

# THE MESSENGER

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April 2006

## *Experiencing God Through the People of Samoa*

Cathy Lauber

During the 2006 Intersession a delegation of eighteen students, faculty, staff and trustees of Pacific School of Religion ventured out to Hawaii and Samoa to spend ten days immersed in the Samoan culture. One of the requirements of PSR's Master of Divinity program is a three unit 'Cross-Cultural/Immersion' credit which is earned outside of the classroom. The purpose of this excursion was to experience a culture that was different from both my own Canadian culture and my newly experienced American culture, and to learn the traditions and theology of the people of American Samoa and Western Samoa.

Samoa culture is a tribal-based culture with strong traditions and a strong belief in God. The connection to God is evidenced in many aspects of Samoan life and can be seen in the traditions of daily worship, of hospitality, of feasting and rituals and of prayer as the beginning to every event from a meal to a meeting. The church is the center of society, and hospitality centers around ceremonies and feasts, community and family, loving God and loving your neighbor. It was an amazing experience and I feel

blessed that I had the opportunity to live for a short time among the Samoan people.

### Culture and Tradition

Our stay at the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS) in Moataa, Western Samoa was full of many cultural experiences. We lived in a Samoan fale for two days. A Samoan fale (house) is a thatched roof hut, oval in shape and open on all sides with pillars that support the roof and also provide leaning posts for the chiefs when they come together to discuss important matters. We spent two nights at the Moataa CCCS in their guest fale, which was in front of the church and beside the minister's residence. I am not

sure my Western sensibilities could have handled sleeping in a completely open fale in the middle of a village, but the guest fale at the church was closed on two sides, and the sleeping area

for the women consisted of a raised platform that was curtained off. The mattresses and the mosquito nets that were set up provided a sleeping area that



*Guest fale at Kanana Fou*

was comfortable and inviting, and gave many of us the feeling that we were princesses, sleeping in a loft under rich silks.

Everywhere we went we experienced a level of hospitality that was almost unimaginable. We were showered with gifts, sometimes in extreme quantities, every time we departed from a gathering. Some of the gifts we received were hand painted fabrics, called tapa cloths, printed fabrics, and jewelry, but often food was given in the form of cases of tuna, whole pigs (roasted of course), cakes, pies and baskets of coconuts. Without fully understanding customs in Samoa it was a little jarring to receive all of these gifts. But customs state that the head of a family (or in our case PSR President Bill McKinney) who receives food in honor of a visit has the responsibility to distribute that food among the families of the entire village. This is one example of the concept of 'spreading the wealth' that is effective in reducing poverty and hunger in the communities where it is practiced.

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*Group at Kamehameha*

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## A Day in the Life of a Chaplain

Jane Siebert

Level I. ETA 1530. MVC, rollover, 18 YO male, unrestrained driver. LOC." The page came across my pager as I was visiting with another patient being prepped for surgery. Ten minutes. Time to pray with the surgery patient and family as they had requested and rush down one flight of stairs to ED.

It was hard to be in one space while my mind was in another. I tried to turn the adrenalin rush off and truly be with the patient at bedside. I'm not even sure what I said in that prayer, but they seemed to appreciate it. And as I have often found, the patient and family hear and receive what they need, independent of my words or actions. God can work that way, thank goodness. As chaplains, we just have to get ourselves out of the way, which is often the biggest obstacle.

As I flew down the stairs, I reviewed the page. Level One traumas are the most serious. The room will be full—the trauma doc, trauma care nurse, a couple other doctors and nurses, a pharmacist, radiology and respiratory techs, and the one chaplain facing the family in crisis—me.

ETA 1530—estimated time of arrival 3:30 pm, one minute to spare. MVC—motor vehicle crash.

Rollover and unrestrained driver explain themselves. Eighteen year old unrestrained male—why won't these kids learn they are not indestructible? If each could spend one day in this emergency department, they would never leave home without their seatbelts again. LOC—loss of consciousness. Head injury, probably in addition to everything else that the young man's body went through as he was thrown out of the car as it rolled over and over and maybe even over him.

I took a deep breath as I entered the trauma bay. The Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) who brought him in from the accident were just leaving the room. They are the best source of information for the chaplain because they often know about the family, which is my number one concern at this time.

"Family is out in the waiting room," they said quietly with downcast eyes. That is not a good sign. They know how serious it is and how frightened the family is.

"Any other information?" I asked the EMT.

"The father was in a car right behind them. He witnessed the whole thing."

"Them?" I asked.

"Yes, another son was in the accident. He is coming in the next ambulance. He is not as bad."

As he was speaking my pager went off. "Level II. MYC, rollover, 20 YO male unrestrained passenger. ETA NOW." And the ED doors swung open as another stretcher was rushed into the next trauma bay.

There was no time to check on the two brothers; there were plenty of medical personnel to do that. My attention turned to the family that I knew was waiting outside the doors of the Emergency Department in the crowded waiting room...waiting...frantically waiting.

With a silent prayer to God, I went through those doors not knowing what I would be facing on the other side. Immediately I knew which family it was. They were right outside the doors to the waiting room, trying to see inside, desperate for news, any news. I introduced myself and the father sagged in another son's arms. "It's bad. I know it's bad," he sobbed.

"We don't know yet," I tried to assure him. "Both of your sons have arrived and they are doing everything for them. Please come with me."

We have family quiet rooms for times like these. They are off to the side, and while it is good to be out of the flow of the busy ED waiting room, sometimes they seem like a long way from the trauma bays. "Where are you taking us?" Jacob, another son, demanded. "We want to be with John and James. Not hidden away in a corner."

I explained that right now this is the best thing the family can do for the brothers. This is where the medical team will know to come with information.

They don't have to stay in this room, but right now the family cannot be in the emergency trauma area. The trauma team needs to work quickly, make rapid decisions about treatment, and get the necessary tests done. I will serve as the liaison and keep them updated.

The father, brother, sister and two friends who had arrived could not sit down, but were more comfortable pacing. "Would you like to have prayer?" I asked.

"Yes, anything," the sister quipped. We joined hands, but Jacob would not join us. "Bunch of hogwash," was his comment under his breath. The prayer spilled out, thanking God for presence in the ED and with the family, giving wisdom to the trauma team, and lifting John and James up in prayer and healing. It was quick, and then I returned to the trauma area for an update.

The first ten minutes in a level I trauma are the most critical. The team needs to have a plan within that framework. CT scans, X-rays, sonograms, all the necessary tests are run quickly to

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### THE MESSENGER

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## Brokeback Mountain

The Love Inside: A Movie Review of  
*Brokeback Mountain*

Mona Conner

In mid-January I was sitting before a breathtaking view of the San Diego waterfront in a lovely restaurant in Coronado having lunch with a good friend. I had been out in California for some volunteer support work related to our Communications Support Unit (COMSU) and the San Diego Swedenborgian Church, and was about to return home to New York the next day.

"Have you seen *Brokeback Mountain* yet?" my friend asked.

"No, I haven't heard of that one," I answered.

"Really?" he sounded a little surprised, "Because it's about what happened to you."

Upon my return to New York I went to see it. This story, adapted from a novella by E. Annie Proulx, is set in 1960s Wyoming. The two lead characters, Jack Twist and Ennis Del Mar, are seasonal cowboys who meet while spending an extended summer job herding sheep on an isolated mountain called Brokeback. As they work together they develop a sexual attraction for each another and act upon their feelings.

Leaving their seasonal job, they also leave the initial bond of what was to become a lifelong relationship with each other, as they attempt to resume their "normal lives," each meeting, romancing and marrying a woman, each becoming a father, each struggling with work, social expectations, and individual family obligations. It is when they see one another again after establishing their families, that the power of their feelings for each other leads to a series of furtive periodic meetings in the guise of "fishing trips" over several decades. The complexity of relations between husbands, wives, and lovers is played out in a suppressive country-western environment which offers zero support or tolerance for Jack and Ennis's love affair.

