

THE MESSENGER

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From Angelish to English, and Back Again

George Dole

Swedenborg wrote copiously, and perhaps we should not be surprised. He devoted a chapter of *Heaven and Hell* to the language of angels; two of the main points are that this language is profoundly moving (n. 238) and that it is "so full of wisdom that [angels] can in a single word express what we cannot say in a thousand words" (n. 239). In n. 155 of his *Spiritual Experiences* (which is a more accurate title than the traditional *Spiritual Diary*), he carried this thought a step further

"I talked with some spirits around me about angels' language and their understanding of things, which the spirits were eager as could be to know. I told them, having learned it from experience, that we cannot even perceive angels' language because it contains what seem to be innumerable things all at once, things which then had to be laid out in sequence at great length and with all kinds of digressions."

Swedenborg, in other words, was a translator. He was confronted with meaning of unearthly depth and beauty, and had to try to convey it in the stubborn stuff of human language. His manuscripts bear witness to the effort this required, with things crossed out, rewritten, written between the lines and in the margins.

He was faced with the necessity of choosing words, with the constant realization that they were less than

perfectly adequate. In n. 4585 of *Secrets of Heaven (Arcana Coelestia)*, he paused in his interpretation of "and they journeyed from Bethel" (Genesis 35:16) to comment on his terminology.

"[some readers] will say, 'What is this 'inner person?' Can you tell it from the outer?'"

"...we cannot even perceive angels' language because it contains what seem to be innumerable things all at once..."

And what is this 'natural' and 'rational'? Aren't they the same thing? And what about this 'spiritual' and 'heavenly'? Is this some new distinction? We've heard about 'spiritual,' but we never heard that 'heavenly' was something different..."

However, since this is the kind of thing contained in the Word's inner meaning, and since these things cannot be presented without appropriate terms, and since we lack more appropriate terms . . . , we cannot avoid using these words..."

So after one try at expressing some of

this angelic meaning in poetic language (and I can't wait till you see Stuart Shotwell's forthcoming translation of *The Worship and Love of God*), Swedenborg settled down to the task of writing very simply, and "at great length, with lots of digressions," not because he had a prosaic and repetitive mind, but because he was constantly confronting the kind of meaning that melts the heart and blows the mind and simply will not fit in ordinary language.

He wrote in what is now called "Neo-Latin." This was a second language for him, but a far closer second than one might expect. He would have started learning it at kindergarten age. It was the language of all his university courses—not simply of the texts, but of the lectures and discussions. It was the language of international relations, the language of his own international correspondence. He did not translate his thoughts from Swedish into Latin, because Latin was itself a language he could handle with ease and with style. In an early set of fables, he imagined his muse visiting a house where Latin was spoken with true, classical elegance. "If Thou wouldst hear him conversing in the tongue of Latium . . . what pleasures wouldst Thou not derive from his ready-witted speech and genius, what elegance wouldst Thou not delight in, listening to his cultivated utterances . . . Then behold, what language of the purest age, such as Maecenas once used when conversing [with] Augustus!"

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Jesus's Last Week in Jerusalem

Karen Feil

Desiring to correct impressions left by Mel Gibson's *Passion of the Christ* film, authors Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan wrote *The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Final Days in Jerusalem*. Using the gospel of Mark, the authors discuss the political environment and aspects of Jewish theology that are pertinent to an understanding of that last week. In March, a group of sixteen of us at the Swedenborg Library in Chicago enjoyed a discussion on this book led by Ron Miller.

Scholars believe that the gospel of Mark was written somewhere between 65–70 C.E. The authors point out that Mark would have been writing his gospel for Christian Jews who had “undergone the lethal persecution in the Jewish homeland during the great rebellion of 66–74 CE,” when the Jewish nation rebelled against Rome, and the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed, i.e. written in a time of war.

For nearly a hundred years before Jesus began his teaching, the Jews had lived under a domination system ruled by the Romans and the high priests who collaborated with them. This collaboration legitimized in the name of God an economic system under which more and more Jews were losing their land. The well being of the common people was sliding, and the lot of widows and orphans was grim. This political environment influences Mark's recollection of Jesus's teachings and choices, especially of the last week.

Jerusalem had been under the control of Rome since 63 BCE. Under Herod's reign, which lasted until 4 BCE, much of the old aristocracy was eliminated. Herod appointed new leaders who owed their positions to him. According to Jewish law, high priests were to rule for life, but Herod

“appointed and deposed seven high priests during his thirty-three years as king.” Herod expanded the temple and built a palace and port at Caesarea Maritima, which became the center of Roman administration, on Judea's coast. It was the palace where Pontius Pilate would live while he was the Roman governor of Judea.

