

# THE MESSENGER

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~ BOOK REVIEW ~

## *The Great Turning*



by David Korten  
Berrett-Kochler/  
Kumarian  
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*Reviewed by Paul  
Zacharias*

This book is dedicated to several people, including George W. Bush, "whose administration exposed to full view the imperial shadow side of U.S. democracy, stripped away the last of the illusions of my childhood innocence, and compelled me to write this book."

The preface is from the Earth Charter (2000) - "We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of the magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is impera-

tive that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations."

This is one of the most fascinating and most important books I've ever read; truly a must-read book. Where to begin? I'm not even sure where you'd find this volume in the nearest book store! It could be under: Religion, Science, New Age, History, Current Events, Economics, Culture. Korten, who also wrote the bestseller *When Corporations Rule the World* brings all of these areas together in a most provocative and insightful way, as he hammers home his central theme: that today humankind and planet Earth are at a critical crossroads. Which way will we go? Up or down! Always the choice is ours, and the time required to reverse present trends is limited.

He begins with a brief crash course in the history of the universe, taking us through the various stages of pre-historic humans; then into the goddess period when there was relative peace and harmony in the world. The bulk of the book walks us through the last 5000 years of our story, which he labels the "Empire Period." Generally speaking the Empire model has not served us well (except for the elite ruling

classes), and a dramatic, radical shift is essential if the human experiment is to continue and flourish.

He tells us in vivid detail how empires have risen and fallen over the past 5000 years: Assyria, Egypt, Rome, Greece, Ottoman, Britain, and they've all followed very much the same pattern. They're based on the following premises: **Life is hostile and competitive; Humans are flawed and dangerous; Order by dominant hierarchy; Compete or die; Love of power and control; Defend the rights of self; Masculine dominant; Ends justify any means; A we-they, superior-inferior mentality.**

All of these once mighty empires collapsed, usually from within. And yes, there's a scathing indictment of the American hegemony with its many global military interventions in the past century; its support of corrupt regimes; its current failing economic policies, resulting in an ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor, and its facade of democracy.

Unfortunately, after 1776 America tilted toward Alexander Hamilton's philosophy, instead of Jefferson's loftier vision of the New World. This chapter on

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# Religious Beliefs

Jane Siebert

Religious beliefs and dealing with traumatic events is a hot area for psychological study, but results vary all over the ballpark.

Relationships between religious involvement and adjustment to trauma are difficult to define, according to a recent study presented at the American Psychological Association's annual convention. Links between religious faith and health-related well-being are more complex than once thought, another researcher reveals. One study found that spiritual/religious beliefs and involvement help survivors make meaning of traumatic experiences, and another data-based study showed that survivors find their religious beliefs helpful in coping with trauma. But other studies found these beliefs hurtful and led survivors to reduce their religious involvement or even abandon their faith after experiencing a traumatic event. The researchers question why individuals have such different responses after trauma.

After working for two years at Wesley Medical Center's trauma department, I have an opinion about the dilemma. Responses vary because spiritual/religious beliefs vary. Some beliefs are helpful to the patient and family member and other beliefs can really get in the way. Trying to study this issue and to group believers into one set is fraught with problems. In scientific studies the goal is to control the variables—what one believes is itself a widespread variable.

One man who had been involved in a car wreck that had severely

injured his 12-year-old daughter was sure God was punishing him for divorcing her mother. We talked into the night as I tried to interject my own thoughts about God's unmitigated love and forgiveness, but he was sure that God keeps score of our wrongs and doles out punishment. This belief was definitely not helping him get through this traumatic event.

Another interaction I remember well was with a young woman facing possible paralysis of her legs from a spinal cord injury. The long-range effects of this type of injury are sometimes not known for awhile. She was positive that she would receive total healing because of her prayers and the prayers of others. She would not even allow the thought to enter her mind that healing comes in different ways and we do not know how God may heal us. She would only have it her way. When things did not go as she had prayed, she became very depressed and blamed herself for not having enough faith. Her beliefs caused her to be very hard on herself and this did not help her deal with her traumatic injuries.

One more example of harmful beliefs that I recall was a young woman who had lost a child in a car accident. People sometimes say the dumbest things when tragedy occurs. They don't mean to be insensitive, but some of our beliefs expressed to one grieving are downright wrong, especially when we really have no idea what the grieving parent is going through. This young mother was told that God does not give us more than we can handle. We've all

heard this, and in some instances it can be comforting. However the young mother said to me in private, "Does that mean if I would not have been able to handle this, that my child would not have died? Does this mean that because I have a strong faith, that my child died and not the child in the other car? If this is how it is, I don't want to be strong, I want my baby back."

There have also been many times in which I witnessed the positive effects of a trusting relationship with God. I have seen people carried through indescribable events due to their faith and assurance in God.

Positive religious coping during trauma doesn't mean that one is not afraid or worried or scared. It means that one is able to face these fears and worries with the confidence that God will see us

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## Religious Beliefs

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through whatever befalls us. It is expressed with the freedom to say, "I don't know what to do, on what is right. I can only hold onto God's support and guidance." It is supported with the freedom to let God come through in the moment rather than holding onto what someone else has told us might help. It is the unrestricted understanding of God as the ultimate source of love and compassion rather than a judging, punishing Being. It allows one the freedom to be mad at God knowing that God understands and cares and it is not up to us to make things right, but only to accept God's love and grace. It is the acknowledgment that we don't have all the answers and we don't understand why things happen, and this is OK.

Questions don't mean one doesn't have faith; faith enables us to live with the questions.

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These are the spiritual/religious beliefs that I see helping people through the most traumatic events imaginable. These are the times God carries us. It is when we put down our spiritual resistance, set aside our know-it-all beliefs, erase the religious quotes on the tip of our tongues, and let God truly be God.

I don't know how anyone is ever going to scientifically measure that.

*The Rev. Jane Siebert is pastor of the Swedenborgian church in Pretty Prairie, Kansas.*

*Reprinted with author's permission from The Plains Banner, Kansas Association of the New Jerusalem Church Newsletter, September 2006.* ☩

## The Great Turning

(Continued from front page)

the birth of America, and its first hundred years, makes for a truly fascinating read.

The Empire model is found in every sector of life: corporations, commerce, international affairs, the media, churches, and, sadly, all too often in families. Well, Korten's talking about the core Swedenborgian concept of the four loves: love of God, other people, the world, and ourselves. When these loves are kept in proper order, heaven results. When they are inverted and love of self and the world dominate, then we have hell. Always, as individuals and nations, we choose, and inch by inch the plot unfolds.

Korten is very big on human free will and personal responsibility. This alternate route leads to what he calls Earth Community, a world in which: Life is supportive and cooperative; Humans have many possibilities and the freedom

to choose; There is order through partnership; The rights of all are respected; Variety is celebrated; Everyone has adequate food, shelter and clothing; There is true equality of sexes, races and religions; Mother Earth is honored and cared for.

