contributions to theological questioning, religious education and camp experiences and other scholarly pursuits through the ministries of women involved in...study groups, scholarship and education, camp activities, Sunday School activities, publishing, and historical studies.

Living our Theology's Usefulness

Women now fully participate in the life of the church in the fulfillment of the integration of their love

and wisdom in the sphere of usefulness through local and national leadership and ministry.

As women's contributions continue boldly into the future, we will experience even more the integration of our church's intention and understanding in the life of uses. This will bring joy and happiness to the women who have gone before us as we honor their legacy of creativity and courage by living and worshiping, fully embracing women's energy, ideas, and leadership.

"True worship of the Lord consists in performing useful services; and such services during a person's life in the world lie in a proper fulfillment of her function by each person, whatever her own position, that is, in serving her country, its communities, and her neighbor with all her heart. These useful deeds are the principal ways of exercising charity and the principal means of worshiping the Lord. The angels in heaven get nothing but happiness out of being useful; and they receive it in proportion to their usefulness. So true is this that to them usefulness is what makes heaven." (adapted from AC 7038.)

Pictures and brief introductions celebrated the usefulness that has been created over the years in the form of contributions to leadership in all areas of church life through the ministries of women involved in...local leadership, denominational leadership, leadership in programming, ministry, and leader-

ship in the National Alliance of New Church Women.

Many unsung women have offered great gifts through their involvement in the support and preparation of this year's Convention.

(At this point an invitation was extended to stand and form a circle of hands. A closing song, "I Hope You Dance" sung by Leeann Womak, gathered the love in the room into a circle of praise, gratitude and happiness.)

The Rev. Susannah Currie is pastor of the Swedenborgian Church at Temenos and the director of the Temenos Retreat and Conference Center.

Kevin Baxter is a second-year student at SHS. (Kevin excerpted the stories about the individual women and put together the slide presentation while he was interning at Temenos, and Susannah wrote the narrative.)

Editor's Note: The "Wall of Women" with pictures and printed stories of the women mentioned in the slide show, was prominently displayed at convention. Convention attendees were invited to post names of women they thought of who hadn't been mentioned. The slide presentation is at SHS with Kevin Baxter.



Council of Ministers Report

The Council of Ministers met on Thursday, July 3, and Friday, July 4, 2003. Participating in the sessions were 29 members and 10 guests.

The Council of Ministers received and discussed Visions of Ministry from six ordination candidates: Alison Baxter, Kevin Baxter, Sage Currie, Jane Siebert, Kathy Speas, and Rich Tafel.

Our foreign field ministry guest for this year was Kei Torita, and she offered a presentation on her ministry in Japan.

We voted unanimously to request that General Council make as generous a donation as possible to Czech Republic minister Pavel Heger and his family in their time of need due to losing their home in a fire. We also took up a collection among ourselves to be donated to the Hegers.

Among the important updates we received were those from the Swedenborgian House of Studies, the Committee on Worship, and the Retirement Committee.

The Council of Ministers approved a bylaw change in terms of service for the Committee on Admission into the Ministry. This change involves moving from one-year terms to three-year terms with a term limit of two consecutive three-year terms. We saw this change as providing terms of office and a balance of continuity and change consistent with Convention's support units and the Council of Ministers Executive Committee.

We were updated on a proposal for a new lay education program which could provide training for leadership in such ministry specialties as worship, youth work, sacraments, spiritual growth, and pastoral care.

We considered, with Chris Laitner present as a guest, some avenues of filling ministry roles and working out clergy and lay cooperation in a situation where a lay person is president of the denomination.

The Council of Ministers affirmed as valuable both the winter workshops and the peer supervision program. There was a discussion of what are appropriate expectations for professional growth and accountability of ministers in the denomination, and we agreed to have a committee work during the next year to develop proposals for addressing these expectations. We also agreed that the Council of Ministers Executive Committee work with the Ministries Support Unit and the Ministerial Placement Committee to develop a



Rev. Paul Martin, Council of Ministers chair with Rev. Ted Klein, outgoing COM secretary.

