

# THE MESSENGER

Published by the Swedenborgian Church of North America

September 2004



*Emanuel Swedenborg  
(aka Paul Zacharias)  
delivered this stirring  
message at the open-  
ing of Convention  
July 10, 2004.*

Dear Friends,

**I** bring you warm greetings and blessings from the real world...the world of the spirit. I note that your theme this week is: a voice in the wilderness. You will

understand that I felt the meaning of these words very keenly many years ago. But thank God, conditions have greatly improved over the past two hundred years.

Please note well these words and inscribe them in your heart: The hour of God is at hand.

By this I mean that so much is at stake at the present time. A great shift in human consciousness is essential in all religions and nations over the next twenty or thirty years...people becoming more aware of higher divine realities. Too many churches and religions have become fossilized in old dogma and divisions. This will require a great deal of faith and courage on your part...the cost will be high in sacrifice, honesty and risk-taking. Remember that the next two decades will be crucial. You will see many vast upheavals in all sectors of life...and eventually there will be great suffering and heartache...or there will be a glorious transformation. It all depends upon what you choose and how you act.

Much is holding you back. Fundamentalism in all its forms; materialism; excess nationalism, corporate and personal greed—these are holding back the Kingdom of God. On the other hand, wonderful forces for good have been loosed upon the face of the earth...and I tell you that the Lord will shower help, strength and guidance upon all who truly want to change and are brave enough to accept the glorious adventure of personal transformation. God wants so much for a nobler, finer world

*180th Convention of the Swedenborgian Church*

## Awaken to Who You Truly Are

to evolve, and in so many ways what the final outcome will be depends in large measure upon all of you. The Lord wants to give you the Kingdom, and it is yours if you truly want it with your whole heart and mind.

Focus on God's goodness and truth...not just in your head but in your heart...open up...let it in. Visualize the Kingdom within you, within your church, your home, in your place of work... wherever you are. This is the Lord's desire for all of you and all of his children. All of this means that this is a wonderful time to be alive...make the most of it. Let God reign supreme in your life.

I close with three brief thoughts:

First, when you read the Bible and my commentaries on God's Word, read them as if they had just been published, and published primarily just for you. When you do this you will find their power to inspire and guide you is amazing.

Second, do not indulge in despair and gloom and doom. This comes directly from the hells. Certainly you must face your concerns and problems in life honestly, with eyes wide open; but know that the Lord God and great legions of angels and millions of fellow spiritual pilgrims are working with you to build up the Kingdom of God on earth.

Third, feel...know...the Lord's closeness. Open your heart to his influx. Hold his hand and he will lead you. Give the Lord honor and praise and glory. Awaken to who you truly are...a beloved child of Almighty God. And know that the Lord depends upon you. When you understand all of this, then you know why you are here, and what you are called upon to do.

The heavens send you peace, calmness and abundant Love. So be it.

*The Rev. Paul Zacharias is a retired Swedenborgian minister living in Kitchener, Ontario.*



**A great shift in human consciousness  
is essential in all religions and nations  
over the next twenty or thirty years...  
people becoming more aware of higher  
divine realities.**

**CONVENTION ISSUE:  
"A Voice in the Wilderness"**

Convention Sermon • President's Farewell Address  
President-Elect's Address • The Graduates Speak

## The Best-Laid Plans Can Turn...Squirrelly

I'm now a veteran of seventeen straight Swedenborgian Church conventions, (should one admit this sort of thing?) and could likely tell anybody more than he or she wants to know about these annual get-togethers—although each one is different, and each, I should hasten to add, has offered much that was uplifting, inspiring and fun before it was over. There have been conventions where the rooms had dust balls the size of miniature tumbleweeds; no hangers (usual); no washcloths; no soap; a 40-watt ceiling light that would allow you to make your way to bed but you'd need a flashlight to read; no air conditioning, no fans, hundred-yard dashes down halls the length of football fields to get to the bathroom; doorknobs that came off in your hand; doors that came unhinged; hard metal chairs that produced symptoms I won't describe here; beds manufactured by the same misanthropic folks who brought you the metal chairs; arguments and wrangling about issues on convention floor that went on so long that we lost track of the original question to be moved; lots of confusion, especially in the first 24 hours; salad dressing of a quality that drove me to travel with pocket-size Paul Newman, etc., etc.—and of course the time I got stranded in Xenia, Ohio, in the dead of night, which was entirely *my* fault, the only tragedy being that nobody missed me or knew I was gone.

But none of these challenges arose at this convention. No problem finding the registration area; we were escorted to the room and helped with our baggage (there's an advantage to being *older*); the keys fit and actually opened the doors; the room was immaculate and the bed was *made*—and comfortable; there were hangers, soap, washcloths; the lighting was more than adequate; the weather was perfect, the food was good; the air conditioning worked; the meeting rooms were comfortable and aesthetically pleasing; everything was smooth, well-organized and relaxed; events followed one on another in

orderly succession, completing themselves without mishap...until...

It was a warm and balmy night when the buses departed from St. Jerome University for the Ordination Service at Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener. There was great anticipation—four ordinands and one inductee, the most we've ever had, and the attending ministers and laypersons in their white robes; the choir, led by Laurie Turley, the flowers, the beauty of the sanctuary—for me, and I'm sure for many others, this is the highlight of convention, when we are witness to our new ministers being launched forth into their chosen areas of calling. We're poised in front seats, cameras ready. The service begins, a stirring anthem is sung, "Find Us Faithful," a beautiful prayer is given by Jim Lawrence, the ordinands and inductee share their calls to ministry, and the choir begins its second musical presentation, "Let the River Run." Then, midway through the anthem, the lights go out. The electricity is completely off; the emergency light is on in the ceiling. The choir continues singing under Laurie's professional direction without missing a beat. The River Runs, but there's no current. George Dole somehow delivers the charge to the ordinands in the dark, with only the candles on the altar providing a small glow. The laying on of hands, the ordination blessing, the placing of the stoles, all serenely performed in semi-darkness.

Later, people comment on how beautiful the ceremony was in the flickering candlelight, but those of us who were creeping down the aisle to try to get pictures, hoping that the flash range would be adequate, cannot appreciate it and find it difficult to give ourselves over to the beauty of the moment; we're worried that our photos will be wrecked. There's a lesson in this: Relax, enjoy what each moment brings, and know that God is in charge. (As it turns out, the pictures are fine.) The lights come back on sometime during the presentation of the ordination tokens.

But the reception, the cake and refreshments, have already been moved to the church lawn, and we are all still

stumbling around in the glare of floodlights and deep twilight. What *happened*?

We're told, then, that a squirrel landed on the transformer. One of the Kitchener members got the power company on it right away, and it was fixed in record time. But the squirrel, of course, was fried. What does all this mean, in the inner sense, in terms of divine symbolism? I'm not sure I want to go there.

Anyway, except for one unlucky rodent, the evening turned out fine—all in all, it was a truly joyous and memorable convention.

Our thanks to the Convention Planning Committee and all the other Kitchener folks involved: Ron and Val Brugler, Barbara Cullen, Steve Thomas, Deb Wilson, Florence Rosenberger, Carl and Joyce Heck, Jean Russell, John Leffering, Sue Frid, Grace Sudden, Jeannie Czudjowycz, Kathy Megs, Kirk Miller, Fran McIntosh, Cathy Lauber, Mary Leffering, Denise Kamo, Don and Jeannette Lasso, Herb and Betty Schneider, Joan McGavin, Pat Zacharias, Peggy Heuss, and Fiona McAlister. And of course the Central Office staff, Martha Bauer, Kim Fenol and Gina Perrachi; the Committee on Worship; EDSU; and Laurie and Ken Turley for another year of fabulous music.

—Patte LeVan 

## THE MESSENGER

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

September 2004  
Volume 225 No. 7  
Whole Number 5292

Typesetting & Layout  
Town & Country  
Press, Plymouth, IN

Patte LeVan, *Editor*  
**Editorial Address:**  
The Messenger  
P.O. Box 985  
Julian, CA 92036

TEL: (760) 765-2915

E-MAIL: [messenger@julianweb.com](mailto:messenger@julianweb.com)

**Business & Subscription Address:**  
Central Office  
11 Highland Ave.  
Newtonville, MA 02460  
E-Mail: [manager@swedenborg.org](mailto:manager@swedenborg.org)

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

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

# Swedenborgians in the Wilderness

Convention  
Sermon  
July 11, 2004

Wilma Wake



One day recently I was checking the phone messages at the Portland Swedenborgian Church, where I minister, and I heard a message that started my heart singing:

"We're from a community agency and want your help with a folk festival on cultural diversity." I thought, Oh, this is good! We are becoming better known; especially for our understanding of diversity.

But then the caller continued: "We are hoping that you can work in the food tent and provide the Swedish food."

I realized we have a long way to go yet in being known and understood for who we are.

How do we become known?

Today's scripture and this week's convention theme tell us to listen to the voice in the wilderness. We Swedenborgians are wandering the wilderness today, listening for the voice. What is it saying to us?

I loved the Biblical studies I did many years ago with scholar Elisabeth Schussler-Fiorenza. She suggests that one way of bringing scripture alive and making it present in one's own life, is to put one's self into the passage and creatively flow with what emerges. Let's try this with the Isaiah passage, imagining that it is the Swedenborgian Church wandering lost in the wilderness.