Alma, Ennis's wife, discovers her husband's affair when she secretly witnesses Ennis and Jack kissing. The expression on Alma's face as she draws out of view from what she has just witnessed tells a thousand things with one glance. Michelle Williams is to be commended for the excellence and genuineness of her performance (she earned an Oscar nomination for Best Supporting Actress.) In just a few small scenes in the movie, mostly with silent looks, she conveys an incredible amount of feeling. Alma is coping with children, poverty, an emotionally withdrawn partner, and, after witnessing the kiss, a secret burden, the impact of which she can't begin to fathom. Like Ennis, she keeps her devastation inside, never really confronting him about what she saw, or what happened on those fishing trips, until after their marriage is history.

Jack is the sexual initiator, and the only character in the movie, besides Ennis's daughter, with accessible emotions. Eventually Jack is willing to put it all on the line and go all the way with his love for Ennis. He tries to offer Ennis a better way to live with their relationship by suggesting they run a ranch together after their divorces. But over the years Ennis, a man who speaks through gritted teeth and has halting relations even with his own family, has gradually shut down even more, effectively shutting Jack out of his life. Despite his love for Jack, he can't face his own feelings about the social condemnation attached to what he has done, or grant himself the possibility of a happy life with Jack. He has no inner compass to direct the course of his outer life back toward the only relationship which has meaning for him now no matter what—and if he can't have that, he will have nothing. His world begins to shrink down until he is living alone in a trailer. After Jack dies, the only person who openly acknowledges Ennis's status as Jack's great love is Jack's mom, who provides Ennis with a keepsake of her son's clothing.

My only real criticism of *Brokeback Mountain* is that the soundtrack theme song is loud and absolutely relentless—

unnecessarily so. The choice of music doesn't ruin this otherwise important movie, but it felt excessive. Relentless music on top of an already overpowering and emotional story is not an enhancement. In this case something quieter and more unobtrusive would have served the story, its characters, and its majestic landscapes much better. But this is a minor point.

I'd like to add some comments from a personal perspective about the movie's meaning for me in social and spiritual terms. Its pertinence to my own life is that in 1985 my former husband Mike exited our eight-year marriage to be with a male partner who he still lives with more than twenty years later. After a tumultuous period of separation and divorce lasting about five years, we resumed the friendship portion of our relationship, a loving friendship which survives to this day, probably because the emotional bond in our marriage was so positive and close. At the time of our separation, I was taken completely by surprise about the nature of our split, as were most people who knew us. Mike describes himself today as bisexual.

Bisexuality is an issue surrounded by a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding. I was surprised and pleased that *Brokeback Mountain* took this theme on without any apology, without cliché, and without grandstanding. Bisexuality added another layer to an already meaningful love story. Have you ever noticed that there is so much pressure to be one or the other—gay or straight—that our society has even less tolerance for the vaguer status of 'bisexual'? A symptom of what I describe is that when I looked for reviews of *Brokeback Mountain*, whether online, in newspapers, or on television, not once did I hear the word 'bisexual' even mentioned. Bisexuality runs on a continuum between heterosexuality and homosexuality. It is seldom a cut and dried 50%-50% attraction. Society adds to that picture enormous pressure on those with alternate sexual orientations

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## Scribe of Heaven



**SWEDENBORG'S  
LIFE, WORK,  
AND IMPACT**  
Edited by Jonathan  
S. Rose, Stuart  
Shotwell, and Mary  
Lou Bertucci  
Published by the  
Swedenborg  
Foundation, 2005;

580 pages.

Reviewed by Stephen Koke

*This is the second and final installment of our review of the Swedenborg Foundation's very absorbing and illuminating book. In the preceding installment we reviewed scholarly theories and surveys of Swedenborg's teachings. In this one, we survey the history and general character of the Swedenborgian movement in various places around the world and honor creative Swedenborgian thinkers whose insights enriched the arts and literature. As always, it is better to read the book than to depend solely on the review; there is much to this long and richly detailed work which could not be included for reasons of both space and time.*

An old question is whether the Swedenborgian church movement should have been launched in the first place. Finding a path to success in attracting people and building at least reasonably large congregations in numerous churches has been frustrated by forces not well understood. After two centuries—plenty of time to establish a popular Christian movement—Swedenborg and Swedenborgian thought are still not widely known among the variety of successful Christian institutions.

In his biographic article on Swedenborg, Richard Smoley writes, "Swedenborg did not want to start a new sect; rather he hoped that his ideas

would percolate into the established denominations and transform them slowly and peacefully [a comment attributed to Lamm with source given]. It was only after his death that his disciples created a new denomination to promulgate his teachings." (p. 40).

Olle Hjern, describing Swedenborg's influence in Scandinavia, writes, "All the same he never called for or supported the founding of a separate church to foster this change in doctrinal outlook, particularly not in his own name." (p. 154).

Why did it take Robert Hindmarsh to do that? Perhaps he didn't understand Swedenborg's attitude or strategy of change: Change, new consciousness, must always be built from the inside out. Swedenborg had his books sent to bishops and the nobility for insertion in

their sources—John Wesley, John Calvin, Martin Luther, the Apostle Paul, etc. The original prophets must not be deposed but kept. As soon as a separate church appeared on the scene with no ties to these traditional sources and claiming a new revelation, Swedenborg's efforts to reform churches from within may very well have caused these churches to, figuratively speaking, throw his books out on the street, unraveling his strategy. His books would have looked like subversive materials from a now identifiable institution outside, not so much from a well-meaning thinker from their own roots who had remained, despite differences, inside the church family. From that point on we have had to carve out a niche of our own. But among whom? Conventional churches seem to maintain a strong hold on

virtually the entire Christian audience.

Consequently, a frequent characteristic of the newly convinced Swedenborgian seems to be that he or she emerges from a private and apparently accidental discovery of Swedenborg's books, if not from the younger generations already within our churches. It seems that to discover the new in

*Swedenborg's attempt to move Christianity away from faith-based belief and over to insight-based belief puts a new burden on theological education — beyond doctrinal education there must be solid instruction in good thinking aided by a widespread exchange of ideas. The ultimate objective is to create a constantly expanding theological frontier which can investigate and solve its problems as it proceeds.*

existing institutions, obviously for change, though often radical, from within. The implication is that if forces for change begin outside and have to draw hearts and minds away from established churches and doctrines, success will not be easy. Consequently, once Hindmarsh launched the new independent Swedenborgian movement things did not go well.

One explanation (by this reviewer) is that churches are very jealous of their territory, their hallowed teachers and the autonomy of their teachings. They are faith-based institutions, have been avidly faith-based for many centuries, not inclined to rethink a hallowed idea, even in the face of good argument. Centuries of tradition bind them to

theology, you have to be impressed by an entirely new theology. A theology is a complete mindset; it defines basic reality, tells the mind how to think, what to do when, much as the operating system of a computer tells the computer how to think, how to perform. The traditionalist therefore remains hard to change. Changing one's theology is often preceded by a crisis of belief in which one does not know what to believe, for the old system must first be removed. This also occurred to Swedenborg before his illumination.

Faith-based religion is hard to reason with and eventually encourages theological passivity: whatever the tradition, or the word from the pulpit, has said,

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# Flames: Teens at Fryeburg New Church Assembly

Nancy Little

At the Fryeburg New Church Assembly family camp in Fryeburg, Maine, the different generations have names: Sparks, Flames, Bonfires and Embers. The teens are called Flames. Flames participate in the regular camp activities as well as their own scheduled teen program.

The Fryeburg Flames was started in 1928 by a group of young adults at the FNCA. Some of the old-time traditions that continue to this day include canoeing trips, Outing Day excursions, and a late night bonfire and corn-boil on the beach of the Saco River. Initiation Day was a tradition for many decades that was faded out in the 1990s. Some of the Initiation Day rituals included an early morning swim in the Saco River (in wet bathing suits that had been left in the walk-in cooler over night!); a one-mile walk into the village of Fryeburg dressed in outlandish costumes in search of the elusive Sturdeley (It was so elusive it changed from year to year.); and a closing ceremony at the end of the day welcoming all of the new Flames into the group. Although Initiation Day no longer exists at the FNCA, Flames welcome newcomers into their group very quickly. And every summer there are a few new Flames who planned to come for a few days or the first week and then have such a great time that they beg their parents to let them stay for the second week, too.