Swedenborgian Church Election Results 2003

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: James Erickson and Sandy 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 (FPSU):

3-year term: Leo Serrano

Ministries Support Unit (MINSU):

3-year term Mark Allen and Rev. Dick Tafel

Information Management Support Unit (IMSU):

3-year term Rev. Lee Woofenden

Nomination Committee : 5-year term (2 nominated, 1 elected)

..... Rev. Dr. Jonathan Mitchell

Committee on Admission to the Ministry (CAM) 1-year term

Minister Rev. Susan Turley

Lay Person: Rachel Lyn Rumson

Swedenborgian House of Studies (SHS)

3-year term Robert Leas and Herb Ziegler

manual for hiring and transitions of ministers.

We discussed implications for ministers and churches of same sex marriages now being legal in Ontario, Canada. We agreed to form a committee to gather relevant resources, consider pastoral and theological responses, and prepare a way of dialoguing and coming to a resolution at next year's Council of Ministers meeting.

We approved a proposed Council of Ministers Budget for 2004.

Election results were as follows:

Secretary—Skuli Thorhallsson

Council of Ministers Executive—Jun-Chol Lee

Committee on Admission into the Ministry—Kit Billings

Convention Preacher 2004—Wilma Wake

Convention Preacher 2005—Marlene Laughlin

The Council of Ministers presented the following ordination recommendation to Convention:

"At her own request, supported by the approval of her Plan of Ministry by the Council of Ministers, and on the recommendation of the Committee on Admission into the Ministry, the Council of Ministers recommends that Kimberly M. Hinrichs, whose ordination has been requested by the Swedenborgian House of Studies at Pacific School of Religion, and who has completed a course of study at the Swedenborgian House of Studies at Pacific School of Religion, be ordained into our ministry, and that the service of ordination be held at this session of Convention, her name, after ordination, to be placed on our Roll of Ministers."

Rev. Dr. Theodore Klein, Secretary



Online Swedenborgian Library Ready

Lee Woofenden

I am pleased to announce that after many months in development, the Online Swedenborgian Library at the Swedenborgian Church website is now available and ready for use!

The Online Swedenborgian Library is your guide to Swedenborg-related material on the Internet, as well as sources of Swedenborg-related literature off the Internet. In the Library, you will find an extensive, structured, searchable index of online editions of Swedenborg's works, as well as online books, articles, sermons, lectures, websites, and other materials related to Swedenborg, his teachings, and the Swedenborgian movement.

You can find the Online Swedenborgian Library by visiting the Swedenborgian Church home page at: <http://www.swedenborg.org/>

Click on the "Library" menu item in the upper right corner of the page.

These are the current general categories covered in the Library:

- Swedenborg's Works
- Theological Works
- Scientific and Philosophical Works
- Collateral Literature
- Books
- Periodicals
- Other Materials and Resources
- Other Online Services
- Discussion Lists and Forums
- Sources for Purchasing Swedenborg-related Material
- Swedenborg Publishers and Book sellers
- Other Sources of Swedenborg Books and Literature
- Swedenborg-related Material Available Offline
- Library and Archival Collections
- Swedenborgian Organizations and Institutions
- Denominational Websites
- Educational Institutions
- Camps and Conference Centers

Under many of these categories—especially under "Collateral Literature"—there are further sub-categories, providing a structured index that makes it easy to find the specific material you are interested in. Or, if you know exactly what you want, just enter a word or phrase into the keyword

search box found at the top of every page in the Library. (Note that the keyword search does not search the documents themselves, but only their descriptions and keywords in the Library database.)

The Library currently focuses on materials in English, plus Latin editions of Swedenborg's works. If there is sufficient interest and demand, in the future we may add a section for Swedenborg-related material in other languages.

Most of the items listed in the Library are links to materials elsewhere on the Internet. However, there is a small but growing body of documents hosted by the Library itself. These are indicated by the icon next to their listing, which shows what type of document you will get if you click on the link. Some of these documents, such as Adobe PDF files, may require you to have a specific program installed on your computer in order to read them.

At its launch, the Online Swedenborgian Library already offers well over two hundred links and documents. This will continue to grow as more Swedenborg-related materials and websites become available on the Internet, and as we find out about other existing online materials. If you know of online Swedenborg materials anywhere on the Internet that are not already included in the Library, please use the "Submit a Link" form available in the left-hand column of every page in the Library. There is also a form for reporting any broken links you find in the Library.