ISAIAH 40: 1-6, 31

Voice in the Wilderness:

*Swedenborgians, be comforted.  
Speak tenderly to each other.*

*You do not need to live with the guilt  
of past sins.*

*You have spent enough time in suffering  
and pain.*

*It is now time for you to prepare a pathway  
out of this wilderness*

*A pathway where the Lord  
can walk by your side.  
Every valley shall be raised up.  
Every mountain and hill made low  
The rough ground shall become level  
The rugged places a plain  
And the glory of the Lord will be revealed  
And all humankind together will see it.  
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.  
CRY OUT, Swedenborgians!*

**Swedenborgian Church:** [frightened; lost in the wilderness]: Yes, Voice. I hear you. What shall I cry out?

**Voice:** First, you must cry. Grieve. Let go of all that you have been so that you can go to where you are being led.

**Swedenborgian Church:** Uh, I don't want too much change! I like my spot in my pew on Sunday morning. If I lose that or have to experience new hymns or a new way to worship, I risk losing God.

**Voice:** Remember that Divine Love and Wisdom is both substance and form. You can find new forms of worship and being church, but the Lord's Divine substance will not change; nor will your essence. You will soar on wings like eagles. You will run and not grow weary. You will walk and not faint. Cry out who you are!

**Swedenborgian Church:** Well, actually, I'm not sure really just who we are!

Let's leave our lost Swedenborgian Church in the wilderness having a conversation with a voice in order to consider the question of who we are.

Some years ago, I heard a wise voice in the words of Roy Oswald, well-respected consultant on church growth, who was asked in a workshop: "Why are our Swedenborgian churches not growing?"

He replied: "It seems to me that you keep talking about how much

you are like everybody else. That you have something for everyone. That doesn't draw people! Instead, tell the world what is *unique* about you. How you are *different* from all other churches. You offer a theology of spiritual growth filled with tools for the journey; people are hungry for this."

Perhaps before we can find the path out of the wilderness, we need to be able to answer the question: what makes us uniquely who we are?

Swedenborg says we are all one. Yet we are each *distinguishably* one.

We can assert our uniqueness without claiming that we have the *only* truth or the *best* path. We as a people can be *both* part of the oneness of all creation, *and* also distinguished by that which is uniquely us.

What are some of the things that make us who we are? Let's dialog and share! To spark the discussion, here are some ideas:

## Community:

We're not primarily lone mystics on a mountaintop. We are walking a spiritual path – similar to that described in many mystical paths and world religions; but we do it in community – *our* community. The relationships we have with each are part of our distinct identity.

## Tradition

We have a shared history we have lived together.

We honor our traditions that define the basis of our own approach to spirituality.

(Continued on page 88)



Ministers and laypersons who have served the Kitchener church: (left, back row) Betsy Coffman, John Maine, Ron Brugler, Steve Thomas (front) Paul Zacharias, Dave Johnson, Eric Allison.

## Swedenborgians in the Wilderness

(Continued from page 87)

We choose to use Swedenborg's writings and their basis in the Word, with Swedenborg's understanding of the Word, as a framework for the spiritual path. This becomes our criteria for keeping ourselves accountable to each other and to the Lord. It allows us to soar through spiritual diversity with wings of eagles; yet always come back to rootedness in our own way of evaluating our Distinct Way.

### Our Distinct Way

Our lives are the living out of who we are. *What* we do is like what others of love do, but *why* we do it is from our own tradition.

We live with an ongoing effort to practice "uses," to *make a difference in the world* from the pursuit of social action to change systems, to the celebration of everyday actions that sustain ordinary life.

Every action every moment is serving the Divine.

Social activist Dorothea Day said: "If I pray by making soup and serving soup, I feel I'm praying by doing. If I pray by saying words, I can sometimes feel frustrated."

We can all feel the frustration some days of praying with words. Swedenborg encourages us to often pray with our actions.

We value the *environment*, because the Divine is in all of creation and we

appreciate the Spirit-matter relationship.

We work for *peace* because we honor the Divine in every person.

We appreciate the *complex psychological-spiritual interplay of life's journey*.

Swedenborg's dramatic encounters with the Divine allow us to value a range of spiritual experience, yet to keep our focus on the pathway of regeneration. We walk a path. Walking that path is knowing that there are times of dying just as there are times of rebirth. The caterpillar must die to become a butterfly.

Swedenborg tells us that we are part of the Divine Human. Jesus did not fully understand who he was until the passion of the cross when he experienced complete emptying of all the ego identity that remained. And he entered into oneness with the Divine.

We are a people on a pathway. We have times of emptying our ego as well as times of rebirth and finding oneness with the Divine.

We have been emptying our egos for a long time now! We have suffered our losses. Churches have closed. Membership has lowered. We have become less known in the past century. We have had losses in the *form* in which we have existed.

But we are entering a new era now: a time of exploring new ways of expressing our unique *essence*.

We have been dying to our old concept of church and denomination and worship.

Now is the time for rebirth. Now is the time to transform from caterpillars to butterflies and let our unique essence shine forth from new forms!

We have exciting new concepts of church popping up throughout Convention. We are bursting with the flowering of music and art and books. We are exploring different ways of sharing, and experimenting with forms of worship. New people with fresh perspectives are joining us. We have new PSR and SHS grads. We will ordain four new ministers, transfer



Following the Sunday service, Rev. Dave and Elizabeth Johnson were honored for their service. Dave was minister of the Kitchener church between 1943-1963. Elizabeth was honored for her role in founding what is now known as the KW Music Productions. They were presented with a framed pen and ink sketch of the Church of the Good Shepherd by Marion Woeller, a church member.

an ordination, and authorize a new candidate for ministry. We will consecrate our first-ever lay-woman president.

As we say goodbye and thank you to the leaders who have brought us this far, we also say welcome to those who will lead us on the next stage of our journey.

Let's talk this week about who we have been, who we are, and, who we are becoming in terms of *community, tradition, and how we live life*.

Let's go back to our Swedenborgian Church, lost in the Wilderness, as it cries out:

**Swedenborgian Church: WE ARE SWEDENBORGIAN! One with all of CREATION! And also uniquely ourselves.**

**Voice: Trust the Lord to guide you to what you are becoming.**

**Swedenborgian Church: Hey, look! I see a path – with the sun shining forth at the end of it – let's get started on this great journey out of the wilderness and into the sunshine!**

Let's begin with a song in our hearts, as we listen to the choir sing "On Eagle's Wings."

*The Rev. Dr. Wilma Wake is part-time pastor of the Portland, Maine, Swedenborgian Church.*



**We appreciate  
the complex  
psychological-spiritual  
interplay of life's journey.  
Swedenborg's dramatic  
encounters with the  
Divine allow us  
to value a range  
of spiritual experience,  
yet to keep our focus on  
the pathway  
of regeneration.**

## The Road to Angel Under Construction

Ron Brugler



*Ron was presented with a plaque in appreciation for his six years of service:*

*"Ronald P. 'Bruiser' Brugler exploding onto the Swedenborgian Wrestling circuit in 1998, Ronald 'Bruiser' Brugler (a.k.a. 'The Rev') has been a constant attraction since taking over the spotlight. Now stepping down from his throne as Convention President on this 14th day of July 2004, Rev. Ron will be remembered as a champion in the hearts of the Swedenborgian Church goers. During his unprecedented six year run, 'Bruiser' has 'wrestled' with the Swedenborgian Church's many issues, problems, and crises, for which his fellow members are most appreciative. Always keeping the Lord in his heart, the wind at his back and Governor Jesse Ventura at bay, Rev. Ron's run as the Convention President will be remembered as one of the best.*

*Well done, good and plenty servant!*

*With love and affection,  
General Council"*

Good evening everyone!  
On behalf of all of us here who are affiliated with the Canada Association and the Church of the Good Shepherd, welcome to Kitchener-Waterloo and the 180<sup>th</sup> annual convention sessions of the Swedenborgian Church.

This is my sixth and final president's report, and I want to offer a few words of appreciation to several people and groups who have given me tremendous support throughout these past six years:

- ♦ Val, Toby and Jessie
- ♦ The good folk at the Church of the Good Shepherd
- ♦ Martha and the rest of the Central Office staff
- ♦ Paul Martin, Chair of the Council of Ministers
- ♦ Chris, Gloria, Larry and the rest of General Council
- ♦ Those of you who serve on the boards of Wayfarers Chapel and our Swedenborgian House of Studies who have welcomed me into your meetings. And perhaps

most important of all—to all of you, who have put up with me: Thank you all!

I truly believe that together we have accomplished a lot of good things for our beloved church these past six years. I think of so many things.

- ♦ We've built a new visitor's center at Wayfarers Chapel.
- ♦ We've launched, after too many years of just talking about it, our new Youth Director's position.
- ♦ We've upgraded ministers' salaries—something that had not been done for 17 years!
- ♦ We've moved our seminary from Newton, Massachusetts to Berkeley, California and have affiliated with the Pacific School of Religion—and we are seeing here this week the "first fruits" of that effort—four ordinations and one induction! Five new ministers! We launched our first ever series of pamphlets geared for specific "target audiences" with the new baptism, marriage, and memorial pamphlets, part of an ongoing series.
- ♦ We've contributed to the growth of Urbana University through our contributions to the Johnny Appleseed Center, and the launch of a new ministry there.
- ♦ And we have taken steps to open up dialogue with our brothers and sisters in the other branches of the Swedenborgian Church around the globe.

I want to say a bit more about that: will those of you who attended the Church Growth and Evangelization Seminar sponsored by the General Church in Boulder Colorado this past year please stand up? And remain standing while I ask those of you who took part in the Gathering Leaves Women's Conference to please stand up. I just want to thank all of you for your participation in these events. These are not about merging our churches into one body. These are simply about learning from our brothers and sisters in the New Church around the world. We, as part of the Church of the New Jerusalem, had basically withdrawn from this global organization. We are now part of it once again. And thank you, for taking the time to support me in these efforts.

Most of you know that these past six years I have taken four trips to England for various meetings with members of the British Conference of the New Church. Each of these trips has been a blessing—and I am so glad that Ken, Laurie, Emily and Ethan Turley will be going soon on a similar venture.