Flames may attend the FNCA without a parent by arranging for an adult sponsor prior to the beginning of camp. The adult sponsor attends camp with the teen and agrees to act *in loco parentis*. If you need help finding a sponsor, please contact the registrar (see below) who can connect you with those who have volunteered to sponsor a Flame.

The rising bell for all campers is at 7:00. Many of the Flames participate in Polar Bear swim before heading to the dining hall to set tables for breakfast which is at 7:30. Flames provide table service at our family-style meals in exchange for a reduced rate. Following the meal, the Flames clear tables and do dishes.

Sing-along in the Lecture Hall is at 8:30 followed by Morning Chapel at 8:45. At 9:00 and 10:00 are the two morning lectures in Founders Hall. Flames are required to attend one of the two lectures. At 11:00 the Flames'

daily religion class is held in Chalmers Lodge, the teen rec hall.

Chalmers Lodge was built fifty or so years ago with money donated by the Chalmers family as a recreation hall specifically for the Flames. In addition to using the space for their religion class, Chalmers Lodge is used for ping-pong, hanging-out, and occasional dances. Chalmers Lodge is similar to Almont New Church Assembly's "Teen Storage." It's a space where the Flames can get together that's just theirs.

Following class, Flames report to the dining hall for lunch at 12:30. Rest hour is from 1:30 to 2:30. A popular activity for Flames during rest hour is to take a canoe or two up river (with permission of the lifeguard and/or waterfront director) where they are out of earshot!

Afternoons are unscheduled at the FNCA. When Flames stay on campus for the afternoon, they can often be found at the river where there is life-guarded swimming from 2:30 to 5:00. Other afternoons may find them at a nearby swimming hole. One of their favorites, Emerald Pool is a 20-minute drive and a relatively short walk through the woods to a deep swimming hole where the more adventurous Flames can jump off ledges into the deep water.

Late in the afternoon or just after they've finished with their dining hall duties following dinner Flames can often be found at the volleyball net in the back field practicing for the Flames versus Bonfires Volley Ball game. Other popular evening activities for the Flames include Flames Games (an hour of active running games that teens just love), bowling at the bowling alley in Fryeburg, a movie at the drive-in or mall, or participating in one of the optional evening all-camp activities.

Flames must be in the dorms by 10:00 pm with lights out at 10:30 pm. The girl's dorm is in the Main Building, and the boys' dorm is on the eastern edge of the campus. Resident dorm parents supervise the Flames

in both dorms.

On Outing Day, the Flames plan an all-day activity together. With adult supervision, Flames often go to Lower Falls on the Kancamagus Highway, Higgins Beach on the coast of Maine, a hike in the White Mountains or the mountains of Western Maine, or an all day canoe trip on the Saco River.

Here's what some Flames have to say about camp:

"FNCA is the best summer camp. I just don't want to leave. I met new people and they have been some of the best. We did so many activities and games that I can't wait to come back." Mary Beth Bernier, 13, Massachusetts.

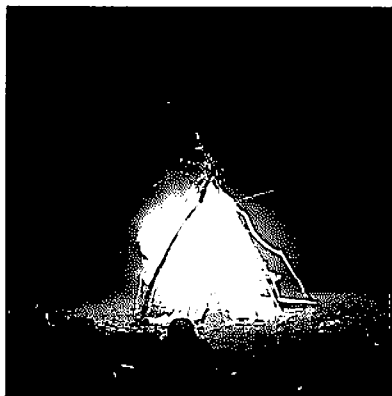
"I enjoy Fryeburg because the people are always a lot of fun and there is always something to do." Alexis Kozar, 17, Vermont.

"Fryeburg has always been a place of relaxation and fun for me. I've met friends from all over the country. They have grown with me and changed me mostly for the better. It is just a great place to be." Emily Turley, 19, Maine.

"I like the relaxed atmosphere, good time to think about things, spark relationships with new people. I come back because of friends and to relax and be useful (as a lifeguard). I would like to bring my girlfriend here. Potentially, this could be a romantic place and could be very healthy for a relationship." Ryan Cook, 19, Pennsylvania

The dates for this summer's session are August 5-20<sup>th</sup>. If you'd like more information about the Fryeburg New Church Assembly visit our website: [www.fryeburg.org](http://www.fryeburg.org). If you have questions about scholarships or staff positions contact Debbie Cook [dcook@bacs-gc.org](mailto:dcook@bacs-gc.org). If you have questions about registration contact Nancy Little, (413) 247-0049 or [litlenancyf@yahoo.com](mailto:litlenancyf@yahoo.com).


Look for more information about FNCA Bonfires and Embers in the next issue.



*Bonfire on the Saco River. A long-standing Flames tradition is to have a late night corn boil on one of the final evenings of a camp session.*



*Bowling and skeeball at Saco Valley Bowling Lanes in Fryeburg. Myrrh Woofenden (L) and Tobin Grams.*

Nancy Little is the FNCA Registrar. She first attended the FNCA as a Flame in 1980. She lives in the Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts with her husband, Trevor Woofenden, and her cat of 13 years, Tiger Lily. 

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# Hey, Isolated Members — There's Hope in Sight!!!

## Cyber Swedenborgians, Part 2

The future North American Society is making excellent progress toward the creation of a website, a Swedenborgian Community and a new society within the Swedenborgian Church.

The contract for the setup of the new site is ready to be signed, and by the time this is published, the site work should be complete and on its way to being tested. There's much still to do, but progress has been remarkable, with members diligently working toward a May 1<sup>st</sup> date for the site to be up and running. At the time of this printing, the decision for a new minister has not been made, but that should be completed by May 1<sup>st</sup> as well.

Current plans are for the website to contain:

**The Welcome Page** – This will be where a new greeting for the site is placed each week.

**The Sermon** – There will be a Sunday morning sermon along with the ability to discuss the sermon during the week via a Swedenborgian Bulletin Board or a chat environment. The bulletin board would post comments from individuals where others would be able to see and make additional comments. The chat would be in a real-time chat environment, allowing for instant responses to comments.

**A "Question of the Week"** – This will be posted each week and there will be an online live chat each Thursday to share ideas and thoughts about the question. Participants will have time to ponder the question and then be able to have a real-time chat with other members.

**Sunday "Coffee Fellowship"** – This will keep members in touch and provide support, friendship and a sharing of

thoughts beyond the scope of doctrinal discussions. This will be a real Swedenborgian Community, with social times and chats to help the members find out more about each other and chat about what is happening in their lives.

**Links** – Throughout the website there will be links available to other sites of interest to Swedenborgians.

**Security** – This will be handled through membership password protection, and while anyone visiting the site will be able to read the welcome message, the sermon, the articles and have access to other Swedenborgian links, only members will be able to participate in the online chats or the fellowship activities.

**A Spiritual Advisor** – The minister will also be available for on-line private chats and will be keeping in touch with the members, as would be done in any church.

Once all this gets going, other options will be available and it will be the members who will be deciding what they want for their own congregational activities. New programs, new links, new chats, new whatever! We will have very few limitations. We want the site to fit the needs of its members and look forward to this church growing rapidly. Our goal is to eliminate isolation and provide members with a place for them to be active and productive Swedenborgians.