A Divine Source and Sustainer of all life looms large in Korten's thinking. There is a loving, intelligent Design and Purpose in every facet of life. Every major religion, at its best, would echo the principles mentioned above that go into the Earth Community lifestyle. In our hearts we know what needs to be done to ultimate this vision of a better world. The crucial question is: Do we have the will to do it? Gandhi said, "The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing could suffice to solve most of the world's problems." Remember that an informed, aroused public opinion stopped the Vietnam War.

An Earth Community world would come to pass when millions of people, and thousands of small groups around the globe, have a vision of the world that could be...then mobilize their dreams, skills, energies and resources to build the Holy City on earth. This will be a grass-roots, from the bottom up, universal movement.

The very last sentence in the book is, "We are the ones we have been waiting for." Amen

This would be a wonderful book for small group study. Website: [www.greatturning.org](http://www.greatturning.org)

*The Rev. Paul Zacharias is a retired Swedenborgian minister with 50 years service in the ministry. He lives in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada.* ☩

# Urbana University Update

Speech Delivered at Convention 2006, Urbana University



Robert  
Head

The last  
Con-  
vention  
held on  
our cam-  
pus was in

2000, the year before my arrival. Much has changed since that time and I have tried to update you at every Convention since as to our progress.

As goes a popular phrase, “a picture is worth a thousand words.” In certain circumstances, neither a picture nor a thousand words is appropriate for capturing the essence of a situation. I believe the essence of Urbana University, with its dynamic learning environment and ever-improving facilities is such a situation. In short, being on campus, seeing the active student life and the changing physical plant is the only way to truly experience our University.

Urbana University is extremely proud of its heritage and its current progress. We are also excited about the prospects for our future. It is wonderful having you, members of our founding church, as a part of our past, our present and our future. Welcome home to your University.

James Madison served as the principal author of the United States Constitution. For his significant contributions, Madison became known as the “Father of the Constitution.” One phrase in the preamble of that historic document included the words “in order to form a more perfect union.” It is clear that those who framed the Constitution were

intent upon creating something better out of something that was already good.

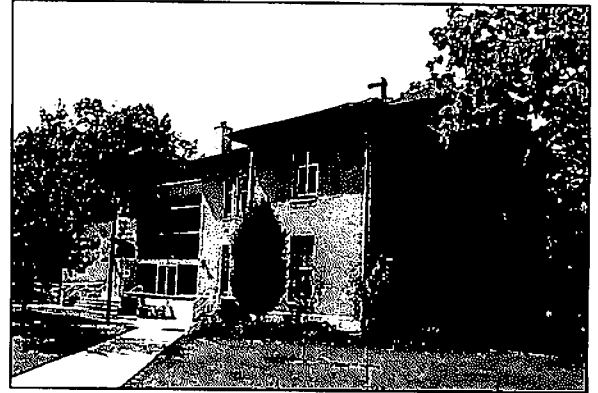
I have often used the phrase “A Will to Excel” to describe our commitment to continuously improving Urbana University. Our faculty takes great pride in leading our students through the life-shaping experience of a liberal arts education.

A more perfect Urbana University will be the result of our growing enrollment, the new facilities on campus, the increased level of technology funded by our \$1.825 million Title III grant, and the same commitment to excellence that we have always had in serving and educating our students. A more perfect Urbana University will be the catalyst for preparing students for a lifetime of leadership and service to their communities, which is our ongoing vision.

Helping students excel is our passion and creating a more perfect Urbana University is the vehicle for doing so. We remain fully committed to both.

Each year I have the privilege of sharing the Urbana University story with you. There were several moments of joy during the past year, and I want to share a few of those with you.

On December 10<sup>th</sup> and May 13<sup>th</sup> we held our 106<sup>th</sup> and 107<sup>th</sup> Commencement ceremonies. The initiation of two commencement ceremonies each year reflects our growth and development as an institution. Between the two events, we had 320 students graduate this past year.



Recently renovated Barclay-Bailey Hall, housing classrooms and Johnny Appleseed Museum.

One of our ongoing challenges is to continue the expansion of our academic programs and outreach. The Honors College, a program for talented and gifted students, experienced its inaugural year in 2005 – 2006. In the fall of 2006, we will have our second cohort of honors students, which will more than double the number of honors students on campus.

In the past year, we grew the number of our MBA students from China from four the previous year to 17! We also enjoyed other international students with five from Poland and others from Canada, England, Ireland and Nigeria. Furthermore, five Urbana University students studied abroad last year, enjoying our reciprocal agreement with Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland. Our emphasis on international activities and exposure is directly related to enhancing education.

In June, our Board approved a new Masters Program. Joining our masters programs in Education and Business will be a program in Criminal Justice. We will launch the program as soon as we com-

*(Continued on following page)*

## Urbana University Update

*(Continued from previous page)*

plete the state authorization and accreditation processes.

During this academic year, we will complete our planning and will likely announce new programs in Respiratory Therapy and Radiation Technology. These will be nice additions to our other allied health programs in nursing, sports medicine and athletic training.

Each year I have been able to tell you of our progress in the area of technology. Last year, I mentioned that we had been awarded a \$1.825 million grant to advance technology even farther. It is exciting that even those outside of our community are beginning to take notice of our technological advances. In the most recent edition of IQ Magazine, there is a very nice story on Urbana University and our revolutionary progress in technology.

To keep you up to date, I will also share with you that we have utilized the grant to acquire a new administrative software system, PowerCampus, which is marketed by Sungard. The implementation of this massive system began earlier this year and will continue through the middle of 2007. The new software system is designed to facilitate systems of support for students that will enhance their opportunity for success.

Growth continues at your University. We are well above 1500 students and are fully committed to growing the University to 2500 students by the year 2014. We opened our newest residence hall in 2004. Last fall we were at capacity and thus, we are just beginning the construction of a new residence hall, which will open in the fall of 2007.

Three years ago, I announced the University's \$4.7 million, five-year capital campaign to build a

student center, football field, raise endowment and operating funds, and to improve infrastructure on campus. Last year I informed you that our campaign success was sufficient enough for us to raise our campaign goal to \$6 million. At this point, we have raised over \$5.6 million towards our new goal and it is our hope that, with our growing number of friends, we will complete the campaign during the 2006 – 2007 academic year.

As you walk around campus, you will note the near-completion of both the stadium and the student center. When you tour the student center on Friday, contemplate the opportunities for both formal and informal interactions between residential and commuter students, and faculty. It will truly be a place that enhances our learning environment, the presentation of the arts, and our relationship to the broader community.

Last spring, we began talking to Champaign National Bank about a property that they own in downtown Urbana. The bank is consolidating its operations in their facility on the east end of town. As talks progressed, the bank offered to donate their downtown building to the University and we accepted the gift.

The formal acquisition of the building will be as of the end of this year and provides two very needed opportunities for us:

It provides office space for administrators and staff, which then provides an opportunity to expand classroom spaces on campus as well as additional on-campus offices for faculty.