“We should wonder what it was about Jesus and his movement that so provoked the authorities at the top of the domination system of thier time.”

Pilate was governor from 26–36 CE, and Caiaphas was high priest from 18–36 CE; apparently they worked well together. The high priest's responsibilities would have included the collection of taxes for the annual tribute to Rome. Caiaphas would have been viewed by the populace as part of the domination system under which they lived.

Imagine Palm Sunday in 30 CE. Jesus enters Jerusalem from the East on Palm Sunday, humbly on his donkey, the peasants hailing him as he passes. Then imagine, as the authors suggest, Pontius Pilate and Roman legions processing in from the West, from Caesarea Maritima, with the trumpets blaring and golden eagles held high in front of the regiment that would reinforce the Roman fort situated above the temple. It was traditional for the governor to be in Jerusalem during the High Holidays, to ensure that order was maintained. The contrast of the humble teacher calling for the Kingdom of God, to the display of Imperial power would have been hard to overlook. After He

arrives, Jesus takes a quick tour of the temple before phase two of the protest—His turning of tables, and challenges to the priests in the temple courtyard.

Jesus's complaint is against the “den of robbers” he assesses the collaborating high priests to be. The temple elite understand that His parable of the “greedy tenants” is directed at them, and they withdraw from the crowd, resolving to arrest him when he is not in public, for fear of the crowd reaction.

Jesus refers to himself as Son of Man, an expression that was a customary euphemism for oneself in Aramaic, according to Ron Miller, chair of the Religion Department at Lake Forest College. In Mark, only other-worldly spiritual voices announce Jesus's status. Jesus's emphasis was on *the way*—rather than on his divinity. For

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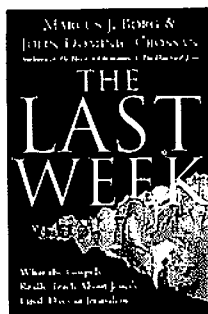
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The Last Week

Mark the message is participation with Jesus in following *the way*, rather than a sacrificial substitution by Jesus for the sins of the people.

Of the temple priests, the authors warn that it is still possible “to fall prey to the delusion of religious power backed by imperial violence.” Sound familiar? “We should wonder what it was about Jesus and his movement that so provoked the authorities at the top of the domination system of their time,” say the authors.

The *Last Week* includes comparisons on these topics among the gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John. A Leader's Guide and questions for each chapter are provided, making this book handy for an adult study class. 220 pages. \$13.95 in paperback.



From Angelish to English And Back Again

Continued from front page

(Emanuel Swedenborg, *Camena Borea*, ed. Hans Helander [Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1988], p. 37) Then comes the task of translating Swedenborg's Latin into English. There is an extensive literature about translating, with arguments for and against literalism, “dynamic equivalence,” “idiom-to-idiom translation,” and the like. There is no “one size fits all.” A grocery list calls for a strict literalism that would be disastrous for a poem. The New Century Edition is, as far as I know, the first edition that has tried to determine and be faithful to Swedenborg's own stylistic priorities, to find English as clear and straightforward as his Latin.

This is not always easy, incidentally. I am fond of the remark of one British scientist-philosopher (I wish I

remembered which one) who said he did not feel he really knew a subject until he could write a children's book about it. In my own translating, I have finally reached the point where I do not want to start translating a paragraph until I have read it through. There is probably a single angelic idea there, a single angelic “word,” if you will, that holds all the digressions together. I may not often sense just what that “word” is, but I have to give myself the opportunity to do so.

“There is nothing abstract about spiritual meaning. It is profound and moving, solid and potent.”

One reviewer wrote of the NCE *Heaven and Hell*, “Fresh and luminous, as though springing from the present moment, Swedenborg's words seemed to flow directly to me without impediment.” I cannot read this (it's on the back cover of the paperback edition) without remembering reading the reactions to Edison's first recordings of music—you could scarcely tell, according to the amazed listeners, that the orchestra itself was not right there in the room. I'm delighted with the reviewer's delight, but I suspect and hope that in a generation or two, our present efforts will strike people as regrettably scratchy.