My last trip there was in November when Paul Martin, Chair of our Council of Ministers, and I attended the meetings of the British Conference ministers. We flew over three days early so that Paul could see a few of the sights in London. He had never been there before, so, since I have been there so often, I ended up serving as tour guide.

Without getting lost, I took him on the correct tubes and buses to many different locations. We went to Big Ben and the Parliament building, to Westminster Cathedral and Buckingham Palace, to Kensington Palace and past 10 Downing Street, complete with an anti-war protest. We saw St. Paul's Cathedral

*(Continued on page 90)*

## The Road to Angel Under Construction

(Continued from page 89)

and the National Gallery, and I actually managed to work in a tour of Swedenborg's London by taking him to lunch at Cheshire Cheese, a pub where Swedenborg himself had dined, and down the street where Swedenborg had walked to the publisher, carrying the first hand-written volume of the *Arcana*. We also went to Bun Hill Cemetery, where William Blake is buried, and I discovered that across the street was the oldest Methodist Church in London where John Wesley is buried.

On our last morning in London, before taking the train up to Nuneton and the Purley Chase Retreat Centre, Paul asked if we could see a bit of the British Museum. I gladly complied, informing him that we could also make a brief stop at the Swedenborg Society, the first New Church publishing house in the world.

The next morning a quick look at my map assured me that all we needed to do was take Bus 37 eastbound, and I knew the area well enough to know where to get off to make our way to the Swedenborg Society. So we stood at the bus stop, and after four or five of those red double-decker buses stopped and made their way onward, I saw Bus 37 approaching. But it was then that I realized that God had more than a trip to the Swedenborg Society in mind for us. It seems that beside each bus's number is a placard noting its final destination. And our #37 bus's final destination was Angel! That was enough for me. I knew that I needed to pay attention.

We boarded that bus, and Paul immediately made his way up the stairs to the upper level, but I paused for a moment just to observe those who chose to remain below. There were people dressed for the office, weighed down by their briefcases and laptop computers. There were people burdened with shopping bags and groceries. There were others who looked alone, and lonely. And I noticed something else about that lower level. No one spoke to his or her neighbor. It was as though each person was in his or her own little world.

I then went up the stairs and sat beside Paul. On the upper level, people seemed happy to be there. Some were pointing out the sights. Others were basking in the sunlight that shone through the front windows. Many people laughed as they talked with one another. Yes, that upper level was a different world from the one below. I too was happy to be there.

As we made our way toward Angel, I realized that I was riding in an example of what Swedenborg describes as the basic human condition. Swedenborg wrote that we are each simultaneously citizens of two worlds as we make this journey through life. We live in the natural world, the lower level. But we also live in the spiritual world—the upper level.

Indeed, Swedenborg had much to teach us about life on these two levels of human existence. We are taught, for ex-

ample, that if we dwell solely in the natural world we can easily become like those folk who were weighed down with the worries and concerns of day-to-day life. In so doing, we will be weighed down spiritually, missing many of the positive and truly rewarding aspects of life, leaving us alone and lonely. But, if we make the effort to dwell on the upper level, life takes on new meaning. We feel the warmth of God's love in each ray of sunshine. We look for signs of God's love in all that we do and see. And, we reach out to our neighbors, talking to them and journeying with them. For we are taught that "heaven's joy is found in the joy we discover in others."

When we reached the stop where Paul and I were to get off that bus and make our way down the street to the Swedenborg

Society, I noticed the name of the street that we were on. It was Bloomsbury Way. Think about that for a moment. The Swedenborg Society, the very first organization in the world with a mission to promote and distribute the works of our new evangel, is located on Bloomsbury Way.

I laughed when I saw that because The Swedenborg Society and Bloomsbury Way seemed so right together. After all, haven't the teachings of our church been given to the world to help our spiritual lives bloom and grow into what God intends? And what does God intend for all of his children? Our teachings state it quite simply.

They note, "God's will is that there be a heaven from the human race." To put it another way,

God's will is that we each choose to make the journey toward Angel. And were this not enough, one other object had caught my attention as that bus pulled away from the stop. It was a road sign intended as a warning for motorists. The sign read (are you ready for this?) "The Road to Angel is Under Construction—Expect Delays." I knew on one level that the creator of that sign had intended to conjure up images of bulldozers and torn up pavement. But to me, that sign summed up one of the primary tenets of our faith. For our spiritual growth, our journey toward Angel, our regeneration, as Swedenborg labeled it, does involve construction and even delays. Yes, seldom is the road smooth, or the ride easy. We encounter obstacles, detours, and times when we must wait for the congestion to clear. But God knows this, and as our teachings make clear, God is with us, even there.

I share this with you because this experience holds three primary lessons that I, as the outgoing president of convention, want to leave with you. The first is this. Six years ago, we were like the people on the first level of that bus toward Angel. We were burdened and weighed down with so many worries and concerns. And as a result, we in this church had basically stopped talking to each other. We were stuck on that first level of the bus.

I set out to correct that situation. I went from church to church to church. And we've talked. We've listened. We've laughed. We've cried. We've set goals together and have met a lot

(Continued on page 102)

**The Book  
of Revelation  
tells us that John saw  
the Holy City descending.  
It didn't say that it was  
over. It never said that  
it was complete.  
It never said that  
it was a  
past event.**

## PRESIDENT ELECT'S ADDRESS

July 12, 2004

*Chris Laitner*

During the last three or four years of my teaching career, I taught a semester-long writing class for seniors; a refresher course covering various types of writing from the basic essay to fairly specific technical writing, and requiring a lot of short, well-crafted products from the students. The process used in the class was the “just write” formula where you make yourself begin writing immediately, not worrying about the conventions; just write, write, write. Then you work on the formal construction and editing processes. This is quite different from my own writing comfort zone where I seem to need an opening sentence before I begin to write. But, I modeled the “just write” process for every assignment, and I have to say that it works fairly well.

Because I was struggling to find the right opening for this address and getting nowhere, I decided to attempt the “just write” process. I needed to stop banging ideas around in my head and actually get into the process in order to create something. The concept of getting up and doing is often a better plan than just sitting around thinking about it. Let me share with you the results of the beginning of my “just write” process.

Fifty-seven. Masters in Music and Music Education. University of Michigan, Olivet College, Central Michigan University. Single. 5'5.5". My dad, Fred, 92. One sister, Dorie Litchfield. Age undisclosed. Two nieces, one nephew, two great nephews. Nicole, Christine, Benjamin, Nathaniel, Jaylen. Midland, Michigan. Reading. Music. Co-own a house with another teacher. Retired after thirty-two years of teaching. Born and bred. Church of the Holy City, Detroit. Allergic to red, yellow, and green peppers. Oh, yes: I am a Swedenborgian and can't fathom being anything else.

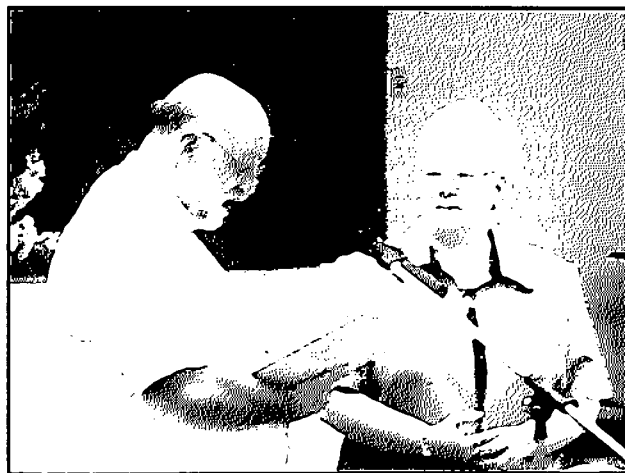
Let's call that the catalyst section and move on into the specifics.

Until Wednesday, July 14, 2004, the presidents of the denomination have been male clergymen. This line extends

back over 180 years. I've grown up with this model, and, actually, my own internal picture of the president of Convention is one of a male clergyman wearing clerics. It took a great deal of soul-searching and prayer on my part simply to accept the nomination for this office last year, and, after my election, I've put in many more hours of prayerful consideration to envision myself in this role.

I've used this president-elect year to look carefully at what the president of Convention is responsible for, and I've tried to ascertain what the president of Convention really “does.”

The first issue is quite clear: the president of Convention is the connecting piece in all of the activities of the denomination. The president is either a member or an ex-officio member (with or without vote, but always with voice) on all of the major boards, committees, and councils of the denomination. In this way, the president is a kind of corporate mind, memory, and vision—present and future—in all deliberations. We know at some level that this is actually impossible, but we also know that every president has tried to fulfill this obligation to the best of his ability – and I recognize that I, too, will try. The positive side is that there is a connecting voice and presence; the negative side is that any president is human and prone to human interpretation. The trick, I think, is in continually working at maintaining perspective. I will try to do so. Like any person in any profession, there will be aspects of this position that connect more closely with who I am while others will definitely be “learned interests” where there will be a less strong connection, but I will endeavor to understand their processes. Throughout my life, I have always tried to stay informed about the things for which I was responsible. I don't think that anyone in a position of leadership or authority should ever simply sit back and rely primarily on personal interpretation of things or events.



*Ron and Chris at Chris's installation.*

The second issue, the identification of what the president of Convention “does,” is much more complex, and is, even at this very moment, changing. An example might help. When I was fifteen or sixteen and attending a convention for the first time in Philadelphia, Rev. Richard H. Tafel, Sr., was the president. He had been in that position for awhile, and even my parents spoke in kind of hushed tones about “Rev. Tafel, president of Convention.” My first impression was of a tall, older man, wearing a dark suit and a clerical collar. He, even though I was a fairly ordinary teen in terms of authority, represented a kind of pinnacle of the Swedenborgian Church in my mind. He had presence and authority for me, and left me feeling slightly afraid – but in the sense of awe for the position, I think. To this day, I understand that the very person of the president of Convention is important; the president is the kind of live image of the denomination and people react to that. It's a pretty awesome responsibility.