Having a downtown presence provides another bridge between the University and the greater community.

My belief is that in addition to office space, the downtown building must have the capacity to draw

the community in. On that front, a very good supporter of our institution has stepped forward and offered to donate \$150,000 towards the development of a community art gallery, with the expectation that we would raise another \$150,000 towards the project. With so many talented regional and national artists at our disposal, and with our agreement to house exhibitions on loan from the Springfield Museum of Art, this gallery will be an exciting space for our students and the public. While we have not formalized a plan for what exactly will be in the downtown building, it is likely that it will include this new art gallery.

No State of the University Address would be complete without some mention of the University's financial condition. Let me briefly state that pending audit, the 2005 – 2006 year ended with a slight surplus in operations and a larger surplus overall when fundraising is added in. Our outstanding loan balance to the General Convention is less than \$92,000 and that obligation will be completely paid off in May of 2008, given the current payment schedule.

Having desirable academic and co-curricular programs, in addition to competitive facilities, has been the catalyst for our increasing enrollment. (In the audience is Christina Bruun-Horrigan, our Associate Director of Admissions. Christina, would you please stand.)

I encourage you to contact Christina regarding anyone that you might be aware of who could be interested in pursuing his or her education at Urbana University. We are proud of our Swedenborgian heritage and would love to have a presence of students from our founding church on campus.

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## Urbana University Update

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Christina is located in Browne Hall and would be happy to assist you.

With all of the good news associated with Urbana University and its students, I am indebted to an outstanding Board

of Trustees. Without their encouragement and support, much of what we have accomplished would not be possible. At our June Board meeting, Rev. Ron Brugler was elected to our Board of Trustees. Ron, it is great to have you back on the Board and I look forward to working with you.

Best wishes for a productive and uplifting Convention.

*Robert L. Head, Ph.D.*

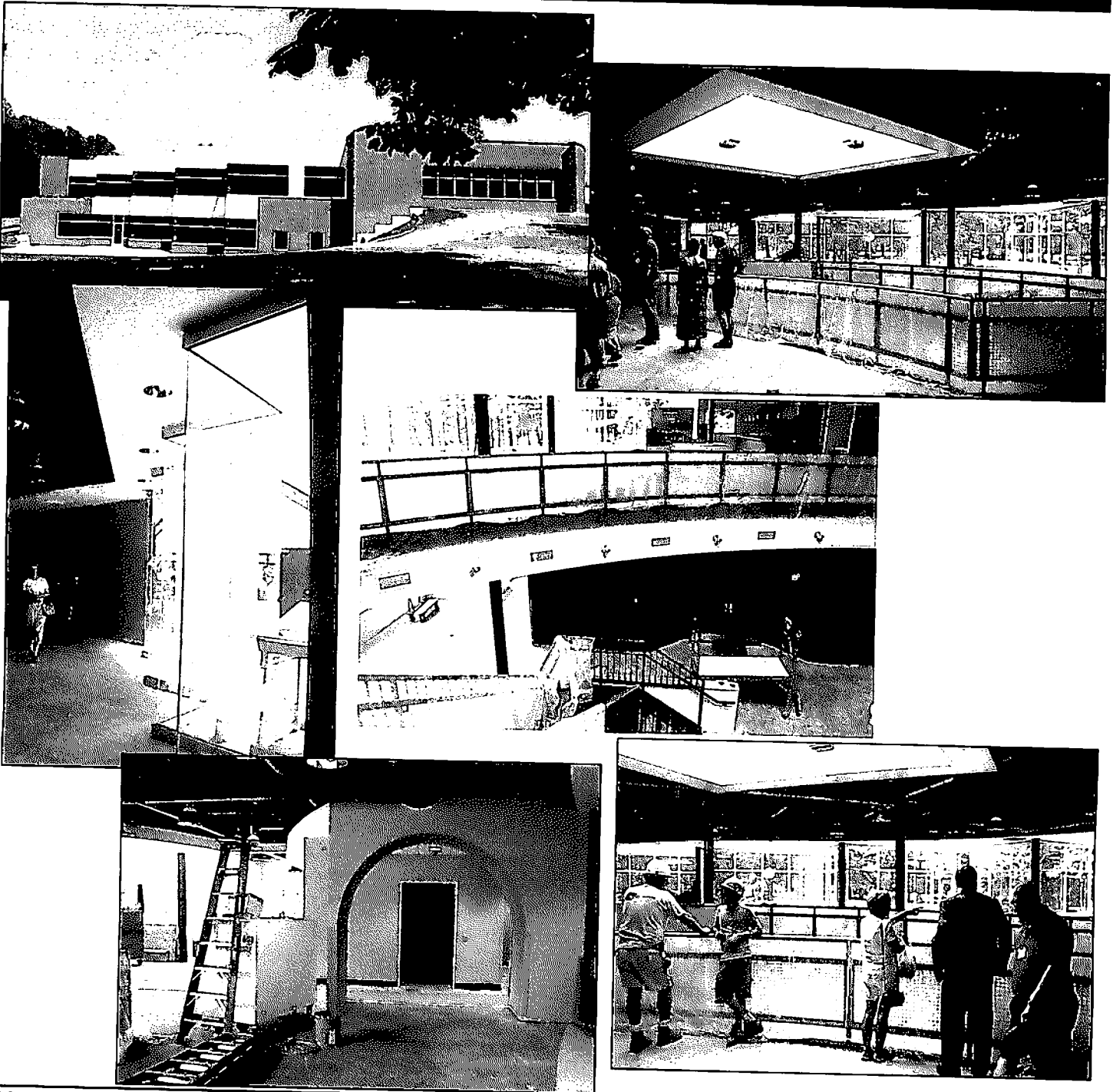
President, Urbana University

Delivered: June 29, 2006

Urbana University

Urbana, Ohio ☒

## A GUIDED TOUR FOR CONVENTION ATTENDEES THROUGH THE SPLENDID NEW URBANA STUDENT CENTER IN THE FINAL STAGES OF COMPLETION IN EARLY JULY



**Editor's Note:** The following speeches are from ordinands at Convention 2006, June 30, at Urbana University, Urbana, Ohio. We have continued them from the September Convention issue so that readers may get acquainted with our new ministers. The Rev. Freeman Schrock has been the minister of the Laporte New Church in LaPorte, Indiana, for several years, and was inducted into the Swedenborgian ministry this year at Convention.



**I** want to tell you first of all, that I am grateful to be here and to be a part of this revelation called The New Church.

I am grateful for the opportunity to be inducted into its ministry! So, I say thank you God, and thanks to you, my sisters and brothers. The people I would like to thank are too numerous to include all of them, but I want to mention a few. First the Laporte Society of the New Church, who have opened their hearts and lives to me and walked with me and sometimes struggled with me the last few years as I prepared for this day! I also want to thank Rev. Renee Machiulak who was so helpful and influential in the early days, and also all the members of CAM, whose guidance and directives made this all possible, and also Dr. Jim Lawrence, whose tutelage and Kindness opened many doors! The gratitude that I have come to know from the writings and the people of the New Church is the rock and the foundation of my joy!