**Next month's Messenger will have information on how and why to become a member of this new and exciting church: The North American Society.**

—*The Swedenborgian Community Ad Hoc Committee*  
*Working for Isolated Members* ☩

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## Loginov Appeal 2006

Dear Swedenborgian friends,

As Secretary of the Ohio Association, I have been administering the Sergey Loginov Fund since early 2003. If you remember back, Sergey Loginov of Kherson, Ukraine is the Swedenborgian preacher introduced to us by Rev. Lee Woofenden. Since then, the Ohio Association has been set up to accept tax deductible contributions to help this ministry. Since I have been very lax in making fund appeals, considerable "red ink" has accumulated. As of 12-31-05 the fund is in the red \$4,750.51. The "red ink" total is money from my checking account for which I have not claimed tax deduction or received donations to cover.

We established the sum of \$200 per month as minimum living needs for Sergey and his family. This I have been sending regularly and have added more as needed for medical emergencies, etc.

Sergey has recently asked for the sum of \$750 to print 200 copies of his translation of "The Shorter Heaven and Hell" as compiled by the Rev. J Duckworth located in Australia. He rented computer time and created a color cover for the book and has arranged to have Rev. Alexander Vassiliev write a Foreword for the book. I sent him \$100 extra in October to print 10 prelimi-

nary copies. I now have one of those copies plus a CD-R of the text in PDF file format and the color cover in bmp format.

He proposes distributing the books to persons in Nursing Homes and in Hospice care. Thus, the books will be helping the spirits of persons who are soon to leave this world and do not have time left for the extensive reading the full version would require. I believe this is a good use for such a book. I am currently in the process of applying to Convention's Jungerich Fund which will provide money to pay for printing of Swedenborg's work for free distribution.

The Ohio Association is deficit budgeted for the next 2 to 5 years with their pledge to the Urbana University's Capital Campaign Fund and has no money available to donate.

If we could find 30 individuals (or the equivalent of) to donate \$100 per year, this evangelism project would be well covered. The need is great, so please give generously. The web site for donating by credit card via PayPal Inc. is as follows:  
<http://home.att.net/~oa.swedenborg.ch>

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# CONVENTION 2006 REGISTRATION

**Urbana University**

***"Walking a Sacred Path: Living Our Oneness"***

**Wednesday, June 28 to Sunday, July 2, 2006**

## CONVENTION 2006

is being hosted by the Ohio Association. It will be held on the campus of Urbana University which was founded in 1850 by followers of Swedenborg, and has had a long association with General Convention. This is an exciting time in the life of the University, which will be evident to all who have attended previous Conventions at this site. Since the denomination's last visit, the University has added two new dormitories, completely renovated two of the oldest buildings on Campus (Barclay and Bailey Halls) while maintaining the beauty of their original historic architecture, and is in the process of completing a multipurpose athletic stadium as well as a new Student Center. The latter two will be very close to completion by the time Convention and attendees will have the opportunity to tour the new and restored facilities, including the Johnny Appleseed Museum. You may also want to check out several models of Swedenborg's inventions, on display in the lobby of the new Moore Math Science Building.

## TRANSPORTATION:

Transportation will be available **FROM THE COLUMBUS AIRPORT ONLY ON SATURDAY, JUNE 24<sup>TH</sup> AND WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28<sup>TH</sup>.** Those wishing to fly into Dayton must provide their own.

Commercial airport van service will be available at a cost of \$35/person for the one-way trip from Columbus Airport to Urbana University's Grimes Center. Vans will carry 6 to 10 passengers and the transportation committee will be grouping folks arriving at about the same time. Please make sure you let us know if you would like to be transported and provide us with **your specific flight arrival information** so we can do the matchmaking. The local committee has also arranged for a 40% discount with Enterprise Car Rental, based on a midsize car, for several days or a week. **You must identify yourself as an attendee at the Swedenborgian Church Convention at Urbana University** to obtain the discount.

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

This year's Convention begins Wednesday afternoon, June 28<sup>th</sup> and ends at noon on Sunday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>. **Mini-courses** are offered on Thursday and Friday. **Our Saturday evening entertainment** will feature a barbeque followed by entertainment by the local Shawnee Nation Remnant Band, including story telling and native dancing. We are also hoping to be treated to a performance of Rev. Ken and Laurie Turley's *Johnny Appleseed Musical* play. If you plan to attend the **Women's Alliance luncheon** on Friday, June 30<sup>th</sup>, please indicate your intention on the registration form. *Space is limited to 70 this year so be sure to sign up!*

## CHILDCARE:

Childcare for very young children as well as a structured children's program for age 5 to 12 will be part of this Convention's offerings. Parents will need to complete information forms to register their children in either of these programs.

## TEENS:

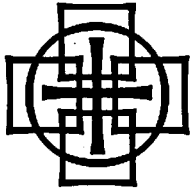
The program for teens begins Wednesday afternoon and will be supervised by the Youth Director, Kurt Fekete. *Contact the Central Office for details.*

## ACCOMMODATIONS:

Housing is in air-conditioned suites (*Maple, Hickory, Blackmer, and Losch*). A suite of three double bedrooms, two bathrooms and a common area. Rooms are also available in the new traditional dormitory, *Sycamore*. If children wish to sleep in the same room (dorm or suite) as their parents and if they bring their sleeping bags (no linens provided) they may pay for meals only (\$20 per day).

## JOHNNY APPLESEED HERITAGE CENTER:

Information will be available at Convention for those interested in the two hour trip to the Mansfield, OH area. More information on the Center is available on the web at [www.jahci.org](http://www.jahci.org).



# REGISTRATION FORM

Convention 2006

Urbana University

*"Walking a Sacred Path: Living Our Oneness"*

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City and Province / State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code / Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Names and Ages of all Children Accompanying You: \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival FI & Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Need Van to Urbana?: \_\_\_\_\_ How many?: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Info: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Church (for your name tag): \_\_\_\_\_

Attending Women's Luncheon? (name): \_\_\_\_\_

Special Needs (dietary, handicapped access, roommate requests, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Adult Registration	\$80.00	x _____ adults	=	\$ _____
Teen (13-17) Registration	\$65.00	x _____ teens	=	\$ _____
Child (5-12) Registration	\$55.00	x _____ children	=	\$ _____
Family Maximum Registration	\$215.00		=	\$ _____
Late fee (if mailed after June 1)	\$65.00		=	\$ _____

Room and Board: Choose ONE option

## FOUR DAY OPTION

Wed. June 28 to Sun. July 2	Double \$220.00	x _____ person	\$ _____
Extra Day	Double \$55.00	x _____ person	\$ _____
Wed. June 28 to Sun. July 2	Single \$300.00	x _____ person	\$ _____
Extra Day	Single \$75.00	x _____ person	\$ _____

Room and Board: Choose ONE option

## EIGHT DAY OPTION

Sat. June 24 to Sun. July 2	Double \$344.00	x _____ person	\$ _____
Sat. June 24 to Sun. July 2	Single \$ 480.00	x _____ person	\$ _____

*All prices are in US currency. If you wish to pay in Canadian currency, please add 20% and a handling charge of \$4.00 for each Canadian check. All bills must be paid in full by June 15. No registration refunds after June 1.*

*Bills may be paid by VISA and MasterCard. Provide number and four-digit expiration date.*

*Call in your payment if you like: 617-969-4240.*

VISA \_\_\_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_\_\_ Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_

*Make checks payable to: The Swedenborgian Church*

*Please send form with checks to: Central Office, The Swedenborgian Church, 11 Highland Ave., Newtonville, MA 02460*

**SHOULD YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT CENTRAL OFFICE AT 617-969-4240**



## Experiencing God Through the People of Samoa

(Continued from front page)

There is another Samoan custom related to gift giving that helps to explain the extravagance of some of the presentations. It is common for family or tribe members to try to outdo each other with their gifts. The one who gives the most impressive gift holds prestige in the eyes of the other members of the village. When we left Kanana Fou Theological School we participated in the traditional gift giving ceremony, and each member of our group presented the President of Kanana Fou with a gift and a few words of gratitude for his hospitality. One of the things the school desperately needed was a collection of religious and theological books that were published in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I brought with me the double bound, New Century Editions of *Divine Love and Wisdom* and *Divine Providence*. Well, the deep purple cover and gold writing on this thick, hard cover book gave an impressive look to this gift. It gave me, as a representative of the Swedenborgian Church, a moment of prestige in the eyes of the Samoan students, and that book will look impressive on the shelves of the library at Kanana Fou.