Over the years, times have changed, formality has lessened, and more personal connections are maintained between and among all members of the denomination, clergy and laity alike. But there is still that image. To that end, I recognize that wherever the president of Convention goes, he or she is the immediate representative of the denomination corporately and personally. It's an honorable responsibility and must be carried

*(Continued on page 92)*

## PRESIDENT ELECT'S ADDRESS (Continued from page 91)

well. I intend to do that. Recently it was my privilege to provide this use at the Gathering Leaves experience. I was honored to represent the "Convention branch" on a plenary panel of four spokeswomen representing four branches: the General Convention, the British Conference, the General Church, and the Lord's New Church. It was a marvelous first experience of speaking for our denomination!

At this point, we need to spend some time on the process that we will be following for the next three years. Thirty-two years of my life was spent in teaching, and during that time I learned the reality of the mandate to make lesson plans. Without an overarching plan for large periods of time and then the various specific plans for each quarter, month, week, and day, a teacher would be lost. So would the students because there would be a lack of sequential learning. It's that kind of background that I'm bringing to this office. I need to plan, to list things in sequence. My last principal was a master of "motivational sayings" that we sometimes got really tired of hearing and seeing, but the one that stated "If you fail to plan you plan to fail" is most worthwhile. There's another good statement I've heard regarding planning: "Plan the work; work the plan." We need to look at the outline of the plan for the next three years.

Last year, in the biographical statement I sent in to the *Messenger*, [May 2003] I listed some goals that I felt would be both achievable and useful during my three year term. Revisiting those goals this month, I am pleased to report that some already show signs of positive beginnings. We are in the final stages of establishing a new outreach program: a center for applied ethics at Urbana University. This center will be supported by a combination of Urbana University, the Urbana Swedenborgian Church, the Ohio Association, the Swedenborgian House of Studies, and the denomination. Kevin Baxter has been selected by Urbana University to serve as the first director/facilitator and, over an initial two-year process, the Center will access funding based on

grants and on the programs it will create that ultimately will replace the current funding structure. This venture will be a positive, creative way of reaching out to people through a new venue.

Another project would respond to the need that so many of our isolated members and friends scattered all over this North American continent have – to feel connected to the whole. They – and we – need closer, regular connection to share and discuss ideas. We currently have things in place to address some of these issues: we have *The Messenger*; we have churches that have online newsletters; we have a wonderfully helpful and interesting denominational Website that includes access to scanned books and other online materials as well as many helpful links; and we have a central office that responds as immediately as possible to emails and calls it receives, and provides other Internet and phone possibilities for people with questions. I'm certain that there are connections that I've missed. The point is that we have a lot of things available. What we need is a single creative and talented individual who would become the coordinator for all of this, who would connect with isolated members and friends via electronic and phone

methods who would send out a monthly newsletter indicating various connections for the isolated, who would oversee the creation of video and audio presentations of Swedenborgian church services for those who would like them – and make them available either via the Internet or as CDs, DVDs, or tapes. While this is not yet a fully fleshed-out idea, it's a need and a possibility, and we will accomplish it.

The other goals that I listed in that same *Messenger* piece are primarily to continue the good connections that have been established through the traveling that Ron Brugler has done, to continue to see that the excellent work that Kurt Fekete is doing as Youth Director for the denomination is ongoing and growing, to travel myself to Associations and individual centers, and to continue to explore the ways that our beliefs can be brought further into the world.

Goals are worthy because they give focus to an organization. Goals in isolation are not a particularly good way to do business because they don't follow or outline a path. We need to get better at identifying what it is we're trying to accomplish. We need a clear mission. In order to have a mission, an organization needs a vision for itself from which it can identify its mission and then create the specific goals needed to fulfill that mission. An excellent result of establishing such a clear focus is that a true plan, containing both short and longterm goals, can be created. We need that especially because we, the members and friends of the Swedenborgian Church, are a truly diverse group of people, and the plan that we will follow needs in some way to touch the lives of all of us.

One of the things that I believe the president of Convention "does" is to listen to and communicate with the members about things that are going on and plans that are being made. This denomination was created because people of like minds and spirit needed community to learn, discuss, and assimilate Emanuel Swedenborg's important teachings. Nearly two hundred years later, we're still working on a framework that binds our distant centers and individuals together. It is my firm belief that this overarching organization needs to con-

**This denomination was created because people of like minds and spirit needed community to learn, discuss, and assimilate Emanuel Swedenborg's important teachings...it is my firm belief that this overarching organization needs to continue to exist, and we need to find the best way to empower it to be useful to the needs of our various members and to be helpful and accessible to those who are seeking. Reciprocal communication is essential to continuance and connection.**

(Continued on page 93)

## PRESIDENT ELECT'S ADDRESS *(Continued from page 92)*

tinue to exist, and we need to find the best way to empower it to be useful to the needs of our various members and to be helpful and accessible to those who are seeking. Reciprocal communication is essential to continuance and connection.

In trying to find a way to create a tangible sense of connection, I believe that we should establish one shared outreach program that each of our churches, centers, and even individual members could support in some way for a year. This would not take the place of programs that various groups are already engaged in. It would simply be one thing that everyone was involved in via some means; a shared outreach mission for the year.

Reading through the items identified by the National Council of Churches as central areas of need during this quadrennium, I am going to suggest that we choose to focus on helping the children of the world. Each of our churches and centers, the denomination, and even individuals would identify one way, no matter how small, to assist the needs of children who are in difficult situations. It might be to join a community effort; it might be contribution of money or some kind of participation in a larger organization that helps children; it might be giving some time to assist as a volunteer in a school; it might be a mentoring position. There are myriad ways, and each group or individual will choose a way that works best for them. At next summer's Convention we'll share what we've done and then identify another overarching, shared outreach use for the next year. It would be just a little thing, but it would be a point of connection for all of us – and it would certainly benefit children in need.

In preparing to step into this office, I tried to identify the ways in which I could serve the most useful purpose for the Swedenborgian Church. One thing I know about myself is that I work best with some sort of outline. To that end, I called Rich Tafel, a man whose expertise in strategic planning I've admired for several years. Rich provided a little exercise for me to use to ultimately estab-

lish two things to help guide me in moving into the presidency. I have, through that exercise, created a mission statement for myself as president, and I've also created a kind of working mission statement for the Swedenborgian Church – not one that I would impose on the Church, but one that guides my thinking about the Church. Establishing these statements gives me a framework to view all that I do in the next three years through their definitive lenses. Anything that doesn't fit isn't right.

These are my mission statements:

### President of the Swedenborgian Church

**M**y mission as president of the Swedenborgian Church is to motivate our members to the broad spectrum of vital ministries in our Church. I will accomplish this by communicating and working with people to encourage ongoing efforts, always being open to new concepts that will further the usefulness of the Church.



*Choir jumpin' with "St. John the Revelator"*



*Ron, Chris and Chris's sister, Dorie Litchfield.*

### The Swedenborgian Church

**T**he mission of the Swedenborgian Church is to support the work of its members in local and denominational venues. This is accomplished through regular review of existing projects and exploration of new strategies in order to best implement the vision of the Church in the world.

In closing, I'll tell you about a little book that's had quite an impact on me. Last year, in June, shortly before coming to Convention, I was walking down the hall to the music room at Aldersgate United Methodist Church where I direct bell choirs. Due to the growth of their Sunday School, the church lending library has been moved into this hallway. A set of books had recently been placed on one of the shelves and the title caught my eye – and I laughed right out loud! The title: *Here Am I — Send Aaron!*

Now, I'm not Moses, and I'm not looking for Aaron, but I am using this title to underscore the combination of honor and fear that accompanies my election to the presidency. As the months from last year's election to this year's assumption of the office have gone by, I've occasionally thought that I'd really like a brother named Aaron and that he would – at least once in awhile – speak for me. But, just as Moses had to stand up and be himself, so have I recognized that I, myself, accepted the nomination and the election, and that much consideration and prayer went into those choices. I believe that it is correct that I am here at this time, and that I answer your call to assume this office. I believe that I have been led, sometimes most

*(Continued on page 102)*

## GRADUATION AND ORDINATION

**Editor's Note:** The first graduating class of Swedenborgian seminarians from Pacific School of Religion participated in commencement exercises May 23 at the Allen Temple Baptist Church in Oakland: Kevin Baxter, Dave Brown, Alison Lane, Doug Moss, and Kathy Speas all received the M.Div. degree from PSR, and Kevin, Alison, Doug and Kathy also received the Certificate of Swedenborgian Studies. Dave Brown will be finishing his certificate work during this year.

Kathy Speas shared honors with another PSR student in receiving the Paul Wesley Yinger Preaching Award. Kevin, Alison, and Kathy joined Jane Siebert, who was graduated from Friends College with an M.A. in ministry studies and has completed the Certificate of Swedenborgian Studies, in being ordained into the denomination's ministry during this convention session. Rich Tafel (who is ordained American Baptist and has completed the Certificate of Swedenborgian Studies) was inducted into the Swedenborgian ministry. Graduation ceremonies were at St. Jerome's on July 11, and ordination took place the evening of July 12 at the Church of the Good Shepherd. Some of the graduates's speeches are printed here; others will appear in the October issue.

### The Graduates Speak

*Kathy Speas*

It's really satisfying after years of study finally to experience Swedenborgian theology in the real world of hospice chaplaincy.