Turning now to the story of Abraham and Sarah, whose children we are, this is the story of a message brought by the angels. I have long loved this story and often identify with it. When I

knew I was to speak here, my thoughts turned immediately to this story, and I wanted it as my text. For one thing it is a story of a man and a woman who had grown old and burdened with long years of unrequited longing for a child, when unexpectedly the angels came with words of promise for this long awaited Blessing.

## NEXT TO THE WOUND LIES THE BLESSING:

*Freeman Schrock*

**A** reading from the book of Genesis, the 18th chapter, beginning at the first verse:

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the terebinth of Mamre, as he sat by in the entrance of his tent while the day was growing hot. Looking up he saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them he ran from the entrance of the tent to greet them; and bowing to the ground he said: "Sir, if I may ask you this favor, please do not go on past your servant. Let some water be brought that you may bathe your feet, and then rest yourself under the tree. Now that you have come this close to your servant, let me bring you a little food, that you may refresh yourselves; and afterward you may go on your way."

"Very well," they replied, "do as you have said."

Abraham hastened into the tent and told Sarah, "Quick, three seahs of fine flour! Knead it and make rolls. He ran to the herd, picked out a tender choice steer, and gave it to a servant, who quickly prepared it. Then he got some curds and milk, as well as the steer that had been prepared, and set these before them; and he

waited on them under the tree while they ate. "Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him. "There in the tent," he replied. One of them said, "I will surely come to you about this time next year, and Sarah will then have a son." Sarah was listening, at the entrance of the tent just behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years, and Sarah had stopped having her womanly periods. So Sarah laughed to herself and said, "Now that I am so withered and my husband is so old, am I still to have sexual pleasure?" But then the Lord said to Abraham: "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, in the spring, and Sarah shall have a son." Because she was afraid, Sarah dissembled and said, "I didn't laugh." He said, "Yes, you did."

Why did Sarah give birth in old age as the story seems to suggest? That seems like good news to me as I am now in my sixth decade of life and only now being inducted! Now some of you may think that, being in one's 60s is not very old, but I will remind you that it is the oldest I have ever been!

**I** am remembering that the Lord first called me to ministry as a young man, barely 20, a call that was confirmed by the ministry of the church I attended. The call also awoke a resistance within, with which I wrestled most of my adult life. Like Jacob I wrestled the whole night long until my mid-fifties, when the dawn came and I was given the blessing of Ordination, and through the power of Love, I began saying yes to God, and saying yes to ministry! So like Jacob I came here with a limp. I have not had the

*(Continued on following page)*



**NEXT TO THE WOUND LIES THE BLESSING:**

*(Continued from previous page)*

opportunity to study the Doctrines throughout my adult years until in more recent times. I believe that my limp has considerably improved under the guidance of CAM and the tutelage of Dr. Jim Lawrence and the Swedenborgian House of Studies.

So here I am now at the door of the tent, in the heat of the day, and the angels are coming with a message of blessings yet to come! In the story, I identify with Sarah, since Abraham's response is less defined. But Sarah appears to have real concern about her age and her life long barrenness, and too many promises unfulfilled. I, too, sometimes lament the road not taken and can identify with her sorrow and woundedness.

So here she is in the tent with Abraham when she overhears the angels say that she is to have a son! It might seem as if the Angels are totally ignoring her age and her grief! Yet, she is alert and wise, and upon hearing the message she bursts into sobbing. Or was it laughter? There is a place in the Human soul where laughter and sobbing are the same thing!

Before he died, Johnny Carson was asked to what he attributed his great success, since he achieved wealth and fame as a successful comedian at a time when such success was largely unknown in our culture. After a thoughtful pause he replied, "I think it was because I have always understood that tears and laughter come from the same place." Indeed, he had the capacity to make us laugh at situations and events that really called for our tears!

Both laughter and tears are expressions of anguish and release. Sounds of laughter or of sobbing,

also gives voice to healing and fulfillment and deep love! The angels said she was laughing. Sarah saw it otherwise. Common belief suggests that the denial of her laughter is also the denial of her fear. I find that believable. But could the sounds in her throat also reflect an awareness that she has been given a great Blessing?

There is an ancient proverb that says, "Next to the wound lies the Blessing." The proverb suggests that in that instant, when the mind perceives, perhaps for the first time, the profundity and devastation of the wound, in that same instant is also the awareness of great blessing. The wisdom of this proverb lies in understanding that to resist the wound, is to resist the Blessing.

Is this story suggesting that the Angels brought just such an experience to Sarah? So that in that instant when she saw the loss and woundedness of her barren state, she was indeed healed and filled with the Lord's promise! And the blessings of a long awaited birth came to her in old age. Sarah gave birth to more than a son. She gave birth to a nation!

Dare I compare my journey with that of Sarah? Long years of internal searching and resistance. Years of longing and unrequited dreams. Hopes that often seemed just beyond my grasp. Only the Angels, or perhaps the poets, can give voice to such a journey. I find familiar ground in the words of Francis Thompson, in his masterpiece, *The Hound of Heaven*:

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;

I fled Him, down the arches of the years;

I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways,

Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears

I hid from Him, and under running laughter

Up vistaed hopes, I sped;

And shot, precipitated,

Down Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,

From those strong feet that followed and followed after.

But with unhurried chase,

And unperturbed pace,

Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,

They beat.. And a voice beat

More instant than the feet

All things betray thee, who betrayest me.

Perhaps my journey is not so different. The story does make a point of the laughter, as does the poet. Sarah hid in the tent and laughed. The poet says, "I hid from him and under running laughter from those strong feet that followed."

In both cases the laughter concealed the fear. Swedenborg focuses on the laughter in *Secrets of Heaven*, numbers 2215 and 2216, noting that the laughter is human rational truth wishing to excuse itself, [through denial] because it was not as it ought to be. The significance of laughter is that it is an affection of the rational, and indeed the affection of truth or falsity, in the rational, that is the source of all laughter (AC 2216). Swedenborg has a good deal more to say about the laughter and it certainly is good reading, but in the interest of time, I will end this portion with Swedenborg's words, that Sarah's laughter also shows us how much of the human is yet to be put off and the Divine to be put on.

Sarah acknowledges the wound and grasps the fullness of the blessing and bears a son. The poet too, finds resolve, when he hears the voice which beat louder than the laughter, calling and saying, "All which you fancied as lost I have

*(Continued on following page)*



**NEXT TO THE WOUND LIES THE BLESSING:**

*(Continued from previous page)*

stored for thee at home: Rise, clasp my hand and come."