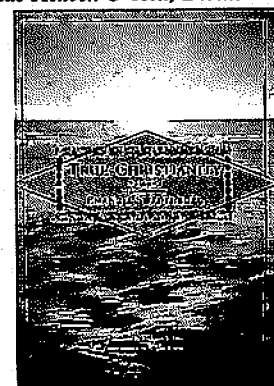
Whatever the merits of the translation, though, it is not an end in itself. It is meant to be read, and its real purpose is not realized until—in or through it—readers catch some glimpse of angelic meaning. The departures from traditional terminology are without exceptions efforts at greater accuracy; but they are published also with the hope that their very unfamiliarity will make people stop and think. There is nothing abstract about spiritual meaning. It

is profound and moving, solid and potent. It is not contained in black marks on a white page. Once the signals are traveling along the optic nerve of the reader, any life that the text may have must come from (or again, more precisely, through) the reader's own heart.

At this point, then, we are talking about the opening of the inner reaches of the reader's mind, and that is accomplished not through intellectual analysis but through living in community, through “acting with prudence, to the end that good may result” (New Jerusalem 100). In other words, whatever the language on the page, it takes an angel to translate it back into angelish. Fortunately, the heaven where angels are and the church where we are act in unison, like our own inner and outer natures, so if church people are focused on the good that love can do because of the truth their faith discloses and on the truth their faith discloses because of the good their love can do, then they are angels as to the inner reaches of their minds (*True Christianity* 1).

Rev. Dr. George Dole is pastor of the Bath, Maine Swedenborgian Church, and senior member of the translating team working on the New Century Edition of Emanuel Swedenborg's writings.

True Christianity (\$15 paperback) is the most recent release in The New Century Edition. Other volumes now available in the new translation include Heaven & Hell, Divine Providence, and Divine Love & Wisdom. To order, contact the Swedenborg Foundation, www.swedenborg.com or call 800-355-3222, ext. 10.



Earth Day: Doing Our Part for Mother Earth

Alison Lane

A few weeks ago, I turned on the television and was lucky enough to catch most of a PBS/National Geographic Special called *At Close Range*, a film about one of National Geographic's photographers, Nebraska-native Joel Sartore. Like many, I've always been amazed by the quality of the photographs in *National Geographic*, and I've often assumed that their photographers must have some of the best jobs on the planet. It was so intriguing, then, to actually hear one of their photographers describe his work as the best and worst of jobs; those amazing photographs come with a price. Sartore has to spend weeks at a time away from his wife and three young children; he's been chased by bears, wolves, alligators and oxen; when he shoots in some of the most exotic locations, he often finds himself in wretched conditions for weeks on end, with the pressure to capture images worthy of an outstanding publication.

Since watching this film, I haven't forgotten Sartore's comments on the environment. He describes himself "as no tree hugger," but he is clearly saddened by what he has seen. After years of photographing the disastrous effects of clear-cutting rainforests and mining adventures that poisoned streams and fish, he makes the comment,

"If you think about the stuff I'm photographing here, it's mainly ghosts. It's all ghosts. Just little remnants. Just little bitty pockets of wildlife. That's all that's left...little scraps of what used to be...whether it's wolves or grizzly bears or rhinos, jaguars or parrots in South America. It's the last of everything I'm photographing. It's really kind of tragic."

On the positive side, Sartore's pictures of Bolivia's Madidi National Park helped stop Bolivia from flooding the entire park with a proposed dam; public outcry helped stop the plans

when *National Geographic* published Sartore's pictures with an article entitled, "Madidi, Will Bolivia Drown its Spectacular New National Park." (Madidi National Park covers 1,000 square acres, and is one of the last pristine tropical rain forests left in South America).

"Somehow, we have to recapture an outlook of the world in which we think of creation not as a collection of objects, but rather as a communion of subjects."

If we could all make such a difference. On April 22, 2007, we will celebrate our 37th Earth Day, an occasion first inspired by a Wisconsin governor and senator, Gaylord Nelson (1916 -2005), who sought to spark a revolution against environmental abuse. In 1970, twenty million Americans took to the street, achieving a rare political alignment as supporters were both Democrats and Republicans, rich and poor, city dwellers and farmers. The creation of the Environmental Protection Agency, the passage of the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act all emerged out of the energy of that first Earth Day. If any of us ever had any doubt about the power of a thought and what it could lead to, this is a good lesson.

I realize as I write this, that not all of us are on the same page – we do not all believe in the validity of global warming or the idea that the earth, as large as it is, might ever run out of resources. As surprising as it might sound, even President Theodore Roosevelt was worried about this problem in 1908, when he warned Americans that "the natural

resources of our country are in danger of exhaustion if we permit the old wasteful methods of exploiting them longer to continue." When the frontier was gone, ecology first began to command public and private attention as the need arose to conserve what wilderness remained.