Hospice is about the most Swedenborgian ministry I can imagine. I have the awesome blessing often to be one of the last people my patients speak with before they actualize their spiritual life. It is my Swedenborgian training that enables me to journey with people facing questions about what their life has meant, and what will happen when they die. The idea that how and what we have loved will become



*Kathy Speas*

our heaven, that we have created enduring peace and love in the ways we have lived, is comforting and makes sense to pretty much everybody I share it with. The notion that God can take our sins and use them for some divine purpose is also immensely comforting. I often use the image of our mistakes and regrets turning to dust, ground for future growth, even as our life's love is creatively transformed into greater glory.

I see a lot of Swedenborgian concepts come to life in my ministry (or come to death, depending on how you look at it):

**Remains:** Even the most deteriorated Alzheimer's patient remembers the 23rd Psalm, the Lord's Prayer, and the words to *Silent Night*. Scripture, prayer, and hymns recalled from childhood have an amazing effect on agitated dementia. There is something from our earliest worship and prayer experiences that sticks with us, even at a time in life when, as Isaiah says, "...the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind..."

**Influx:** Life decides on its own terms and its own timing when it will leave our bodies. People appear to be actively dying, and life stays in them for days or weeks (or even months) longer. It is quite common for someone to remain in this life until they have had a chance to see specific people, until all the children are there, until the grandchild arrives.

**The World of Spirits:** It is common for people to see "invisible" presences before they die. This experience is commonly documented by nurses as evidence the person is getting close to death, as people talk to unseen people, appear to recognize dead friends and



*Ordination by candlelight.*

relatives, and sometimes seem to be straining their vision as if to see something far away.

**Proprium:** It is a challenge to deal with people who have no belief outside of themselves, the events of their life, and what they have experienced with their senses. Nurses will tell you that people who don't believe anything generally have difficult deaths, full of fear and struggling, and often intractably painful, while those who have some kind of faith (any kind of faith) have a more peaceful dying experience.

**Uses:** One of the most important aspects of quality of life at the end is the feeling that we are of some use, not a burden, and still contributing. An important part of Hospice ministry is helping people to see the gift of time together with family, the powerful blessing of letting themselves be cared for, and of affirming the impact their spirit has had on the world, in ways they never thought about. Love has a cosmic impact, I tell people. You have made the universe a better place because you loved.

So, our seminary's first employed minister ended up in an orbit outside of the network of Convention churches. It is a

*(Continued on Page 95)*

## GRADUATION AND ORDINATION

### *The Graduates Speak*

(Continued from Page 94)

tremendous opportunity to actualize Swedenborgian thought outside of our orbit, and to explore a new and creative use for Swedenborg's experience and the theology it generated. I look forward to continuing the dialogue between scholarship and my ministry. I hope my ministry can enrich SHS, as well as the denomination. I see a lot of potential synergy between our churches and the growing presence of Hospice across the country. Swedenborg's teachings speak directly to this experience, and I hope that as a denomination we continue to explore how Swedenborgianism can serve people as they change from a material to a spiritual state.

*The Rev. Kathy Speas is the chaplain at Hospice of Marin in Sonoma, California.*

*Kevin Baxter*

I must apologize in advance, in looking over the program, I realized my fellow ordinands have selected a couple of

verses from the Bible. I on the other hand selected the whole second chapter of Jonah. I am not going to do a theological exposition, but rather I am reading a verse which spoke to me on a much more natural level. Jonah was called by God to deliver a message. When he heard this, he ran, and not just a block or two—Jonah got on a boat and tried to get as far away as he could. God then upset the seas. During the tossing and turning of the boat, the sailors discovered that Jonah was running from his God. They quickly dispatched him to the waters. After being swallowed by a whale or fish (depending on translation), he offers a psalm of thanksgiving (which



*Kevin Baxter*

is the second chapter of the book).

I first received my call to ministry at the convention in 1993. It was the day before my father's final sermon, the best one he ever gave. I approached a minister for advice. After telling him of my concerns and my intense feeling of a call to ministry, he simply told me to try as hard as I could to be anything but a minister. If, after trying not to, I still became a minister, I would find it to be a wonderful, tiring, and rewarding career. To this day, I am not really sure if it was good advice or not. After hearing that bit of advice, like Jonah, I ran. I explored broadcasting, photography, communications, and so on. One day I realized that all the classes I wanted to take were interfering with my major.

So, I took the plunge into religion. However, I still had fears about the influence of my father. Was my desire to be a minister based on the life of my father? But then I asked the question, what is wrong with being influenced by my father? He was a good man and a good minister. Is it any better to be influenced by all the schools or the other popular media? I think not. On this ordination day, I am wearing my father's robe and carrying his Ordination Bible. (A moment of silence for my father.)

Like Jonah, I am thankful to God. I

am happy that as I sailed away, God urged me through the storms in my life to return. And now, I stand on the beach looking toward my call to Urbana University, the Urbana Society, Ohio Association, the Swedenborgian House of Studies, and the community at large. I will bring a message of compassion, charity, love, and hope to all. I just hope that I won't end up like Jonah.

*The Rev. Kevin Baxter will begin a newly created teaching position at Urbana University as director of the Center for Applied Ethics, director of Campus Ministries, and he will also be the new director of Almont Summer School.*

*Jane Siebert*

Scripture: Exodus 17: 8-13.

This choice of scripture for my ordination may seem a bit unusual—one of the many battles in the Old Testament with the Amalekites fighting with the Israelites on their journey to the Promised Land. But this story holds special meaning for me, and my friends from the Pretty Prairie church know why. It was while studying this scripture

(Continued on Page 96)



(From left) Ron Brugler, Susannah Currie, Kevin Baxter, Eric Zacharias, Alison Lane, George Dole, Dorothea Harvey, Jane Siebert, Emily Jane Lemole, Kathy Speas, Jim Lawrence and Rachel Rivers.

## The Graduates Speak

(Continued from Page 95)

almost 20 years ago in our adult Sunday school class that I had my first "aha" moment in my understanding of the inner sense of the scripture.



Jane Siebert

Margaret Kraus mentioned that the Amalekites represent our own doubts and uncertainties that attack us when we are tired and discouraged;

those old bad habits that are sneaky and spring from behind and attack us. I finally realized that the Old Testament is not just a bunch of historical stories that had caused me so much confusion every time I tried to read the Bible. God provides an inner spiritual meaning within these stories that reveals life lessons. This is good stuff. It is amazing. It makes sense of the killing and battles that are sanctioned and even championed by the Lord. And it all fits together as this inner spiritual sense is consistently and rationally woven throughout this literal sense of scripture.

As I studied more I found that this was not just an allegorical system; one cannot rewrite the Bible in this new sense. It is Divine revelation itself opened to us through the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. The inner spiritual sense of the Word is more like something we experience as we read the Bible than something we can simply convert back to words. It connects head and heart. It is between us and the Lord. It is the true experience of the Lord through the Word as we read in John 1:1. And that is why the first experience of this kind is so powerful.

A love of the inner sense was born in me that day and I find I am not alone in this experience. As part of my class work for the certificate in Swedenborgian Studies I have been working

with Wilson Van Dusen on aspects of the inner sense. He encouraged me to talk with others who were not born into the Church and find out how they came to experience the inner sense of Scripture. I have talked with many people, and those with a strong affinity for the inner sense can tell me the exact story of the Bible through which the inner sense was opened for them. It seems the experience, while it may still be present, is not as strong for one born and educated in the Swedenborgian Church. I think this is because they have not fought with the confusing literal sense of the Word but rather were raised with an understanding of the inner sense while studying the literal sense.

In the scripture passage about the Amalekites we have Moses holding up his hands, and as long as he can hold them up the Israelites are winning the battle. But he can't stand there alone and keep them up. And when he lowers his hands the Amalekites prevail. Moses represents the law as we find it in the Word – or the literal sense. We need this literal law to guide us in our battles in life. Remember when Moses was selected by God? He said he wasn't a good speaker, so God gave him Aaron as a mouthpiece. In this story we have Aaron, soon to be a high priest, helping to hold up Moses' hand. Aaron represents truth from the Word as experienced in the inner sense, or mouthpiece of the literal. And Hur, holding up Moses' hand on the other side, represents our own understanding of truth as we study and meditate on what it means to us.

All three levels of truth are needed to fight the Amalekites and all of our psychological and spiritual battles.

So last night when I awoke at three a.m. full of doubt and uncertainty, questioning how I will be able to serve and grow the Pretty Prairie Church, asking who am I to take on the mantle of ministry, I got down on my knees in prayer. And I realized I was being attacked by the Amalekites and this awareness gave me new hope. I was not alone in my battle. God was holding me up in his arms. I am not adequate, but God is beyond adequate. We will move on together.

I have chosen two wonderful women to lay hands on me and in the laying on of hands I pray that this service may help me keep my hands elevated as I serve the Lord and the Pretty Prairie Church. You all know Rev. Dorothea Harvey who is the most spiritual woman I know and closest as representing Aaron the first high priest. Dorothea has been and continues to be a mouthpiece for all women in this Church as she was the first woman to be ordained within the General Convention in 1975. The second person you may not know. Emily Jane Lemole is a wonderful woman that I met through our work together on the steering committee for Gathering Leaves, a retreat bringing together for the first time in history the women of all branches of the Swedenborgian tree. Emily Jane is a member of the General Church, and although women in that branch cannot yet be officially ordained and sanctioned as min-

(Continued on page 97)



## GRADUATION AND ORDINATION

### *The Graduates Speak*

(Continued from Page 96)

isters, I have asked her to lay hands on me as a representation of the ministry of all God's people and affirmation of her personal ministry in God's sight by putting the truth to work in her life.