And that is my prayer tonight, that all the good, which I have fancied lost, the Lord has indeed stored for me at home! What is important now, is that I, like Sarah, stop laughing and become willing to create birth where there is none and none seems possible. And, like the poet, become willing to stop running and listen to the voice of the Lord as He speaks with outstretched arms,

"Rise, clasp my hand and come." (p. 26) Induction into this Church is a great blessing because I just believe that the Lord God Jesus Christ, did on June 19th 1776, bring forth the birth of the New Church and cause his servant, Emanuel Swedenborg, to write down what was seen and heard, so that the old church may become the New Church. I want to conclude, with Swedenborg's words in which he states, "Our being spirits inwardly has reference to our capacities for thinking and intending, because these are our actual inner natures. They are what make us

human, and the quality of our humanity depends on their quality." (*Heaven and Hell* 444)

I am committed therefore to serve a human ministry, and to watch with compassion and care for those qualities of thinking and intending that awaken Human dignity and vision! And I shall use as my motto the words of Helen Keller, who said, "Swedenborg's message has been my strongest incentive to overcome limitations. His teaching has been my light and a staff in my hand. And by his vision splendid, I am attended on my way." ☸

## *The Wind is God in Motion*



Lana Sandahl

John 3: 8  
"Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be

born? Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the spirit is spirit. The wind blows where it chooses and you hear the sound of it, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Everyone feels the wind, and often its movement changes our lives. The wind can be a gentle breeze at sunrise, or a hurricane of insurmountable force that scatters the leaves that lie upon the ground before us; a metaphor for all things expected or unexpected. God is in motion! An invisible force, a force that mysteriously touches us,

guides us, calls us, and speaks to us in compelling, unexpected ways. I love to feel the wind upon my face, waves of gentle stirrings that carry my dreams, my cares, *your* dreams, *your* cares upon vast spiritual currents that are forever changing...enduring...yet always grounded in sacred knowing.

The wind-spirit gently carries seeds of life and lifts them beyond our imagination to cultivate new growth and rebirth. This is how God moves through us, invisibly and mysteriously, to challenge our self-will, to stir our inner thoughts and feelings, and open our minds and hearts to give birth to new understandings of self and others.

The wind blows and we hear the sound of it, but we do not know where it comes from or where it goes. This passage invites us to surrender to the silent voice of the spirit to enter and embrace the mystery, and rest upon the winds of truth as we live our oneness with God on this journey **together** along the sacred path.

This month of June is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the

AIDS epidemic. It is because of the AIDS epidemic that I stand before you today. Twenty-five years ago, I began my chiropractic practice in San Francisco, and in those early years, many of us in the health care professions worked with many young men, who died "difficult and painful deaths." There was no treatment, and there was a prevailing fear and a vicious stigma against anyone infected with HIV. This stigma was based on fear of death and fear of difference, and it separated families from caring for loved ones, and deprived many people from participating, or receiving spiritual comfort. A community of people was made to feel unworthy of God's love. I witnessed countless people and dear friends I cared about denied dignity, respect, as well as basic care and compassion.

The wind invites us to stand openly before others born of water and spirit. As God breathes upon us, we are challenged fearlessly and in faith to become vulnerable, willing to see everyone who lives within what is now an

*(Continued on following page)*

*The Wind is God in Motion*

(Continued from previous page)

evolving, secular society; a society hungry for the spiritual creativity, wholeness, and 'lived spirit' that Swedenborgian theology articulates.

We can think of the wind as God's spirit swirling around us, encouraging us to bring our best selves forward as we examine and engage both our gifts and shortcomings. It is through the choices

we make along life's way that allow us to remain "close to the wind," and as close as possible to the loving truth of God, that sustains and lovingly guides us along our spiritual path.

God calls us to be born anew! The spirit moves us to not simply live this life safely upon the surface, but to delve into the depths that awaken us to the spirit of God that "broods across the face of the waters." We too are called to

boldly, deliberately, and mindfully brood and move forward, beyond the walls we construct.

I thank you for allowing me to enter, and become vulnerable in your arms. You are a people who live the truth of God's message of love...a message that shows everyone the same human dignity as to become fluid, like in the mother's womb.

So it is with everyone born of water and Spirit! Amen. ☩

## A Perfect Fit



W. Hunter Roberts

*"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

*For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."* Matt.11: 29-30.

I used to make it so hard. Like Sisyphus, I would find some big stone, and putting my broad shoulder to it, I would begin to push. Being strong, I would get the stone farther up the hill than most. And that was satisfying at first. Then it would roll back down. Undaunted, I would push it up the hill again. But it would again slide back down. So I would do it again. And again—sometimes with a different stone, maybe even a heavier one. Size never dissuaded me. I am nothing if not persistent, so I could do this for a long time. I did—I did it for years. But eventually I collapsed. It was so hard! I was trying to do it all under my own steam, with my own indomitable will, which like an ox, snorted

and pawed the ground, wanting to run away with the cart, resisting any sort of yoke.

I am an independent woman, used to operating under my own authority. Why would I want a yoke? It sounded confining. Why would I take the Lord's yoke upon me? That's what I asked when I came upon this piece of scripture one night last spring. I was researching something else in Matthew, when this short verse, Matthew 11: 29-30, jumped out and announced itself to me, saying, "Excuse me, I'm your ordination scripture." Nothing could have been further from my mind at the moment, so I just marked it with a post-it note, and went on with my work. It was weeks before I went back in search of it. I no longer even remembered what it was. When I found it, it spoke again, assuring me, "I am your ordination scripture."

I may be willful but I'm not completely dense. I accept it when I get that clear a message. "All right," I said, "but why? Why are you my ordination scripture?" I began to inquire and pray on it. It took several more weeks for the answer to unfold.

I am admittedly ambitious. I am powerful. I like power. I might as well say it. Many of you know it. I like being a mover and shaker. I like making things happen. I like recognition. I like all that stuff. I also like speaking the truth, prophetically, and do so even when it gets me into trouble. That's one of the burdens of leadership, isn't it? And isn't leadership supposed to be hard? How can such a burden be light, and again, why would anyone want a yoke?

A yoke fits over the shoulder of a strong, willful animal, harnessing its power, but not incapacitating it. Far from it, a yoke makes the burden light. With the right yoke, it turns out, an ox can carry many times the weight it can carry without it. So in taking God's yoke, the yoke of the church, upon me—the yoke of Love and Goodness—I can carry more. I can carry a heavier burden, without buckling, and it *feels* light. All that raw power gets yoked to Goodness and Love. In doing that, I can take my love of power, as my dear friend, Anodea Judith says it is time for us humans to

(Continued on following page)

## A Perfect Fit

(Continued from previous page)

do—and hitch that Love of Power to the Power of Love.

Now we've got something, because The Power of Love is the Power of the Lord. And with the Lord, or the Power of Love, helping me, the truth becomes light to carry. "My Yoke is easy, and my burden is light," it says. So I can carry more truth—easily, lightly, lovingly. The more you're hitched to willing the Good, the lighter seems the truth you bear. People can hear you, because they can feel your love. So by yoking my powerful shoulder to the Yoke of God, or Goodness, I can carry Truth under the Yoke of Love.