If you have comments on the Library, or wish to contribute materials or volunteer time preparing materials for the Library, please email me at leewoof@leewoof.net. Your active participation is part of the Library's plan for growth!

The Online Swedenborgian Library is a project of the Information Management Support Unit (IMSU) of the Swedenborgian Church: Lee Woofenden, Chair; Philip Bae, and Bob Hinrichs. Web design for the Swedenborgian Church website is by Andrew Riley.

The programming of the Online Swedenborgian Library and the Online Edition of *Our Daily Bread* is by Stephen Yezzi.

Happy Online Hunting!

The Rev. Lee Woofenden is pastor of the Bridgewater church in Bridgewater, Mass.



A CONCISE OVERVIEW OF SWEDENBORG'S THEOLOGY

Robert Kirven's long awaited *A Concise Overview of Swedenborg's Theology*, published by J. Appleseed & Co. in trade paperback, is now available from the Communications Support Unit (COMSU).

Here at last is perhaps the most useful and readable summary of Swedenborg's theology yet published, a brilliant, lucid distillation and analysis of Swedenborg's thought. In an earlier limited manuscript edition it was adopted by the Swedenborgian House of Studies as a basic resource for our theological students, and has been used for study groups by many of our churches. The *Overview* is available now for \$19.95 per copy plus \$1.84 shipping at the media mail rate. Please send your orders to:



Margaret Culver
COMSU Business Manager
3820 22nd St
San Francisco, CA 94114
Home and fax phone:
(415) 282-1312
E-mail: mculver@pngusa.net
Or order from the J. Appleseed & Co. website, www.jappleseed.org



CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

The Rev. Pavel Heger's family home was destroyed by fire late last spring. Pavel was able to save his new computer that MINSU sent funds for at the beginning of 2003, but most of their household goods were destroyed. They were without electricity for two weeks and now live in a borrowed mobile home (1 room). Pavel writes that fortunately, nobody was hurt. He sent photos (see below).

So far, donations to Pavel and his family total \$3,255. General Convention voted to match that amount, so a check for \$6510 has been sent to him in the Czech Republic to help them rebuild before winter. More checks will be sent as the donations arrive.

Please send donations, marked for Pavel Heger, to:

Central Office
Swedenborgian Church
11 Highland Ave.
Newtonville, MA 02460



Swedenborgian Book of the Bi-Month Club:

Join Now!

It's not too late to join this exciting book club opportunity! The start date has been moved to October 2003!



Club members get a 25% discount on all books. For three or more books sent to a church address, there is no postage.

You get recently-published books related to Swedenborgian spirituality and discussion questions for your group.

Upcoming titles include: the new Chrysalis Reader anthology, *Eternal Wellness: The Importance of Healing, Connecting, Community, and the Inner Journey*; and the New Century Edition translations of *Divine Providence* and *Divine Love and Wisdom*.

To sign up, contact Wilma Wake. (207) 232-0113 or (207) 985-8776.



Fairy Tales, Doctrine, and the Holy Spirit (Continued from page 103)

of birth and willing to experience all that motherhood demands and offers.

As we look to the doctrine of our faith, and the life of charity, and our church and the birthing of its future, each one of us must find within ourselves the powerful passion and committed dedication of a mother-to-be. Birth is both painful in the extreme and joyous beyond words. Birth is an experience that changes your life. In the act of birth, the old life dies and a new life is born. To reach for new life is to face death, but the one cannot be had without the other. As you listen to this song, I ask you to look at your life, look at your relationship to God, look at your connection to your church and to your world and imagine yourself in the place of an expectant mother. Ask yourself, what does the future hold for you and what do you bring to the new life that is about to emerge?

{Editor's Note: Laurie Turley sang *Magnificat*, a song of stunning beauty that she had composed for the occasion.}

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

**The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*, by Eugene Trivizas, illus. by Helen Oxenbury, Scholastic Inc. New York. 1994.



Inness Exhibition to Open in New York

George Inness and the Visionary Landscape exhibition opens at the National Academy of Design Museum in New York September 17 thru December 28, 2003. After leaving the Academy this exhibition will travel to the San Diego Museum of Art, where it will be exhibited from January 24-April 18, 2004.