In response to doubts about the current threat of a crisis, I only know that for my part, I take more from the earth that I give back. I don't know where all my garbage goes; my car guzzles more gasoline than it should; I still allow non-biodegradable products to run down my drain; and that's just the beginning. There are ways I allow myself to be completely separated from the world around me.

Catholic eco-theologian Thomas Berry writes about this very sense of separation in his paper *Ethics and Ecology*. According to Berry, this separation from nature has occurred and been strengthened for a number of reasons. For one, our biblical traditions have taught that we "subdue" the earth, and a resulting attitude has been that the natural world owes to the human all the support that the human needs for a certain life fulfillment. Secondly, events like the Black Plague intensified an other-worldly approach to life; the Black Plague wiped out close to a third of the population in Europe between 1347 and 1349. Without any knowledge of germs, the plague was understood as a punishment from God on the wicked. Instead of focusing on living creatively in the world, the world was devalued and attention turned toward the afterlife and eternity. Also, the arrival of modern science brought with it a new outlook: instead of trying to escape the world through salvation, we could learn to control it. As science developed a mechanistic view of the natural world, religious traditions again emphasized the spirituality of the human being over and against the

(Continues on the back cover)

Church of the Holy City, Wilmington Celebrates 150 Years

Sue Ditmire

When it was merely sixty years old, the Church of the Holy City at Tenth and Washington Streets in Wilmington, Delaware was moved stone by stone to its current location just off Pennsylvania Avenue at 1118 N. Broom Street, to accommodate a street-widening project. This year, the congregation is celebrating one hundred and fifty years of church life.

The first Swedenborgian or follower of the New Church teachings in the Wilmington Area, was Margaretta La Motte, daughter of Daniel La Motte, an early convert who had raised all his children in the New Church Doctrine. La Motte was also a very active lay leader in the movement. Margaretta married Alfred DuPont in 1824 and they came to Wilmington and lived near the powder mills.

In 1841, Margaretta's sister, Mrs. Mary A Hounsfield, newly widowed, and her son came to live in Wilmington and so did their third sister Elanora A. Gilpin, whose husband would later become the Chief Justice of Delaware.

Other early believers came to join the discussion groups meeting in peoples homes:

- Dr. Carl Gosewich a German homeopathic physician (he died in 1854, but his wife continued to be an enthusiastic member of the community.)
- William and Hannah Wisdom from NYC.
- Dr. August Negendank another German homeopathic physician.
- Mrs. Margaret L. Riddle - a native of Virginia.

In 1855, Mr. Daniel La Motte, relocated to Wilmington, bringing with him his second wife and their children, raising the membership of the small group to around twenty adults.

Mr. La Motte quickly organized the group into a congregation and

encouraging the building of a church.

In 1857, a constitution was drawn up and signed by twenty people—seven of them were women—most surprisingly for the time period.

The congregation met temporarily in a hall on Market St. They called Rev. B. F. Bennett to become their minister; services were moved to a room called Central Hall located at the corner of Fourth and King Streets.

Chief Justice Edward Gilpin and his wife Elanora donated the land at the corner of Delaware Avenue and Washington Street for a church building. A cornerstone was laid that very year, 1857.

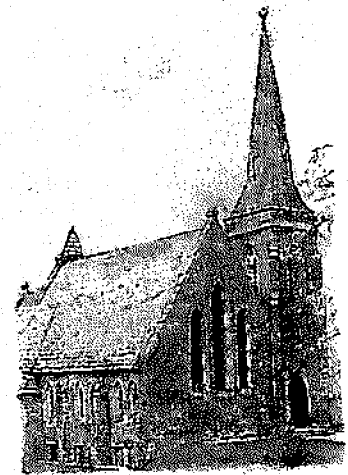
The church building was finished in only eighteen months, and dedicated by the newly called Rev. Abiel Silver on the 29 of April 1858.

Rev. Abiel Silver became a Swedenborgian after reading *Heaven and Hell*, given to him by Charles Barnum. It is said that Silver did not tell his wife about the book at first, but she found it in his drawer and read it herself.

In May 1860, Rev. Silver accepted a call to the pulpit in New York City. This began a very difficult time for the Wilmington congregation.

Most of the monetary support for the congregation was coming from Mr. Daniel La Motte whose business was not doing well. The congregation was not immune to the politics of a border state in the Civil War: three of Mr. La Mottes' sons were serving in the Union, Major Robert La Motte, Col. William A. La Motte, Brigadier-General Charles Eugene La Motte; whereas member Mrs. Margaret Riddle, who had been a native of Virginia and was now married to the Senator George Riddle of Delaware still held slaves.