There is a legend that above Joseph's carpentry shop was a sign that said, "Our yokes fit perfectly." Apparently One size does not fit all. No yoke fits more than one ox's neck and shoulder. And it

must fit perfectly to work. If it doesn't fit just right, it will break the animal. So, it must be the right fit, the right use. But—here's the good news—if it is right use, led by one's love, then the yoke of use fits perfectly, and it makes the burden light.

The great theologian Frederick Beuchner said, in the longest-lived quote on my office wall, "Calling is where my deep gladness meets the world's deep need." It is not sufficient for me to meet the world's deep need in some generic way, although that may still be of service. But, for it to be a calling, I must be in some way meeting the deep need of the world through my deep gladness, or love. The yoke must fit.

Now I realize that when I collapsed back there under the weight of my load, it was Divine Providence, regenerating me, bringing me to God's yoke—not to confine me, but to lighten

my load. I've been waiting and searching a long time for a way to use my gifts and power in service of my Love. I've tried pushing many stones up hill, and carrying many truths without benefit of yoke, by will alone. I learned it doesn't work. So I give up. I surrender my love of power to the Power of Love.

Now I take your yoke upon me. I ask you to empower me with your love, and to stand with me in love of Goodness and Truth, that this power may serve God and neighbor in love, with the deep gladness I feel in my heart and soul.

I am happy to say at last: *This yoke fits perfectly!*

*The Rev. Hunter Roberts is called to Mauritious. She has put together a proposal for a media ministry as well, and there will hopefully be more about that in the November Messenger.* ☩

## 2006 Youth Director Report

Kurt Fekete

Now in my fifth year, I remain elated to serve our church and our church youth as Youth Director. This is an exciting time for our youth community! Here are a few highlights of the past year with the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL) that made my heart sing with joy:

### Convention 2005

Witnessing seventeen teens from across the North America form a positive, cohesive group and create a tight circle of friendship. Working with the SCYL to pull together a phenomenal SCYL Art Gallery worship experience featuring an exhibition of human statues, refreshment service, ribbon cutting, musical performances, original "Art

and Soul" hymn and individual congregant commentaries describing the beauty of the human artworks amongst us and celebrating each of us as a work of art created by God.

### Convention 2005

Watching the energy around the minister trading card fundraiser as packs containing twenty-four different minister cards (including two different rare and exclusive Rev. George F. Dole cards, one serious and one funny-face) sell out in hours sending forth a playful positive wave of trading and laughter.

### Almont Summer Camp

Developing and conducting a two-hour teen team-building activity with outdoor education specialist Peter Little and seeing the



(l to r) Ethan Turley, Gabrielle Lawson hugging Shannon Fisher, Sola Thorhallsson, Sam MacTavish, Alison Putnam, Alicia Campbell, Erika Penabaker, Alec Sheppard, Jake MacTavish, Carrie Boucher (youth leader), Kurt Fekete (youth director).

(Continued on following page)

## 2006 Youth Director Report

(Continued from previous page)

youth freely share and collaborate in mind, soul and body.

### Fryeburg Assembly

Meeting with the newly created enthusiastic Fryeburg Assembly Growth and Outreach Committee on youth growth, programs and liability considerations for the Assembly.

### United Church of Christ Massachusetts Conference "Faith Under Construction"

Participating in the high school event and conducting the workshop "Discovering the Divine in Pop Culture" to 70 engaged teens.

Michigan Youth Group – Assisting and observing the new Michigan Youth Group take shape under the skillful and caring leadership of Rev. Renee Billings-Machiniak of the Royal Oak church and Jennifer Tafel of the Lansing church.

### Maine Youth Group

Leading and nurturing the Maine Youth Group (Fryeburg and Portland New Church youth) to become an active and thriving center for play and spirit.

### Five Year Church Resource Plan

Working with the talented team assembled by our President, Chris Laitner, on a vision and plan of future actions for our denomination.

### SCYL Almont Winter, Fryeburg Memorial Day and Blairhaven Columbus Day Retreats

Seeing the delight in new faces joining our wonderful teen retreat environments, watching the younger teens grow and become motivated league leaders and observing the older teens mature

into dynamic, insightful young adults.

### Maine Association

Participating in the visioning work-shop skillfully lead by Rev. Rich Tafel.

### Lay Education

Developing creative and exciting youth modules to guide and inspire future lay leaders and youth workers.

Here are a few projects that I am working on in the coming year that I am really thrilled about.

- **Strengthening the SCYL community**, raising SCYL awareness and improving SCYL outreach through innovative and engaging multi-media communication with youth.

- **Increasing the number of youth worker volunteers** and surveying youth leaders to better match their experience, skills and interests with the needs of our youth community.

- **Continuing to help establish** and sustain active local junior and senior youth groups in all churches with access to a youth leader and a core group of youth.

Implementing a teen-focused curriculum of Swedenborgian tenets to be taught at retreats.

I close with a thank you to all the SCYL youth and League Officers for being an active part of our church community. I also thank all of you who generously give time and money to our church youth programs. You are the backbone and life force of our youth programs and I so value your involvement. For those of you not yet involved in youth work, I invite you to join us. *Everyone* has some talent, gift or expertise that can benefit the youth in our church. We need you!

I look forward to another year of youth work and pray that my work

is of worth and benefit. I hope that you take the time to let me know how I am doing and what I can do better. ☩

## Important Church Dates 2006-2007

October 7

Rev. Kevin Baxter's installation,  
Cambridge, MA

October 9

Columbus Day, Central Office closed  
Cabinet Conference call at 9 PM EST

October 11

Cabinet Conference call 9 PM EST

October 17-20

CAM, SHS, Berkeley

October 20

SHS Board of Trustees, Berkeley

October 28

Investment Committee, CO, Newton

November 2-5

General Council at UCC Retreat  
Center, Framingham, Mass.

November 10-12

Retirement Committee, CO, Newton

November 12

Rev Carla Friedrich Installation,  
San Diego, CA

June 24-July 2, 2007

Convention 2007, Hope College,  
Holland, Michigan ☩

*Let your  
religion be less  
of a theory  
and more  
of a love  
affair.*

— G.K. Chesterton



## Distinction Between "Good Deeds" and "Good Uses" Noted

Dear Editor,

I enjoyed Dr. Radzins' article in the June, 2006 *Messenger*, "Absolute Faith and Absolute Works." She makes a good point regarding the paradox of free will and the reciprocal relationship between faith and charity. However, I believe she makes a common error when she equates charity with works: "... both faith and works, which he refers to as 'charity,' are 'absolutely one.'" (emphasis mine)

Swedenborg is quite clear throughout his writings that the theology of the new church required a strict distinction between charity (a quality of the will and intentionality) and works (speech and action). They are related but not equivalent aspects of spiritual life. This distinction is made clear in TCR in n. 374, and in chapter 7, titled "Charity, or Love to the Neighbor, and Good Works." (See especially section 7, "Charity and Good Works Are Two Distinct Things, Like Willing Well and Doing Well.") The importance of this distinction is also discussed in his work *On Charity*, n. 154-155: "The human being is born to become charity and can become charity only by constantly doing the good of use to the neighbor from affection and pleasure. . . . We can not do charity constantly if we make charity consist in good deeds only." That is, according to Swedenborg, equating charity with good "deeds" can actually *prevent* us from "becoming" charity.