The exhibition consists of forty works ranging from the 1870s-1890s, exploring not only Inness's various artistic developments, but the spiritual preoccupations—namely Swedenborgian—which influenced his work.

"Initially hailed as one of America's finest Hudson River School painters, Inness quickly distinguished himself as

an artist in search of something radically different. His unique pictorial techniques produced anything but typical landscape painting, and in fact, rather infused his work with something spiritual. Composition took on specific symbolism. Guided by Swedenborgian principles, Inness communicated the correspondence between the natural and spiritual realms. His philosophical beliefs led to the development of a totally new depiction of the landscape, and distinguished Inness from his contemporaries." (Kathleen Brady, Director of Communications, National Academy of Design Museum and School of Fine Arts, New York.)



Birth

Klein—Willow Hafwyn Klein, daughter of John and Myriah Klein, was born June 11, 2003 at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. Willow is the first grandchild of the Rev. Dr. Ted Klein and Dr. Mary Kay Klein.

Baptisms

Cressy—Carrie Lynne Cressy was baptized into the Christian faith May 11, 2003, at the Fryeburg New Church in Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Ken Turley officiating.

Engelman—Erich A. Engelman and Logan Aaron Arthur Engelman, two young brothers, were baptized into the Christian faith April 19, 2003, at the Swedenborg Chapel in Cleveland, Ohio, the Rev. Junchol Lee officiating. The boys' parents are Tim and Jackie Engelman.

Gillespie—Jonathan M. F. Gillespie was baptized into the Christian faith April 27, 2003, at the Swedenborg Chapel in Cleveland, Ohio, the Rev. Junchol Lee officiating. Jonathan is the infant son of R. Michael and C. Jane Gillespie.

Confirmations

Calder—Linda Calder was confirmed into the life and faith of the Swedenborgian Church in the Royal Oak Church of the Holy City, Michigan, June 1, 2003, the Rev. Renee Billings Machiniak officiating. Linda is a cousin to the late Paul Calder, a dearly loved member of the church.

Cressy—Ella Cressy was confirmed into the life and faith of the Swedenborgian Church May 11, 2003, at the Fryeburg New Church in Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. Ken Turley officiating.

Marriages

Calder and Hornsby—Linda Calder, a new member of the Royal Oak Swedenborgian Church, and Larry Hornsby were united in marriage June 8, 2003, at the Almont Retreat Center Chapel in Almont, Michigan, the Rev. Renee Billings Machiniak officiating.

Garber and Young—Bill Garber and Mimi Young, members of the San Diego Swedenborgian Church, were united in marriage June 7, 2003, at the San Diego church, lay leader Eldon Smith officiating.

Deaths

Clemens—Glen M. Clemens, age 81, entered the spiritual world December 6, 2002, at a care center in Bountiful, Utah. Glen attended the Swedenborg School of Religion in 1983 and was at one time affiliated with the former Stonehouse Bookstore and Spiritual Growth Center in Redmond, Washington. Memorial services were held in Nampa, Idaho, December 9, 2002.

Hanson—Helena A. Hanson, longtime active member of the Boston Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world in March, 2003. She had resided for several years at the Lanessa E.C.F. Nursing Home in Webster, Mass. Helena was a member of the Ladies' Aid Society, Women's Alliance, and attorney at law for over 40 years. A memorial service is planned for a later date.

Pelkie—Marianne Pelkie, 35, a member of the Fryeburg New Church in Fryeburg, Maine, entered the spiritual world June 2, 2003. Services were conducted June 7, at the Pine Grove Cemetery in Fryeburg, the Rev. Ken Turley officiating. Marianne is survived by her husband Jeffrey and two daughters, Nicole and Brianne.

Sawyer—Althea Sawyer, age 84, a longtime member of the Fryeburg New Church in Fryeburg, Maine, entered the spiritual world April 4, 2003, at the Bridgton Hospital. A memorial service was conducted April 6, 2003, the Rev. Ken Turley officiating. Althea is survived by one daughter, Lorette Andrews, of Stoneham, Maine.

Witzell—Charles E. Witzell, Jr., a lifelong member of the New York New Church, entered the spiritual world March 12, 2003. Charles and his surviving brother William, also a lifelong member, made regular and generous contributions to the church. Charles was dedicated to a vision of world unity and peace, and was a strong supporter of the U.N. and strongly dedicated to Swedenborg's vision of a universal new church. Charles and William both served in the armed forces during World War II. Memorial services and burial were held at North/Meadowland Funeral Home and Cemetery in New Port Richey, Florida, their hometown for the last 13 years.