We were privileged to be invited to participate in an ancient welcoming ceremony twice during our visit to the Samoan islands. We experienced the traditional kava ceremony at both Kanana Fou Theological School, in American Samoa and Moataa Congregational Christian Church, in Western Samoa. In Moataa the paramount chief, the church minister, and all of the village chiefs came to welcome us. At the beginning of the ceremony, once we were all seated in proper order on mats in the guest fale, there was a genuine, twenty minute debate among the chiefs regarding who would have the honor of

speaking to welcome us to their village. It was an important exchange and the oratory skills of the speaker were a critical factor in determining who the honor would go to. Once the decision was made, the ceremony continued in the traditional manner.



Tongan students at CCCS in Honolulu

Our chief representative, Fuamai, was presented with the staffs of all the chiefs of the village and the minister of the Moata Church. Fuamai, who is a PSR student and a citizen of Western Samoa, gave the appropriate words of appreciation and gratitude to the chiefs and thanked the minister for housing us during our stay. Then one of the chiefs moved and sat cross legged behind a four legged bowl that was filled with water. He held the leaf of a kava root, which had been pounded flat, and he slowly dipped it into the bowl. He then began to knead the root and then squeeze the liquid from it. After the appropriate length of time the paramount chief let out a loud shout and another chief jumped up, dipped a small cup made

from a coconut shell into the kava water and then ran to the middle of the fale. There was another shout, and the chief jogged over to the head of our contingent, Bill McKinney, and with a broad sweep of his arm offered the cup to him. Bill accepted the cup, drank the kava water and returned the cup to the chief. The chief jogged back to the bowl, refilled the cup, and after another shout offered the cup to the minister, the most honored individual in any village.

The next esteemed person in our group was PSR professor, Mai Anh Tran. In traditional Samoan culture, women do not usually partake in the kava ceremony; however, the cup was offered to Mai Anh as a show of respect for her position and to honor our entire group as guests. This was only one of many situations we found ourselves in where the traditional rules of culture and the rules of hospitality were at odds with each other. In every case, the rules of hospitality won out and tradition was put aside. Even though tradition and ritual are extremely important in Samoan culture, *being a good neighbor* is more important.

## Community

In Samoa, you are never alone, and the sense of community that we experienced while visiting the islands will always remain with me. While at

Kanana Fou Theological Seminary, each of us was assigned a host or hostess who took care of us the entire time we were there. If we were ever in need of anything, all we had to do was ask. Our hosts fed us, gave us tours, supplied water, information and great conversation. We learned that the whole Samoan society is structured around community in the form of extended family relations. Families live in the same villages, and often in the same fale. The matai (chief), or head of family, is responsible for the well-being of the



(L-R) Amie, Danette, our Samoan hostess; and me, Cathy, KF grounds.

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## Experiencing God Through the People of Samoa

(Continued from page 57)

entire aiga (family group), which includes the extension of anyone who is related to the matai or their spouse. Each member of the aiga is responsible for working on the plantation, maintaining the honor of the family and not bringing disgrace to the aiga. Children are raised by the whole village, and it is common to have children spend years under the care of an aunt or uncle, or as in the old tradition, for young women to be sent to the pastor's home for care and protection.

### God and the Church

The motto of Western Samoa is 'Fa'avae I le Atua Samoa' (Samoa is founded on God). Similarly, the motto of American Samoa translates as, 'God is First'. The 1961 through 1991 Censuses show over 98% of the population of Western Samoa as Christians. The belief that God provides all things for all of us underlies everything that happens in this Pacific island society. Prayer is a regular part of daily life and all meetings, classes, lectures, meals and political gatherings of any kind, always begin with prayer. Every evening there is family worship, led by the women of the home, which everyone is expected to attend. Most of the churches also offer morning worship at 5:00 or 5:30 a.m. for anyone who is able to make it. On Sunday there are two services, a morning and an afternoon service, and there is a traditional custom of placing fines on you if you miss too many Sunday morning worship services.

Worship was very familiar, even though the services I attended were mostly in Samoan. There is something spiritual about worshipping in another language where your understanding needs to come through the spirit instead of the mind. The Lord's Prayer has a familiar cadence in every language, and singing praises to God is simply about opening your mouth and making a joyful noise. Experiencing the Samoan choirs was like hearing angels singing praises to God.

Most of the services I attended began with a call to worship and invitational prayer and the rest of the elements of a worship service were included in various order. During the service in Fagatogo, American Samoa, I was given the honor of addressing the congregation with a short presentation about the PSR program for ministry from a woman's perspective. My fellow student, Leanne Wade, delivered a children's lesson. There was always fellowship following the service which included a traditional Samoan feast complete with taro and breadfruit, raw and fried fish, beef, chicken, beans, and a few things I never could identify but were extremely tasty.

### Conclusion

From what I have experienced, I would say Samoans are a very proud and happy people who honor God in everything they do. Citizens of American Samoa are proud to be U.S. Nationals, and the people of Western Samoa are equally as proud to be an independent nation. Everyone seems to have an incredible sense of humor and smiles and laughter are a part of everyday life. A good joke is always appreciated, and the gift of humor is evident in young and old alike. When I was visiting the minister of the CCCAS church in Fagatogo, his 'almost five year old' granddaughter played a joke on me. As I was heading to the ladies room she ran up and grabbed my hand;

"No, that's the wrong room," Morgan said with a sense of urgency. "That's the boy's room."

"Is it really?" I asked, smiling down at her.

Morgan smiled sweetly and said "Read the sign."

Little did she know that *fafine* was one of the words I had learned even before coming to Samoa. I was indeed

at the correct door, and I let out a huge laugh as I bent down and informed Morgan that I knew *fafine* meant woman and that it was a good joke she tried to play on me. I sent her back to the table to think of a joke she could play on my fellow PSR student, Leanne.



Cathy at KF in dress

From the viewpoint of a Swedenborgian it was plain to see how the integration of faith and charity manifests itself in the life and culture of the Samoan people. I experienced a culture based on a faith in God that is strong and that is lived out in every day life. Expressions of this faith can be seen in all areas of family, community, church and economic life and provides the foundation for expressions of charity. Our delegation experienced charity in action, or love to the neighbor, in the generosity and graciousness of the Samoan people. Hospitality is simply a

part of life in Samoa, it is the *Fa'a Samoa*, or Samoan way and is as inseparable from the culture as faith is from charity.

The memories of my time in Samoa will be with me throughout my life. We were shown God's love through the hospitality of the Samoan people, and we were welcomed in as part of the family everywhere we went. We were given the opportunity to learn and experience Samoan culture, not simply through reading about it, but through living with the people of the islands and experiencing their way of life. I have been truly blessed by this experience and I will carry it with me always.

Cathy Lauber is a seminary student on the ordination track at the Swedenborgian House of Studies at Pacific School of Religion (see Profile on following page). ☩

## Cathy Lauber: Profile

I was born in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada and grew up in a home just outside of the city. I was raised in the Catholic tradition and attended Catholic schools through to the end of grade 8. Around the age of 14 I left the practice of Catholicism behind because it didn't make sense anymore in my life and growing spiritual beliefs. I had no intention of ever joining another church, and didn't for many years.

In 1988 I left home to attend Brock University and lived in St. Catharines, Ontario for about eight years. In the spring of 1993 I graduated with an honors degree in Business Administration (BBA). I spent the next twelve years attempting to 'climb the corporate ladder.' I was armed with ambition, a good education and a belief that I could accomplish anything. I advanced to senior management levels within the administrative arm of business in various industries, however through most of my career I was left feeling unsatisfied in my work. I upgraded my education to include a certificate in Human Resources Management, thinking that a focus on the human side of business would bring the fulfillment in my career that I was looking for. Little did I know that ministry was my true calling, but it would still take a couple of years for me to figure that out.