The Lutheran antagonism between faith and works is completely recast by Swedenborg through the reciprocal relationship between faith and charity, understanding and will. This new relationship, in turn, reveals a subtle but important distinction between

"good deeds" and "good uses."

Many people can point to the good deeds they have done, but this is different from good *uses*, which serve the spiritual need of others from a will of charity and an understanding of faith; service that often goes unseen by the eyes of the world, and which is offered up to the grace of God, not for praise of self. In other words, the value or "goodness" of works keeps pace with the dynamic relationship between faith and charity within the individual.

It is quite common, even among Swedenborgians, to understand charity as giving to the poor, being nice, building hospitals, etc. A simplistic dualism between thinking and doing, mental and physical, faith and works, which, as we know, has led to all sorts of questionable folk-wisdom, such as, "It's the thought that counts," "deeds not creeds," and my favorite, "Why don't you get a real job?!" Swedenborg offers an entirely different schema which resolves this dilemma by revealing the role of charity/love/will in the dynamic between faith (spiritual understanding) and works (activity/operation in the natural world). So not just "creeds or deeds," or even "creeds and deeds," but "love and creeds and deeds."

Ironically, this distinction between charity and works is often missing from many New Church discussions. No longer compelled to place faith over works, far too many congregations instead feel compelled to always be "doing something" in order to feel validated, instead of being about the business of the church: facilitating regeneration. And of course instead of becoming the light and hope of the world, they get burned out and discouraged.

Luther was right to locate Christ's transformative work within the individual, existentially and spiritually, rather than economically and externally. And Swedenborg was right to reset the pendulum so that the power and place of spiritual uses might be revealed.

Robert McCluskey  
Boston, Mass. ☩

### Response

Dear Editor,

I appreciated Robert McCluskey's response to my article in the June 2006 *Messenger* and specifically, his explanation of the meaning of the idea of *charity* in Swedenborg's works.

By way of dialog, let me clarify a point in my brief article. I was dealing with a common theme that occurs when teaching the Christian tradition, that of *faith* and *works*. In so doing, I was asking how Swedenborg's theology contributes to this discussion. More specifically, I wanted to show how Swedenborg's notion of *charity* has a way of tweaking this age-old theological dilemma by understanding works as composed of *charity* and *faith* (TCR 336)—or, as Rev. McCluskey affirms in other words, that charity involves both good uses and good deeds. I did not mean to equate Swedenborg's idea of charity with that of *works*, if works is understood as somehow opposed to faith or only as deeds. Rather, I was affirming that charity, as Rev. McCluskey emphasizes, involves both good uses and good deeds.

Inese Radzins, Ph.D.  
Swedenborgian House of Studies  
Pacific School of Religion  
Berkeley, California ☩

# Swedenborgian Church Websites, as of June 2006

Denomination's website: [www.swedenborg.org](http://www.swedenborg.org) • PCA: [www.swedenborgpca.org](http://www.swedenborgpca.org)  
 Fryeburg New Church Assembly: [www.fryeburg.org](http://www.fryeburg.org) • Almont New Church Assembly: [www.ancarc.com](http://www.ancarc.com)  
 Swedenborgian House of Studies (SHS): [www.SHS.PSR.edu](http://www.SHS.PSR.edu) • Urbana University: [www.urbana.edu](http://www.urbana.edu)  
 Swedenborgian Spiritual Growth Center dba Stonehouse Book Room: [www.stonehouse.org](http://www.stonehouse.org)  
 The North American Society: [www.swedenborgiancommunity.com](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.com)

## Pacific Coast

CA: San Francisco ..... [www.sfwedenborgian.org](http://www.sfwedenborgian.org)  
 CA: Wayfarers ..... [www.wayfarerschapel.org](http://www.wayfarerschapel.org)  
 WA: Puget Sound ..... [www.heavenonearth4u.org](http://www.heavenonearth4u.org)

## Middle Atlantic

DC: Washington ..... [www.holycitydc.org](http://www.holycitydc.org)  
 PA: Temenos ..... [www.temenosretreat.org](http://www.temenosretreat.org)

## Illinois

IL: Chicago ..... [www.swedenborglib.org](http://www.swedenborglib.org)  
 MO: St. Louis ..... [www.openwordchurch.org](http://www.openwordchurch.org)  
 MN: St. Paul ..... [www.virginiastreetchurch.org](http://www.virginiastreetchurch.org)

## Maine

ME: Fryeburg ..... [www.fryeburgnewchurch.org](http://www.fryeburgnewchurch.org)  
 ME: Portland ..... [www.theportlandchurch.org](http://www.theportlandchurch.org)

## Massachusetts

MA: Bridgewater ..... [www.bridgewaternewchurch.org](http://www.bridgewaternewchurch.org)  
 MA: Cambridge ..... [www.swedenborgchapel.org](http://www.swedenborgchapel.org)

## Michigan

MI: Royal Oak ..... [www.churchholycity.com](http://www.churchholycity.com)

## New York

NY: Bayside ..... [www.baysidechurch.org](http://www.baysidechurch.org)  
 NY: New York/New Church ..... [www.newyorknewchurch.org](http://www.newyorknewchurch.org)

## Ohio

OH: Cincinnati ..... [www.newchurchofmontgomery.net](http://www.newchurchofmontgomery.net)

## Canada

Kitchener, ON ..... [www.churchofthegoodsheperd.com](http://www.churchofthegoodsheperd.com)  
 Edmonton ..... [www.edmontonholycity.com](http://www.edmontonholycity.com)

Editor's Note: If your church or association has completed a website that is up and running that isn't mentioned here, please send the info to Central Office and *The Messenger*. We will be running an updated list in *The Messenger* every month. ☩

## May 2006 Gathering Leaves Retreat a Repeat Success

(Continued from page 128)

- the variety of workshops—i.e. some for *doing* things, and some for listening
- program, schedule, mood, personal interactions, variety of viewpoints, harmony

There was an overwhelming consensus that Gathering Leaves be held again in 2008 and a number of new volunteers came forward to put their names out to serve on the Steering Committee and to lead workshops. Other creative ideas for gatherings and projects are also in the works. Some of the participants' comments particularly captured the purpose and spirit of the event in these words:

• Such a worthwhile opportunity for all kinds of New Church women to get together and learn to know each other!



Attendees enjoy outdoor lunch.