And now I would like to ask you all to help me, the others being ordained and inducted here tonight, all the ministers and leaders of our Church, to keep our hands elevated as we strive to serve the Lord. *Amen*

*The Rev. Jane Siebert has accepted a call to the Pretty Prairie Swedenborgian Church in Pretty Prairie, Kansas.*

*Doug Moss*

When our dean, Jim Lawrence, suggested to us that you all might like to hear about something that was not even on our radar screens

when we began our ministerial training, I knew it would take me no longer than it takes to say "Emanuel Swedenborg," because to be completely honest with you I had never heard of the gentleman until I met these classmates of mine here.

I had come to seminary hearing a definite call from the Lord to put myself to good use, but also convinced that only through serious and rigorous study could I crack this hard noggin of mine and fully grasp such mysteries as the absolute Truth of the Trinity of three persons, or how Jesus' passion of two thousand years ago somehow absolved me of my as-yet-uncommitted (but soon-to-be) sins.

My talisman in those days was the 51<sup>st</sup> Psalm, which coincidentally plays a large part in the liturgy of many New Church services: "Create in me a clean heart, O Lord, and put a new and right spirit within me." But in those days I was more taken with the 17<sup>th</sup> verse: "The sacrifice acceptable to God is a

broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."

Now I see my attitude at that time as somewhat akin to Abraham's binding of Isaac. When the angel stayed his hand, it was as if the Lord looked down and said "I wanted to see what you were willing to give, but I don't really need this of you." And rather than substituting a ram for the sacrifice he provided me with the teachings of Swedenborg.

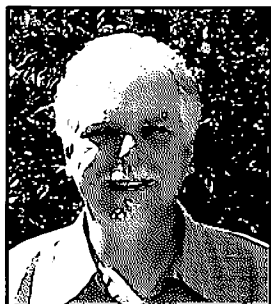
The Lord led me to that to which I could not have been compelled, in such a way that I have felt that it is of my own.

Now, due to the process of our church, I will not stand before you for ordination until this time next year, and I am happy for this. It gives me time to step away from the classroom and finally let the spirit flow out from within. As much as I respect and admire the scholarship of this church, and especially the qualities of my professors Jim Lawrence and Greg Johnson, they can both tell you that in seminary I made a concerted effort *not* to become an academic.

During my chaplaincy training, one of my group used to complain that when I cited the Bible it was, for her, like fingernails on a chalkboard (not being from a Judeo-Christian background), and she hated it when I quoted Swedenborg, whose doctrines were just beginning to take root in me. Now, I cannot apologize for use of the scripture because I cannot, for the life of me, imagine how to be a minister of the Lord without the Word. But of Swedenborg she would say "I don't want to hear what somebody else thought; I want to know what you feel."

And I realize that, in at least some ways, she was right. While there is certainly a big place in ministry for education – for Bible classes and study of Swedenborg's writings (to which I look forward) – a bigger part is to learn from those lessons and just simply and intentionally be a child of God among God's children, not boasting to everyone "how much I have learned and know about the Lord" but rather listening to people, to hear in them the voice of the divine which speaks within each and every one of us.

*Doug Moss will be ordained next year at our convention in San Francisco.* ☩



*Doug Moss*

### *Gathering Leaves*

We gather on a grassy hill,  
Women from many places,  
Though many here have never met,  
All seem familiar faces.

We gather in a sunny room,  
Women from different branches,  
We're here to learn from one another,  
To learn our different dances.

The leaves have gathered here for  
healing,  
Oak, Ash, Honey-locust and Olive,  
We hear each different point of view,  
In charity and love.

We gather next in smaller groups,  
To give and take some more.  
Different ways of seeing,  
Still have a common core.

We gather in a circle,  
And dance in ancient patterns.  
We feel a link among ourselves,  
In touch with all that matters.

We gather all to worship,  
Around the open Word.  
We say the Prayer in different ways,  
But all of us are heard.

Gradually, a light comes on,  
Each group we come to know,  
With all our different gifts to give,  
We form a larger whole.

Different branches, reaching out,  
All separate, seemingly.  
Yet all the branches have their source  
In one life-giving Tree.

As I walk back down the hill,  
Through tears I cannot hide,  
I see with all my heart and mind,  
That love does not divide.

*This poem was inspired by the "Gathering Leaves" women's retreat held at Temenos Retreat Center in Pennsylvania in May 2004. The retreat was attended by women from four branches of the Swedenborgian Church; British Conference, Convention, General Church, and the Lord's New Church.*

*Dori Ferr  
Kitchener, Ontario  
June 2004* ☩

There were 28 ministers and 16 guests present.

Paul Martin gave his last address as Chair.

Ron Brugler gave his last address as President.

Susannah Currie gave the Retirement Committee report. Ministers are able to control their investments online. A socially responsible fund is available. Once a minister is 59 ½ years old he or she can roll the investment over into a self-directed IRA.

Lee Woofenden gave the *Our Daily Bread* Report. There is a new look for the cover to make it more attractive to visitors. There is an online edition, which had over 12,000 hits in April. You can send him sermons in any form.

Susannah Currie and Jane Siebert gave a report on the Gathering Leaves women's retreat. Seventy-eight women attended from different Swedenborgian denominations. The theme stayed away from theological differences. The emphasis was more on what they have in common.

Jim Lawrence gave the Swedenborgian House of Studies report and Paul Martin introduced the students.

Ordinations were approved for Alison Lane, Kevin Baxter, Jane Siebert, and Kathy Speas.

Induction into our ministry was approved for Rich Tafel.

The Report on Same-Sex Marriage was presented by Paul Zacharias, Jonathan Mitchell, Kit Billings and Sage Currie (who represented Kim Hinrichs).

The Statement on Same-Sex Marriage was recommended for adoption to Convention: The Council of Ministers supports and recommends to convention the adoption of the following resolution:

### Denominational Statement on Same-Sex Marriage

With humility and prayerful willingness to be led by the Lord and in love toward the neighbor, The Swedenborgian Church of North America, a Christ-centered church that affirms religious pluralism recognizes the goodness of love in many forms. Wherever love is, God is there too... for "for God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them." (1 John 4:16) We also affirm our fundamental human right

## Summary of The Council of Ministers Meeting

St. Jerome's University  
Waterloo, Ontario  
July 7-9, 2004

of freedom of choice; we affirm the right of each individual to choose his or her life partner and do so within a committed relationship based in love and faith toward the Lord, and in love and fidelity toward one another. We affirm that in a democratic and free society that adult persons should be free to enjoy the same basic legal rights with a committed and faithful relationship, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, religion or social status. We affirm that the presence of hatred, discrimination, homophobia, and selfishness are against God's will as we perceive the Divine with and amongst us.

Therefore, we do so declare and affirm that couples, irrespective of sexual orientation, deserve the right to legally join themselves together in a union of love called marriage.

We do this with the conviction that marriage entails lifelong mutual trust and strict fidelity to one partner for better or for worse, and the church will offer its ongoing support to the couples it has united. We acknowledge that there are differences of opinion within our church regarding usage of the term "marriage" for same-gendered couples, and we affirm the goodness of a diversity of opinion. As members of the Lord's New Church on earth (specifically within general convention), whose hearts enjoy deep affections for the truth of God found in the Holy Bible as illuminated by the beautiful doctrines of Emanuel Swedenborg, we affirm the importance of continued good scholarship and deep, careful, spiritually sensitive, compassionate thinking and dialogue. No individual or congregation will be required to bless same-sex marriages in the Swedenborgian Church. The Church respects the judgment of those who decide to bless these relationships by providing such rites for use within the Church. The Swedenborgian Church, therefore, lends its support to ministers and congregations who, as a result

of their own discernment processes, decide to offer their services and sanctuaries to all people, irrespective of sexual orientation, who wish to join themselves together in holy marriages.

The Council of Ministers granted the request of the Laporte Society to hire Rev. Freeman Schrock as its minister for the coming year.

It was voted to remove Bob Kirven from the Roll of Ministers and add his name to the Roll of Former Ministers (deceased).

It was voted (by unanimous vote) to remove, at his request, Steve Ellis from the Roll of Ministers and add his name to the Roll of Former Ministers (severed).

Susannah Currie, Eric Allison, Sarah Buteux, and Ken Turley presented the Committee on Worship report. COW is offering to work with congregations and ministers, creating and exploring new forms of worship. You can give and receive resources for worship on the Internet: [www.swedenborgianresources.org](http://www.swedenborgianresources.org). George Dole presented "Nobody's Keeping Score Up There" music CD and songbook.

It was voted to change "Swedenborg School of Religion" to "Swedenborgian House of Studies" in the Council bylaws.

### Election Results:

**Executive Committee - Jonathan Mitchell**

**Nominating Committee - Kim Hinrichs**

**Chair of the Council of Ministers -  
Eric Allison**

**Convention Preacher 2006 - Sue Turley.**

It was voted (unanimous) to approve the Budget of the Council of Ministers.

It was voted to recommend to Convention that Doug Moss be an authorized candidate for ministry.

It was voted to recommend to Convention that one minister be appointed to the Augmentation Fund Committee (AFC).

-Skuli Thorhallsson  
secretary COM



## GENERAL COUNCIL REPORT

General Council met July 10, 2004, for their pre-Convention meeting at St. Jerome College in Waterloo, Ontario.

President Ron Brugler made his final report, during which General Council discussed the vulnerability of small churches to embezzlement and other crimes, and how to best protect them. He urged General Council to study this issue.

They also heard the vice-president, secretary, treasurer and the Council of Ministers' reports. They approved the 2003 expenditures charged against the various funds after reviewing a chart outlining what these funds were.

The Rev. Steve Shannon, interim minister of the New York Church, spoke to us about his ministry at the church there and about interim ministry in general.

Council was also addressed by Bob Keller of Urbana University who spoke to us about their "Will to Excel Campaign." Council acted on various budget concerns.

General Council members then met as National Church Trustees and as Iungerich Fund Trustees.