During this time I was living in Kitchener and usually lived alone in my own apartment. However there was a short time in 1999/2000 when I had a roommate. This roommate was getting married in the Swedenborgian Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener and one day she asked me to not only go and see the church but also attend worship service with her. I thought "Sure, why not. I haven't been to church in a while, it might be fun."

I think I had been away from church long enough to miss the parts of Sunday worship that I had enjoyed. I have always loved to sing and was in the youth choir for a few years, and I realized that I missed the singing of hymns. I enjoyed participating in worship again and also enjoyed the fellowship and the socializing that happened after the service. The community at the Church of the Good Shepherd was so welcoming and friendly, and over time I learned how supportive the community is of each other's spiritual journey. I became involved in the church quickly and found that in the middle of the daily drab of life, my church activities provided some light and enjoyment. Right up until the moment of my calling I believed my talents would be best used to support the administration and operation of the church, working 'behind the

scenes'. I was involved as a member of the board of directors and volunteered on numerous committees over the years, depending on what was needed at the time. I was preparing to take over as chair of the board of directors and was looking forward to leading the church in a new direction over the two year term, and then along came Convention 2004.

The Kitchener church hosted convention in 2004 and I was on the year-long planning committee. During this time I was also reflecting on my career and why it was not heading in a positive and satisfying direction. I was searching very seriously to find what my vocation really was, and even though my church activities brought me the most joy in life, the thought of entering the ministry never crossed my mind.

When July finally came and convention started I thought I would be focused on making sure all of our guests were settled, and that all the meeting rooms were properly scheduled. However, what I found happening was that I was drawn to speaking with anyone I could find who was associated with the school. Over the course of about 48 hours I found myself being led to a higher level of thinking that at first made it clear that I was to enroll at SHS, and then I came to know that I was being called to take this step for the purpose of becoming an ordained minister. It was an amazing experience of being lifted up and feeling completely confident in following this path that was being laid before me. It was an easy decision to make when it is so clear, and being at convention and having the love and support of the Swedenborgian community all around me helped make this transition easier and helped give me the courage to follow this calling.

So, here I am. A student at the Pacific School of Religion and the Swedenborgian House of Studies in Berkeley, California, U.S.A.. I am planning on graduating with a Masters of Divinity in May of 2008 with ordination to follow in July. There is much to accomplish between now and then, and it has often been quite challenging to follow this path. However, this recent immersion trip to the South Pacific is just one example of the many amazing experiences that I will be blessed to have along the way. I carry with me the sentiment that I had during my calling, when I was thrilled and terrified at the prospects of my future, when I had no idea and yet felt a certainty like I had never experienced before, a sentiment I summed up in the heartfelt phrase, "I can't wait to see what happens next." 

## A Day in the Life of a Chaplain

(Continued from page 50)

give them as much information as possible. As I rounded the corner they were taking John to surgery and James, the level II, was talking to the team that was checking him out. His only worry was his younger brother. He seemed to be in amazingly good condition. James had managed to stay in the vehicle as it rolled six or seven times. He is not sure at what point his brother was ejected, but he remembered vividly getting out of the crashed vehicle and going over to his brother who was unconscious. He had performed CPR on him until the EMTs arrived.

Soon I was back with the family, updating them on the condition of the boys. The afternoon was awash with medical updates for the family. It flowed with tears and stories as we passed the time. Soon they were able to see James, and he was even dismissed with only a few cuts and bruises. His adrenalin was running so high that he did not even feel the pain. Finally the news came that they had stabilized John and the family could see him. He was not out of the woods, but things were looking better. He had a ruptured spleen, broken leg, punctured lung and slight concussion, but he was out of surgery and being moved to surgical intensive care.


As I escorted the family up to the floor from the ED quiet room we passed the chapel.

"What's that for?" Jacob mumbled.

"It is for families and patients when they want to get away to meditate, pray and thank God."

The next day as I was rounding I stopped by the chapel. I noticed a new message in the book we keep there called "Prayers of the people." It said: "I don't care who or what saved my brother tonight, but I'd like to say, just in case it was you, thank you. Jacob."

*Rev. Jane Siebert, in addition to being the minister of the Pretty Prairie New Church in Pretty Prairie, Kansas, is a chaplain at Wesley Hospital in Wichita.*

Reprinted with author's permission from *The Plains Banner*, March 2006. 

## Brokeback Mountain

(Continued from page 51)


not to "come out." It's possible that the character of Jack in this movie leans more toward homosexual, and the character of Ennis leans more toward heterosexual, accounting in part for their respective behaviors, but we never know that for sure because Ennis has so much difficulty articulating his feelings, and feels so trapped by the family and social expectations which surround him. Like real life, it's complicated!

In discussing *Brokeback Mountain* with several friends I was surprised to find that not everyone shared the same opinion of what it was about. I noticed that the movie provided a mirror in which each person may see their own understanding of sexual orientation issues. One friend who has a conservative military and Catholic background had questions about whether sexual orientation is actually in the DNA; he has been told by some psychologists that they have 'cured' some of their clients of homosexual behavior. He told me he thought Ennis must have been 'forced into it' with Jack, referring to the seduction scene in the tent early in the film. On the other hand, my ex-husband Mike felt that Ennis's inability to connect with his emotions directed his behavior even more than his fear of public condemnation. Mike saw *Brokeback Mountain* more as a universal love story than as an exploration of sexual behavior hindered by social consequences.

I felt tremendously sad at the end of this movie. I believe it is a spiritual truth that when we worry too much about what others think of us, or when doing the 'right thing' becomes more important to us than what we feel inside, we often wind up sacrificing, or not even fully recognizing the very abundance that God is trying to place in our hands. We can also hurt others in the process. At the same time, we understand through the film the way Ennis's environment has made it feel impossible for him to claim the abundance of his love for Jack. Early on in their relationship Ennis recounts to Jack, "There were two old guys shackled up together. They were the joke of the town, even

though they were pretty tough old birds. One day they were found beaten to death and castrated. My dad, he made sure me and my brother saw it. For all I know, he did it."

God wants so much for us in terms of our ability to love and be loved—much more than we can possibly imagine. He also considers ALL the aspects of our situations, and always, always, God has our *love* and our *joy about our love* on the top of his agenda. Even if Ennis never publicly acknowledged Jack as more than a fishing buddy, God knows about the great love in Ennis's heart for Jack. We only take with us from this life what we keep in our hearts. All that is inside us is what really counts in the spiritual world. The rest we leave behind. And that is what *Brokeback Mountain* is ultimately about—the love inside, expressed or unexpressed, public or private, forbidden or not forbidden. The love inside, which is always counted by God. In this sense, Ennis's life is not a total tragedy. There is still something inside him in that tiny trailer, in that memento of Jack and how it represents all his love for Jack, which he takes away from his life situation. But true joy, and what God wants for us all, is what Jack wanted in life—to go all the way for his love. ALL. All that is an expression of the love inside is a joy to God Most High.

*Mona Conner is an artist and illustrator, member of the New York Swedenborgian Church, and former chair of the Communications Support Unit. She lives in Brooklyn, New York.* 

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## Loginov Appeal 2006

(Continued from page 54)

Also, donations can be made by sending checks payable to the Ohio Association of Swedenborgian Churches, noting "for Loginov Fund" on your check and mailing to the Ohio Association Treasurer as follows:  
Frank Doyle  
7325 Drake Road  
Cincinnati, OH 45243

*Edmund Swiger, Corresponding Secretary of the Ohio Association* 

## Scribe of Heaven

(Continued from page 52)

goes, despite logical problems or difficulties imposed by well-researched facts. Rarely may one hear a dissenting voice in a church. Swedenborg's attempt to move Christianity away from faith-based belief and over to insight-based belief puts a new burden on theological education—beyond doctrinal education there must be solid instruction in good thinking aided by a widespread exchange of ideas. The ultimate objective is to create a constantly expanding theological frontier which can investigate and solve its problems as it proceeds.