Dr. Jane Williams Hogan, General Church, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, chats with Rev. Kim Henrichs, General Convention, Berkeley, California.

- Seeing more harmony, less distance/dissension between different branches of the church
- Meeting young newcomers to the New Church; feeling their enthusiasm that we were unique individuals with unique experiences but part of a much larger, caring, trusting, insightful, *wonderful* community

• The moments of outright laughter, and the freedom to cry

• Thank you very much for providing a sacred space with room for diversity, room for joy and grief, silence and conversation. This has been a blessing within a blessing.

Any women interested in finding out more about the next Gathering Leaves Retreat are invited to join the 'leaf participants' Yahoo group by emailing Rev. Susannah Currie, 2006 Steering Committee Chair, at [revscurrie@yahoo.com](mailto:revscurrie@yahoo.com). A video of the 2006 event is expected to be ready by the end of 2006. ☩

## Deaths

**Chapin**—George R. Chapin, 66, of Everett, Massachusetts, entered the spiritual world August 2, 2006, after a long and valiant battle with cancer. He is survived by his wife, Audrey; son, Michael; daughter, Melissa; five grandchildren; and brother, Walter.

George was a lifelong member of the Boston Church until that church withdrew from Convention. He was also a dual member of The New Church of Southwest Florida. He held many offices in the Boston Church, including that of vice-president and board member of BostonView, the apartment building constructed as part of the church's rebuilding effort on Beacon Hill.

George was devoted to his church, serving wherever needed. He ably served the denomination as a trustee of the Gray Fund.

When the Boston Church withdrew from Convention, George once again rose to the call to duty and was instrumental in supporting the denomination's legal action in regard to the Boston Church.

George was also deeply involved in service to his country, serving in the Marine Corps, and later in the Air Force. He was an active member of VFW Post 177 and the Arlington Elks.

Memorial services were conducted August 7, 2006, by the Rev. Dick Tafel, George's Florida minister and good friend. Interment followed in the Massachusetts National Cemetery in Bourne.

**Turner**—Marion Washburn (Eaton) Turner, 91, entered the spiritual world June 27, 2006 in Staunton, Virginia. A graveside service was held on August 3, 2006 at the South Street Cemetery in Bridgewater, Mass., the Rev. Lee Woofenden officiating. She was the second daughter of George Eaton,

Jr., and Jane Martha (Nye) Eaton. She was preceded in death in the year 2000 by her husband of sixty years, John Laureston Turner. She is a former member of the New Jerusalem Church in Brockton, and a niece of the Rev. Russell Eaton, a former minister of that church. Mrs. Turner is survived by three sons: John L. Turner, Jr., Peter G. Turner, and Richard L. Turner; a daughter, Jane M. Pietrowski; eight grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

**Worden**—Ethelwyn (Muff) Worden, age 63, entered the spiritual world August 25, 2006. Muff was taking a small holiday during the week before the school where she taught music (in Seydisfjörður,

Iceland) began a new term. She was traveling via car ferry through the Feroe Islands (Den-

mark) and was planning to spend a bit of time in Scotland. In the Feroe Island vicinity, Muff passed away — peacefully and immediately.

Muff grew up in the Philadelphia church and served as Central Office Director from 1984 to 1990. Muff, the only one of four siblings to actually be born in the United States, spent her childhood in China and Italy before coming to the Eastern Shore of Maryland and then the suburbs of Philadelphia, where she grew to adulthood in the Philadelphia Church. Music was always the driving force in Muff's life. Not only did she have a lovely contralto voice, but was a skilled harpist, played keyboard and accordion very well, and could pretty much master anything she put her hand to. She graduated

from Temple University with a degree in music.

Muff lived in Dover, Delaware for nine years, where she was a music professor, then Public Relations Director, at Wesley College. While there she produced, directed and acted in many stage productions, including Gilbert & Sullivan. She founded and taught the Baroque Madrigal Choir; was a member of the Community Singers and the Kent County Theatre Guild. Muff then became Office Manager at the Church Central Office from 1984 to 1990, and attended many sessions of Convention while working in that capacity. She also sang with a professional group in Boston, and gave courses in Celtic music and storytelling for Elderhostel.

Muff was a woman of tremendous energy and enthusiasm. She was also a person of far-reaching intelligence and talent who spoke five languages fluently and could write in three, including Icelandic. The last 11 years of her life were spent in Seydisfjörður, Iceland, where she moved for health reasons and contributed her skills as a music teacher, choir director, church organist, concert artist, and organizer/administrator of various concert series of visiting artists. She loved her adopted country, with the beauty of its scenery, the warmth of its people, and the country's great love of music.

Her parents were Warren L. Worden and Mildred Boericke Worden. She was preceded in death by her younger sister, Gretchen Worden, and is survived by brother Dexter, of Newark, Delaware, and sister Jen, of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Muff's ashes will remain in her beloved Iceland; memorial service(s) in the United States will take place at a later date.

—Memorial by Nina Tafel ☩



*Muff Worden addressing Convention in early nineties.*



May 2006

# Gathering Leaves Retreat a Repeat Success

*Susannah Currie*

The second Gathering Leaves Retreat was held May 19-21, 2006 at the Temenos Retreat Center in West Chester, Pennsylvania. The mission of Gathering Leaves, first held in May, 2004 is

**"To promote harmony among women who are associated with the various Swedenborgian organizations around the world. We are coming together to acknowledge our common beliefs, explore our differences, develop a respect for one another's contributions, create an atmosphere for healing, and celebrate our spiritual sisterhood. It is our intention to promote a sense of charity and goodwill so that we might say, "No matter what form her doctrine and her external form of worship take, this is my sister; I observe that she worships the Lord and is a good woman."**

Attendees came from as far away as Alaska and Sweden and included twenty-four Convention women, two British Conference women, five Lord's New Church women, thirty-three General Church women, two women with



*Rev. Susannah Currie (center) with Donna Hymes (left) and Hope Merkert. They were part of a group called "Anointed Dance."*

joint affiliation and two two women unaffiliated with a church organization.

It was a full and yet relaxed schedule with time for informal socializing as well as plenary sessions and workshops. The retreat's theme was 'Historical and Personal Perspectives on Swedenborgian Faith' and we journeyed together through 220 years of Swedenborgianism on earth with the help of an extensive timeline which stretched long across the wall of the meeting room. A wide variety of workshops were held in Temenos' three retreat buildings. Worship was varied, meaningful and plentiful and we enjoyed leisurely meals with delicious food.



*Roslyn Taylor, General Church, and Rev. Rita Russell, British Conference.*

Some things participants particularly loved were:

- dancing: sacred, cooperative, healing, meditative, feminine, beautiful
- the worshiping relationship with each person and together as a whole
- sacred dance at the last worship
- the labyrinth meditation
- welcoming environment
- witnessing

*(Continued on page 126)*

The Swedenborgian Church  
of North America  
*The Messenger*  
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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.