### Post-Convention Meeting July 14, 2004

The Council discussed some budgeting issues revolving around the Communications Support Unit and Board of Mediation: The following board and committee appointments made by the president were approved:

**Board of Mediation** - Kurt Fekete, Margaret Dwyer.

**Structure Review Committee:** Marjie Leas, Barb Halle.

**Committee on Library and Documents:** Linda Tafel, Lissa Dirrim, Larry Conant, Martha Bauer.

**Central Office Review Committee:** Four Convention officers, with vice-president as chair.

**National Council of Churches:** Maryann Fischer, Rev. Marlene Laughlin, and president of Convention (Chris Laitner).

**Wayfarers Chapel Board of Managers:** Rev. Erni Martin (renew for three years); Jeannette Hille (renew for three years); Merle Lundberg (to finish the last year on an unexpired three-year term).

**Investment Committee:** Rev. Robert Bossdorf, Rev. Jane Siebert, Lawrence Conant, Dan Dyer, John Perry, Leo Serrano, Peter Toot.

**Building Fund:** Sue Burns (chair), John Perry, Betsy Lau.

**Retirement Committee:** Ian McIntosh, term expires 2007.

**The Committee on Inquiry:** Duane Beougher, Rev. Jonathan Mitchell.

The final list of appointments will be submitted to General Council for input and vote no later than August 15 for confirmation.

General Council's next meeting is scheduled for the first weekend in November at Wayfarers Chapel.

Gloria Toot, secretary



## As Soon As I Find My Glasses...

They have finally found a diagnosis for my condition. I have recently been diagnosed with A.A.A.D.D.—Age Activated Attention Deficit Disorder. This is how it goes:

I decide to wash the car; I start toward the garage and notice the mail on the table.

OK, I'm going to wash the car. But first I'm going to go through the mail. I lay the car keys down on the desk, discard the junk mail and I notice the trash can is full.

OK, I'll just put the bills on my desk and take the trash can out, but since I'm going to be near the mailbox anyway, I'll pay these few bills first. Now, where is my checkbook? There's only one check left! My extra checks are in my desk.

Oh, there's the coke I was drinking. I'm going to look for those checks. But first I need to put my coke further away from the computer, or maybe I'll pop it into the fridge to keep it cold for awhile. I head towards the kitchen and my flowers catch my eye, they need some water. I set the coke on the counter and there are my glasses. I was looking for them all morning! I'd better put them away first. I fill a container with water and head for the flower pots.

I see someone left the TV remote in the kitchen. I will never think to look in the kitchen tonight when I want to watch television so I'd better put it back in the family room where it belongs.

I splash some water into the pots and onto the floor, I throw the remote onto a soft cushion on the sofa and I head back down the hall trying to figure out what it was I was going to do? End of Day: The car isn't washed, the bills are unpaid, the coke is sitting on the kitchen counter, the flowers are half watered, the checkbook still only has one check in it and I can't seem to find my car keys!

When I try to figure out how come nothing got done today, I'm baffled because I know I was busy all day long! I realize this is a serious condition and I'll get help, but first I think I'll check my e-mail.

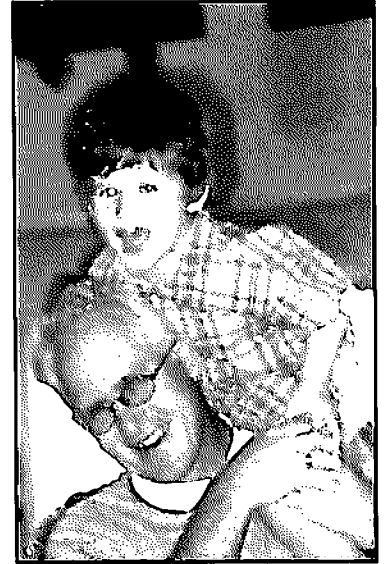
—Anonymous Email Phantom



More special music—what an angelic bunch!

Photos in this issue were supplied by Steve Koke, Patte LeVan, Val Brugler, Nancy Apple, Lee Woofenden, and Herb Schneider.

# Fun and Special Moments



## 2004 Octoberfest



*Kathy Speas—graduate glee.*



*Woman power—women ministers who attended convention plus Chris Laitner. (Left back) Renee Billings Machiniak, Dorothea Harvey, Rachel Rivers, Deborah Winter, Susannah Currie, Sue Turley, Nadine Cotton-Durgin, Wilma Wake, Chris Laitner, president. (Front) Alison Lane, Kathy Speas, and Jane Siebert.*

# TO THE EDITOR

**Editor's Note:** The following letter was sent to *The Messenger* after the June issue was completed, so this our first opportunity to print it.

## To the Editor

### Open Letter to Eric Allison

Reading your Heart/Vision article in the May *Messenger*, it was such a pleasure to see that you are launching a progressive and focused youth ministry. I enjoyed reading about the series' developmental process: How you met challenges and modified the structure and material to meet the needs of your group. It is refreshing to see that you've recognized how important a strong youth program is to the process of promoting church growth. Children and teenagers openly, innocently and spontaneously express vibrancy, joy and energy that are often missing in church circles. The spirit of youth can act as a catalyst to accelerate the process of growth. Where there is visible life, newcomers feel comfortable establishing new roots. I applaud your diligence and am especially delighted that you discovered the value and importance of building not only a youth-centered, but youth-directed program. That takes courage, strength and the particularly difficult challenge of a leader to be able to "let go and let God."

I fully support experiential youth worship programs. I personally have found that this is the best way to reach our youth and support their needs. Pre-teenagers and young teens who are searching, questioning, and beginning to understand their newly-awakening spiritual souls are like infants when they first realize that they are separate and distinct human beings able to independently control their movements and actions. They delight in learning through multiple and varied senses, testing the water and nurturing their developing wisdom by expanding

boundaries and determining limits. This physically dynamic and emotionally expressive period in one's young life, particularly the ages of 11–14, demands a worship setting that respects and harbors these premises in order for it to be meaningful, effective and worthwhile.

I am also excited to see that you are attempting to weave the thread of Swedenborgian theology through the core of the series. I do not believe that we need to be drawn away from doctrine to practice charity. Quite the contrary, it is the strength of our faith in doctrine that directs and hones the nature of our charitable acts. In such a strong new-age based culture, it would be easy for you to lose sight of fundamental Swedenborgian concepts and compromise our relevant spiritual insights to meet the apparent demands of your potential congregants. What a gift to be able to intertwine Swedenborg into the rich and diverse rituals and religious traditions that you bring to the children each week. I pray (and believe

that it is your challenge) that you can maintain this practice while continuing to provide material that is engaging, inspiring and useful to the youth in your community.

Please know that I, as our denomination's Youth Director, am here for you. I have resources you may find helpful, knowledge that I have gathered from educational opportunities and experience working with youth and youth leaders in both the Swedenborgian and other religious traditions. You've got a great thing started here. Please feel free to use my talents. I'm here to help you and am willing and thrilled to do so. Please send me a copy of the entire seven week edition. I'm excited to see it in detail. Thank you for inspiring and energizing one of the most vital aspects of my work, the initiation, support and guidance of our local church youth ministries.

Sincerely,

Kurt Fekete  
Swedenborgian Youth Director



Gabrielle, Carol Lawson's granddaughter, first time at convention.



Gabe Lipski, Ice cream service



Above:  
Ben Currie,  
the new  
Youth League  
president.



Left:  
Youth band

## The Road to Angel Under Construction

(Continued from page 90)

of them, and in others we have either failed or simply not reached them yet. Even so, we have accomplished many things.

And I ask you to please remember this. Talk. Communicate. Share your hopes, your dreams, your fears, your worries and concerns. And listen. And thank God that we are able to do this.

Secondly, never forget the fact that our journey as a church is like that double decker bus. There are two levels—the natural and the spiritual. There are times when we must deal with the things of this natural world. Business meetings serve a purpose. There is a corporate aspect to our denomination that must be tended to. Budgets are real. So are liability issues, fiduciary responsibilities and contractual agreements. But remember something else. All of these are useful only if they lead us someplace, and that is toward the upper level—where things of the spirit are of primary concern. It is here where we can know and appreciate how real and meaningful God's love is to us. And so I ask that you always seek to use that first level as a way to make an upward journey to the second level.

And thirdly, always remember the **A**stop where the bus toward

Angel pauses for a moment. It is a place that can lead us toward appreciating our new evangel. Bloomsbury Way must be a real experience for us. Our task as a church is to help people's spiritual lives bloom and grow and prosper. How are we to do this? In many, many ways. Thus, we are to realize that ministries within our churches are just as important as ministries in a hospice, at a university, in a bookstore, in a bar in Times Square, or on Ft. Myers Beach where bread is being distributed to the poor. All that matters is that we are on the right street. All that matters is that we are reaching out to all who walk along the way.

And lastly, I urge that we truly cherish one last thing about this journey we are on as a church. The road toward Angel is always under construction, and we

must expect delays. The Book of Revelation tells us that John saw the Holy City descending. It didn't say that it was over. It never said that it was complete. It never said that it was a past event. Our task is thus to "keep on building" that temple that is still undone. And so I urge to build on—build on, build on.

**T**oo often we find this truth of our faith the ultimate of frustrations. We complain that things are wrong about our church. We point at work that remains to be done and we complain, as if we have failed. We have not. And friends, this does not mean that the bus has broken down. Why? Because this is a wonderful reality and truth! It assures us of the fact that God still needs us. God will always need us! These delays are an opportunity for us to fulfill our use.

I leave you with one additional bit of advice. The Good Book tells us something that we ought never to forget. "I have always loved you," says the Lord. "Whether you have traveled to the east or to the west, or to the north or to the south, I have been with you, and have loved you dearly. My children, remember that wherever you go, I will always love you. I will never leave you alone."