Right in the first paragraph Eller and Kirven say that "In this post-postmodern era, interest in formal theological ideas has obviously lost ground."

The problem of whether to establish a Swedenborgian Church, and if so what kind? appears especially in this and following chapters. The answer to the first question has generally been yes, though non-church Swedenborgians exist and persist in remaining aloof. The General Conference in England and the American Swedenborgian denominations had to wrestle with problems concerning ecclesiastical authority in any Swedenborgian Church, the proper liturgy and place of doctrinal teaching, the attitudes expected of congregations, and how to define the authority of Swedenborg's writings.

A lot of this very detailed history reflects old questions about what should rule: the individual or the group, the Church or the individual? What liturgy is to be used? The objective in much of this was to become very distinct from "the Old Church." And is the Church supposed to be a very large Person made up of individuals—a kind of Grand Man on earth which has to find unity and uniformity of belief in some higher authoritative form? If so, who should govern at the top, be the brain of the Church? And to what extent should the rank and file believe as the higher offices of the Church determine?

Jane Williams-Hogan and David Eller write on pp. 247-8:

"Perhaps it is natural to think of church groups as the primary means by

which Swedenborg's teachings took on an organizational form. Numerically, Swedenborgian churches have been a tiny part of the Christian family; in the year 2003 their membership numbered perhaps 35,000 worldwide, not including 15,000 readers and associates. . . . Yet virtually all branches of the organized New Church would agree that Swedenborg's spiritual vision of a New Church that would replace the varieties of Christianity with which he was familiar should not be equated with any specific earthly body or organization.

"... The twentieth century witnessed a significant decline in the membership of the General Convention. By 1930, it had dropped from its 1890 peak of just over 7,000 members to 5,800. By the end of 1999, it had dropped still further to just over 2,100 members (1,531 considered active), in some forty churches, served by thirty-six active clergy (pp. 282-3).

"In the twentieth century, both the General Convention and American Society changed. Culturally, strong loyalty to religious institutions declined. Faith became a private and personal matter that many saw as something that could not be embodied in an organized church. Paralleling these trends, the General Convention also became more ecumenical and universal. One significant departure from its past, reflective of the times, was approval for the ordination of women clergy in 1975 [not 1972?]. The first to receive ordination was Dorothea Harvey, a professor at Urbana University. Rather than focusing on doctrine, or education, or ritual, Convention energies in recent decades have centered primarily on personal spiritual growth."

From this point, *Scribe of Heaven* considers historical and theological developments in the General Church and The Lord's New Church Which is Nova Hierosolyma.

To cite these denominations' membership statistics: In the General Church growth was "slow but steady."

"In 1900 the General Church had 560 members. The total membership had increased to just over 2,000 by 1930 of which approximately half resided in Bryn Athyn. By the year 2003, the membership had increased to

4,810 worldwide. Undoubtedly, factors contributing to this steady growth and the stability of the church organizationally include a strong system of education, generous financial backing by its members, and more recently, new efforts at evangelism." (p. 292)

The Lord's New Church Which is Nova Hierosolyma had a membership of 1000 by the year 2000, including members in various places around the world.

*Scribe* also covers related organizations such as The Bible Christian Church, the St. Thomas Christians, a small denomination with Orthodox roots which elevated Swedenborg to sainthood, the Waltham New Church School, Urbana University, and Convention's Swedenborgian House of Studies and its predecessors.

Williams-Hogan and Eller write: "This overview of the history and institutionalization of Swedenborgian thought and worship in Britain, the United States, and Canada speaks to the continuing energy and vision of believers in the new Christianity, but also to the incredible difficulty of establishing a church without the presence of a single charismatic leader. . . . While the New Church has had an abundance of capable leaders, it has not been able to avoid some of the ambiguities that would have been removed by the directives of a charismatic founder." (p. 309)

Swedenborg was of course of a different temperament and also suffered from a speech impediment. His business in the Swedish Diet was generally conducted by memo.

The New Church in Africa occupies an entire chapter. Africa contains more members of the New Church than any other continent.

David Mooki was a minister of the African Holy Catholic Church. In 1909 he found a copy of *True Christianity* in a pile of secondhand books in an old furniture shop in Krugersdorp, South Africa. He started to read and soon decided that he must have it. He bought it, took it home, and read it from cover to cover.

"When he closed the book he was convinced that the Lord had made his Second Coming on earth as Swedenborg

(Continued on page 62)

## Scribe of Heaven

(Continued from page 61)

maintained. He was also impressed by statements in the text and in a supplement to it that emphasized Swedenborg's belief that Africans had a special genius for discerning spiritual truth." (p. 321)

He decided that he absolutely must find the New Church that the book referred to. He was determined to share these new truths with other Africans.

When Mooki brought *True Christianity* to his congregation, many of them accepted its teachings. "It became the authority to which they referred in all matters of doctrine." (p. 321)

The bishop of the denomination became determined to join another, non-Swedenborgian group in the United States, but Mooki and his followers refused to go along. Finally they broke away and formed the New Church of Africa in 1911.

The church established a relationship with the General Conference of the New Church in England and grew dramatically in spite of overbearing restrictions and racial segregation imposed by the South African government.

The story of the New Church of Africa is long and detailed. By 1988 the South African New Church was reported to have 24,800 members. There are also strong New Church groups in Kenya, Ghana, and Nigeria.

Alice B. Skinner's essay brings a lot of the preceding essays down to earth in the lives of creative people. It is the last essay in the book. She describes the power of three central ideas in Swedenborg's theology: the spiritual essence of reality, useful living, and the nature of knowing. There are vivid examples of how they influenced a number of creative people, including thinkers writing in prose and poetry, artists in paint, stone, and glass, architects, a lawyer, and a composer. Unfortunately brief summations of her discussions were required by space limitations.

### I. Spiritual Reality:

A major theme in Swedenborg is that the spiritual is what is most real:

"The spiritual is not some shadowy phantom of material reality, or some distant or future realm; it is in fact so much more real than materiality that according to Swedenborg the material reality we see actually draws its shape and being from the spiritual." (p. 341).

As Swedenborg puts it, "With this [spiritual] realm it must have a constant connection in order to endure, or remain in existence." (HS 4524). The connection is that spirit and nature correspond to each other. Each reflects the other, looks similar to the other, works similarly, but the material world exists only because the spiritual world does, not *vice-versa*. In a special way, the spiritual world exists within the material world. Emerson wrote: "The Universe is the externalization of the soul." (p. 344).

The Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges and Robert Frost are the center of attention in the next section of the essay, "Seeing the Spiritual."

Then follows a discussion of "Spiritual Architecture: Worcester, Brown, and Porter," followed by "The Human as Representative of the Spiritual: Flaxman and Powers"; "Themes of spiritual Growth: Pyle, Inness, Keith, Tiffany, and Yardumian".

### II. Useful Living:

"The Swedenborgian principle of usefulness is highly developed; it operates . . . at every level of the chain of being that stretches from the lowliest stone to God himself. According to Swedenborg, everything has its useful function in the ordered system of the universe from minerals to plants to animals to human beings . . ."

Here Skinner discusses Mussey, Child, and Chapman on forging links for Community, and the value of appointed work as defined by the work of Barrett Browning, Galli-Curci and Jewett.

### III. Ways of Knowing:

Knowing as an act necessarily bound up with love, as seen in the painter Joseph Andrews (1806-1873), knowing as a state originating in the inner self as exemplified in Hellen Keller (1880-1968), and mystical knowing that sees what lies within material reality, as seen in William Blake (1757-1827), an artist

and poet "profoundly influenced by Swedenborg." His work influenced the poet and student of mysticism William Butler Yeats (1865-1939). "Following Blake and Swedenborg, Yeats applied mystic insight to his own poetic craft, employing symbolism in a way that made poetry a new language for the new way of knowing." (p. 172) ☩

## Messenger Back Issues Available

The Fryeburg New Church has the following duplicate back issues of *The Messenger* that anyone can have for the price of postage:

2000: Sept (2), Oct, Nov.(2), Dec (2);

2001: Jan, Feb, March(2) April, Oct.;

2002: Jan, Sept, Oct, Dec;  
2003: Jan, Feb, March, April, May, June(2), Oct, Sept;  
2004: Jan, Feb, April, Oct.