Wood—Nancy Farley Wood, age 99, a member of the LaPorte New Church in Indiana from the late 1980s to the early

1990s and deeply interested in the writings of Swedenborg, entered the spiritual world March 19, 2003, in Baroda, Michigan, where she had been living with her son, William. She is survived by her two sons, William and David; three daughters, Marjorie Crawford, Nancy Ahrens, and Elizabeth Trimm; 14 grandchildren, and 15 great-grandchildren. "Nan" Wood, a brilliant scientist and teacher, was one of the first feminists. In the early 40s, she was approached by the FBI to work on the secret Manhattan Project, where she helped with the designs of various radiation detectors and built many of them, unbeknownst to her family and friends until after the war. In 1949, she founded the N. Wood Counter Laboratory in Chicago, which supplied radiation detection instruments to research scientists around the world, and ran the business until she was 87. She joined the women's liberation movement and eventually became the national secretary of NOW. She was also deeply committed to environmental causes.



CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

Dear Swedenborgian Church Friends,

Gabrielle and I wish to express our gratitude for your love, support, and prayers during the past year. The first anniversary of Gabrielle's kidney transplant is coming soon and we will never forget how much your expressions of care helped to support and sustain us all. We are both feeling well, and Gabrielle's treatments are going according to plan, with only a few bumps in the road. We thank the Lord for all of His blessings, including especially, our family and church family!

Love,
Lorrie, Gabrielle, Hart & Gloria Lipski 

CORRECTION

The number given in the June issue for Norm Bestor at the Swedenborg Chapel in Cleveland (p. 95) has been changed to (216) 351-6141, to order your free videotape on the Johnny Appleseed Heritage Center update. The (216) 351-8093 number that was published is solely for the wedding coordinator. We're sorry for any inconvenience this has caused.

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.

SHS Upcoming New Courses

APPROACHES TO SPIRITUAL RENEWAL IN PARISH LIFE

A one-week intensive course at the Swedenborgian House of Studies Taught by Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake, Adjunct Professor of Spirituality January 12-16, 2004, Berkeley, California

How can a congregation tap into the rich resources of the Christian spiritual tradition to develop modern, vibrant approaches to spiritual life in a variety of parish formats? In this practical, experiential course, students will have an opportunity to:

1. Review classic and modern resources from the Christian tradition for personal and congregational spiritual growth
2. Explore modern approaches to the deeply-rooted traditions of "spiritual direction" and "care of the soul." In both discussion and experiential formats, students will explore the use of spiritual companionship in the parish. Models will include the pastor as spiritual mentor, lay spiritual companionship, and peer-led groups.
3. Consider a range of formats for incorporating spirituality in a congregation. They include sermons, workshops, ongoing groups, community programs, and congregational covenanting.

This course will meet on the campus of Pacific



Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake

School of Religion from 9:00am-1:00 pm, January 12th-16th. On-campus housing is available at a cost of \$25/night. Tuition for academic credit (1.5 units) is \$828. Tuition for auditors is \$250. To register, please contact Kim Hinrichs at khinrichs@shs.psr.edu or at 510-849-8228.

Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake is Spiritual Ministries Consultant for the Swedenborgian Church and minister of the Swedenborgian Church in Portland, Maine.

INTRODUCTION TO SWEDENBORGIAN THOUGHT

An online course from the Swedenborgian House of Studies Taught by Dr. Gregory R. Johnson, Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Swedenborgian Studies, September 5-December 12, 2003



Dr. Gregory Johnson

The aim of this course will be to provide an introduction to the life, thought, and influence of

Swedenborg. Using Robert Kirven's newly released *Concise Overview of Swedenborg's Theology*, there will be a special focus on his systematic theology, which will be compared to other Christian theologians and other religious traditions, East and West. The Ernst Benz biography will also be foundational.

Tuition for SHS credit is \$400. To register, please contact Kim Hinrichs at khinrichs@shs.psr.edu or at 510-849-8228.



The Swedenborgian Church of North America
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