(Continued on page 103)

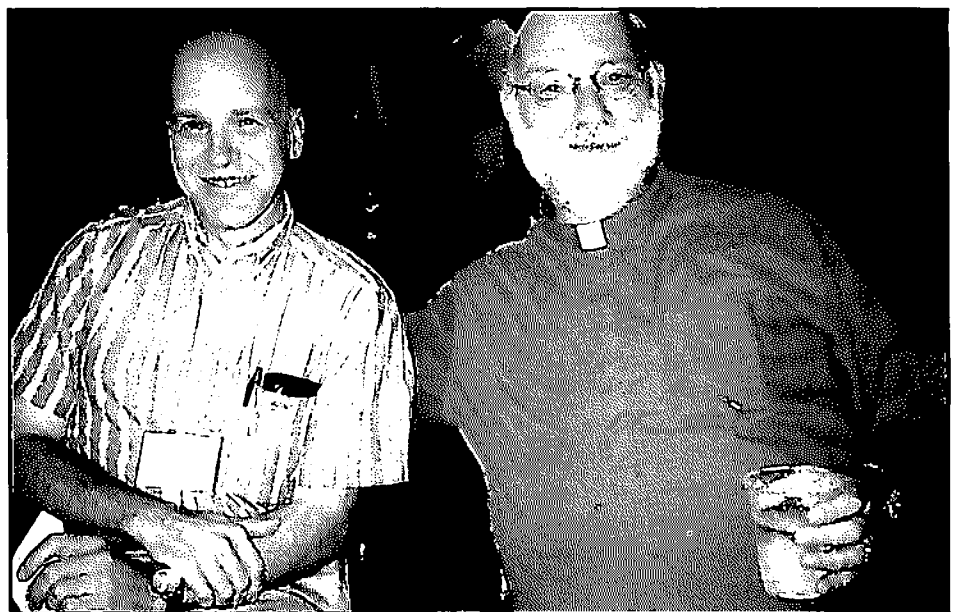
## PRESIDENT ELECT'S ADDRESS

(Continued from page 93)

unwillingly, to this position. This doesn't mean that I wouldn't like Aaron to show up occasionally, because what this title and the story behind it do is allow me to understand that even the best who are chosen for various tasks are at times uncertain. Although I have a plan for my time in this office, I would be less than honest if I didn't say that I also have some trepidation. Be assured, however, that that's a good thing for me—it makes me work harder and be stronger. It also keeps me focused and never lets me be complacent.

So, in "sending Aaron," I'm actually looking at the thoughtful support and information that the other elected individuals and the various units, councils, and committees can give, as well as the support, input, and prayers of the people of the Church. It is through the involvement of all of us that the best informed decisions will be made. So, *Here Am I*. I don't really need Aaron...

Just let me walk and work in company with the wonderful folks both known and those we have yet to meet who make up the body of our cherished Church.



Larry Conant, treasurer, and Ron Brugler—the Ax and the Ex.

## New Members

Twelve new members were welcomed into the life of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church May 16, 2004: Joy Barnitz, Christopher Cordani, Lissa Dirrim, Dave Brown, Amara Glorioso, Laurie Carlson, Randy Wiederhold, Christine Lehto, Rachel Franke, Portia Nichols Albee, Frank Greene and Barbro Swedenborg Greene.

## Marriage

**Larson and Billings**—the Rev. Kit Billings, pastor of the St. Louis Swedenborgian church, was united in marriage to Penny Larson May 30, 2004, at the St. Louis church. The groom's father, the Rev. John Billings, and the groom's sister, the Rev. Renee Billings Machiniak, officiated. (the groom states that it was *a wonderfully adventurous wedding day...complete with the reception site flooding twice, a tornado warning, and the caterers had a car wreck due to hydroplaning on their way to a local Elks Lodge...but trust in the Lord and his divine care brought them all through, and "Penny and I were immensely blessed by the entire experience."*)

## Deaths

**Beath**—Phyllis R. Beath, 97, of Urbana, Ohio, longtime member of the Urbana New Church, entered the spiritual world May 18, 2004. She taught school in Champaign County, Madison County, Ross County and in the Urbana City Schools in Ohio. Phyllis will be sadly missed. She is survived by five cousins. A memorial service was held May 24 in the chapel at Oakdale Cemetery, with Dick Sommer officiating.

**Mucka**—Marjorie R. (Heer) Mucka, 84, a lifelong member of the Swedenborgian Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, entered the spiritual world March 10, 2004. Marjorie was the daughter of the late Harry H. and Alice R. Heddaeus Heer. Her father served as lay minister and treasurer of the church for many years. She attended the church until it was closed in 1986. She is survived by daughters Suzanne Schnupp and Marjorie E. Williams; sons John R. Mucka Jr. and Rich-

ard H. Mucka; and six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

The Rev. Ronald P. Brugler, who was minister of the Pittsburgh church when it closed in 1986, conducted the memorial service at Simons Funeral Home in Pittsburgh, March 13, 2004. Interment followed in Allegheny County Memorial Park.

**Smith**—Annella S. Smith, beloved wife of lay leader Eldon D. Smith and cherished mother to Carol Smith and Debbie Noce, and grandmother to Danielle Noce, entered the spiritual world July 18, 2004. She is also survived by a sister, Marlene Early, and niece Gail Hull.

She was very involved in the San Diego Swedenborgian Church and worked with many groups and organizations within the Swedenborgian Churches in the United States. Annella, born in Florida, grew up in Pawnee Rock, Kansas, where she began attending the Swedenborgian Church. She met and married Eldon Smith in San Diego, California, June 20, 1953. They were married by the late Rev. Robert Loring Young. She had many friends who became family with her involvement with the church. She was a very loving person and will be sorely missed.

A memorial service was conducted August 14, 2004, at the San Diego church, the Rev. Harvey Tafel officiating.

**Worden**—Gretchen Worden, 56, longtime member of the Philadelphia Society, died August 2, 2004, of respiratory failure at Hahnemann University Hospital while awaiting transplant surgery. She passed quietly into the spiritual world surrounded by family and friends. Gretchen's Memorial Service will be held September 12, 2004, at the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, where she worked with great passion and imagination for many years. As director of the Mutter Museum since 1988, Ms. Worden "transformed a collection of medical oddities and history into a work of art that spoke for itself." Her best-selling book, *Mutter Museum*, was published in the early nineties. She appeared on the David Letterman show three times, and NPR's Terry Gross interviewed her for a Fresh Air segment. That interview was rebroadcast August 6 on WHYY Radio. She is survived by her sisters, Jen and Ethelwyn (Muff) and a brother, Dexter.



Jim Erickson, new vice-president.

## The Road to Angel Under Construction

(Continued from page 102)

Yes, we have always been loved, and we have had a wonderful journey together. I thank God for that. And as this church begins again in the coming year with a new driver named Chris, we begin again, and we will still be loved. And we will still have work to do. But more importantly, God will never leave us alone.

Thank you for having allowed me to share this part of the journey with you. We've had a wonderful and meaningful ride. And I thank God that we have made it a little farther down the road toward Angel. The view from the front seat has been incredible. Come Wednesday, I'll take my seat in the back. And quite naturally, I'll look back through the window of some wonderful memories. But I will also look forward along with you, to see what Chris helps us to see.

Thanks again for taking this ride with me, and during the president's reception that follows—have your tickets out for the collector!



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 Prof Edits Book on Time

*Are We In Time? : And Other Essays on Time and Temporality* by Charles Sherover (Author), Gregory R. Johnson (Editor)  
Hardcover: 224 pages Publisher: Northwestern University Press; (February 19, 2003)

### About the Author

Charles M. Sherover is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Hunter College. He is the author/editor of *The Human Experience of Time* (Northwestern, 2001), and the author of *Heidegger, Kant, and Time* (Indiana, 1971) and *Time, Freedom, and the Common Good* (SUNY, 1989). He has also translated Rousseau's *Social Contract* (Harper & Row, 1984). Sherover was recently given the 2002 Josiah Royce Award by the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy.

Gregory R. Johnson received his Ph.D. in philosophy from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. He currently teaches in the Swedenborgian House of Studies at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California.

### Book Description

The summa of a distinguished philosopher's career, and full treatment of the temporal in philosophical terms, this volume shows us that by taking time seriously we can discover something essential to almost every question of human concern. Are we IN time? Charles Sherover asks, and in pur-

suing this question he considers time in conjunction with cognition, morality, action, physical nature, being, God, freedom, and politics. His essays, while drawing upon Royce, Heidegger, Kant, Leibniz, and even Hartshorne and Bergson, defy categorization by method or school; instead, they reveal the diversity and divergence of thinking about time as well as the myriad features and values within the omnipresence of time and change.

The volume begins with an overview of the history of thought on time and a clarification of some fundamental conceptual distinctions in temporal ideas. Sherover then offers a critique of Kant, the first thinker to recognize that all human experience has a temporal form. In a series of essays on metaphysics—a valuable corrective to the dominant metaphysical tradition of talking about being as if time does not matter—he pursues temporal responses to such problems as being, internal relations, individuation, mind, and free will. Finally, in essays on time, freedom, and the common good, Sherover argues that these three phenomena are intrinsically related to one another, the fulfillment of each involving the other two.

Throughout, these essays brilliantly depict human life and thought thoroughly steeped in time and argue for the significance of the future for human activity. Portraying the openness of the future as the basis for purposiveness and freedom, knowledge and moral action, social life and religious hope, Sherover's work conveys a hopeful message of human finitude that nonetheless allows us a measure of control over events in our own time.



The Swedenborgian Church  
of North America  
*The Messenger*  
11 Highland Ave.  
Newtonville, MA 02460

Address Service  
Requested

Non-profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Plymouth, IN  
Permit No. 105