Contact before June 1, 2006 and direct requests to:

Fryeburg New church, 12 Oxford Street, Fryeburg, ME 04037  
(207) 935-3413 or  
[www.fryeburgnewchurch.org](http://www.fryeburgnewchurch.org) ☩

## Want to Make a Tangible Difference in the Quality of People's Lives and Share Some of What We Take So Much for Granted?

The Central Office has recently received two requests for material assistance from overseas — one from a gentleman living in an impoverished area of the Philippines who requests clothing and supplies and one from a gentleman in Ghana asking for Bibles and musical instruments for use in worship. If you or your church would like to be involved in responding to these requests please contact Teri at the Central Office, (617) 969-4240 or email: [centralo@swedenborg.org](mailto:centralo@swedenborg.org). ☩

## Building with Nature: Inspiration for the Arts & Crafts Home

(Continued from back page)

his influence on the American Arts and Crafts Movement. It is beautifully illustrated with examples of the aesthetic (including many of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church) and their antecedents, for this was a studied and erudite movement.

Allow me to fete you by quoting the first two paragraphs of Chapter One in their entirety. Then, you can treat yourself (and perhaps even your parish library) to a copy of this rare twice-in-a-lifetime book which will surely inspire, teach, and entertain you and yours for many years to come!

"Joseph Worcester (1836-1913), Reverend of the Swedenborgian Church and the man who gave the simple Arts & Crafts house in northern California its initial impetus, was an architect by avocation, although he was not credentialled as one. Worcester stands out as a highly influential proponent of unpretentious Arts & Crafts houses built of natural materials to harmonize with nature. Not only did he design and oversee construction of five California Arts & Crafts houses and a church, he inspired, urged, cajoled, and succeeded in convincing many others to follow his design ideas.

While he was best known in California, his friends included such important

figures as architects Daniel H. Burnham, Bernard Maybeck, Charles Follen McKim, Willis Polk, Ernest Coxhead, A. Page Brown, and John Galen Howard; artists Bruce Porter, Arthur Mathews, William Keith, Jules Guerin, George Inness, and Mary Curtis Richardson; writers Robert Louis Stevenson, Charles Keeler, Charles F. Lummis, and Jack

London; pioneering environmentalists Frederick Law Olmsted and John Muir; philanthropist Phoebe Apperson Hearst; many university of California professors; and at least one San Francisco mayor. All of them play a role in this book."



*San Francisco Church Sanctuary as Joseph Worcester used it.*

*Alan Thomsen is on the Swedenborgian House of Studies Board of Trustees, a member of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, and has contributed months of valuable labor and expertise to the SHS library and archives. He is a longtime devotee and scholar of the Arts & Crafts Movement.*

Editor's Note: Author Leslie M. Freudenheim gave a lecture at the San Diego Swedenborgian Church February 2, 2006, and at the San Francisco church March 19. The San Francisco church was celebrating its National Historical Landmark designation, as well as the 111<sup>th</sup> anniversary of worship in their sanctuary. Both lectures were well received with a good turnout. ☒

## PASSAGES

### Deaths

**Daigle**—Marilyn Louise "Mino" Daigle entered the spiritual world February 9th, 2006, after a long illness. She was a lifelong member of the Fryeburg New Church in Fryeburg, Maine. A memorial service was held at the Fryeburg New Church February 14th, 2006, the Rev. Ken Turley and Pastor Lyle Leach officiating.

**Green**—Kathleen "Kitty" Green entered the spiritual world December 24, 2005, after a long battle with brain cancer. Kitty was a member of the Royal Oak Church of the Holy City in Royal Oak, Michigan, a very talented artist and beloved friend to many. A memorial service was held for her January 15th, 2006, the Rev. Renee Machiniak officiating.

**Jackson**—Helen Jackson, treasurer of the former Brockton, Mass. Society and longtime director on the Mass. New Church Union Standing Committee, entered the spiritual world February 12, 2006, at the age of 93. She was living in a nursing home in Maine. During World War II, Miss Jackson served in the U.S. Army Air Corps. She was a member of the Brockton Historical Society, and was active in aiding children through Catholic Charities. A memorial service was held for her February 22, 2006, at the Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church, the Rev. Lee Woofenden officiating. A graveside service followed at the Union Cemetery on Center Street in Brockton.

**VanBaalén**—Edward, passed into the spiritual world December 15, 2005, due to congestive heart failure and complications with diabetes. Ed served as a dedicated trustee of the Royal Oak Church of the Holy City and will be greatly missed. A memorial service was held for him January 28, 2006, the Rev. Renee Machiniak officiating. ☒

## HELP WANTED

### FRYEBURG NEW CHURCH ASSEMBLY

Fryeburg, Maine

AUGUST 5 - 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2006

#### Summer Session Staff Positions (for adults 18 yrs. and older)

Available positions include dorm mother, dorm father, Flames advisor, child-care provider, dining room supervisor, and 2 qualified lifeguards. If interested contact Debbie Cook, summer session director, as soon as possible! Some positions go very quickly. Compensation for these positions is free room and board. If you would like to be a lifeguard and are not certified, contact me about financial help in training costs.

[dcook@bacs-gc.org](mailto:dcook@bacs-gc.org) or 215-657-2220 ☒



## ***Building with Nature: Inspiration for the Arts & Crafts Home***

Leslie M. Freudenheim

Reviewed by Alan Thomsen



For Swedenborgians who are proud and enamored of the church's artistic influence and aesthetic sensibilities and contributions, the publication in 1974 of the first edition of *Building With Nature* was a landmark event. In that work, co-authors Elisabeth Sussman and Leslie Freudenheim laid the groundwork for understanding the seminal role played by San Francisco's Swedenborgian minister, the Rev. Joseph Worcester, in launching the Bay Region Tradition in architecture, now more commonly known as the California Arts and Crafts School.

In the original *Building With Nature*, the authors uncovered evidence of Rev. Worcester's leadership in the design of the now nationally-landmarked San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, and proof of his having designed his own Piedmont home and the Price Marshall homes in San Francisco. These rank as the very earliest pieces of architecture to demonstrate the new arts and crafts principles and to feature the new aesthetics. In short, Joseph Worcester was, at least at critical junctures, as competent a designer, aesthete, critic, and even an architect as a minister. Indeed, he was often consulted, his advice and approval sought by such eminent architects as Daniel Burnham of Chicago, Bernard Maybeck, John Galen Howard, Willis Polk, and A. Page Brown. His aesthetic circle extended to artists such as William Keith, Charles Keeler, Arthur Mathews, and Edwin Markham, to name a few.

It is safe to say that an entire generation of scholarship—and joy—grew out of this book and for that we

are grateful, indeed. Now, thirty-two years later, we can only exult in its having been entirely rewritten by Leslie Freudenheim and handsomely republished by Gibbs Smith, Utah (229 p., \$45).

In the years intervening between the two editions of the book, interest in this most organic and American school of architecture has steadily grown. Buildings which once languished in obscurity or were even disparaged by modernists are now venerated, emulated, and acclaimed as national treasures and are prized as patrimonial jewels.

Now, enriched by more than a generation of experience and continued research, scholarship and keen insight, Leslie Freudenheim returns in person and in print to further document, discuss and



*Drawing of San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, Chapel and Residence, NW Corner Washington and Lyon Sts. A Page Brown, Architect, 1894. (p. 33)*

celebrate the influence and importance of our beloved Joseph Worcester in shaking up the world of aesthetics and militating for a new school of architecture which would sweep across the entire nation.

The opening chapters of the book, and more than a few sections later on, treat of Worcester and

(Continued on page 63)

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