Another dividing issue was the presence of the Spiritualist movement. The Spiritualist movement was very popular especially with so many War-related deaths and people



Top: Illustration of the Church of the Holy City, Wilmington, by a member, the late Reynolds Thomas. The church steeple as viewed from Broom Street. The sanctuary features a timber ceiling and recessed altar. Bottom: at left, Rev. Randall Laakko, pastor for the past forty-three years, with Rev. Sage Currie, assistant pastor.

looking for a way to contact their departed family and friends.

Also, within the Swedenborgian church there was a bit of disagreement about the Spiritualist movement, which was adopted by some for a while and then rejected when it was thought to have gone too far.

In 1864, the church was reopened again under the leadership of Rev.

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Wilmington Anniversary

(Continued from p. 53)

Abiel Silver and he once again helped the congregation to stabilize and grow. He retired to Massachusetts in 1866. Ednah C. Silver would go on to become a Swedenborgian writer and speaker at the 1893 Colombian Exposition in Chicago.

Three ministers served between 1866 and 1889: Rev. Hinkley 1866–1872; Rev. Seward 1875–1878; Rev. J. B. Parmalee 1879–1889. All were known for speaking widely in the area and creating a Sunday School that at its peak had more than 250 children attending.

In the late 1800s the painter Howard Pyle came to Wilmington and opened a studio. It's said that he would often have an assistant read Swedenborg to him while he painted. He was a trustee and a very active member of the congregation.

Rev. Phillip Cabell served from 1890–1904. Through the 1890s, the church experienced a slow decline in membership, as the founding, enthusiastic members died and were not replaced. Although some left financial legacies, their presence was deeply missed.

In June of 1891, Howard Pyle arranged for the purchase and installation of the organ at the request of the trustees.

In 1894, a Sunday School building was built adjacent to the church. It was designed with sliding doors that were used to divide it into two rooms. The building was used as a library and parlor as well as Sunday School room and was a great asset to the congregation.

From 1904–1936, Rev. George H. Dole, grandfather of George Dole, served the Wilmington church.

He had a very active pastorate and wrote for the Wilmington newspapers, his columns later becoming syndicated.

February 8, 1914 was declared National Go to Church Day. In Wilmington, members of the local Elks

organization visited the Wilmington church. Rev. Dole had frequently attended to their spiritual needs and they met at the Elks hall early in the morning and then walked as a group to the church. That service was standing room only.

The church was once again standing room only when Edwin Markham, a popular poet of the WWI era, delivered an address on "What Swedenborg Brings to the Heart of Man." The aisles were filled with folding chairs and about 275 to 300 attended. "Mr. Markham's lecture was listened to with breathless attention. At the close of the lecture he read some of his poems, and then answered questions. Many remained to greet personally the appreciated poet," notes the church record.

In 1917 the congregation learned with dismay that their church would be condemned to accommodate a road widening project. Church members rallied, and the church was taken apart block by block and reassembled to its current location at Pennsylvania and Broom Street. An alternative account of the reason for the church move involves Pierre Dupont's desire for a new fire station to be built near one of his buildings.

A new cornerstone was laid at the new location and the new building dedicated on Dec. 3, 1919.

In 1928, Mr. Stewart Poole was elected a trustee, beginning a lifelong role for him and his wife Mary.

Also in the years just before the stock market crash, the church meeting minutes record many reports of meetings and social gatherings of The League, which was an organization of young adults. They frequently met with other young adult groups in Maryland and Philadelphia.

The Church of the Holy City felt the impact of the Depression. A report by George H. Dole dated June 6, 1932 notes: "The church as well as business is feeling the effects of the universal depression. It is for us to summon the courage, strength, and faith to meet all

adversity, knowing that the Lord reigns and that his Church prospers."

Throughout The Depression the Sanctuary was adorned and community worship continued.

Four ministers served the congregation from 1936 to 1951.

Rev. Ernest Martin was served from 1952 to 1959. He reminisces in a recent letter about how wonderful the two parish houses were that the church provided. He politely does not point out that when he first arrived in Wilmington, he lived in the church basement.

By 1954, Rev. Martin was holding a discussion on *Why Do Things Happen?* In 1959, the name of the church was change to "The Church of the Holy City"

Rev. David Garrit served from 1959–1962. In 1965, right after their ordination, Rev. Randall Laakko and Rev. Jerome Poole came to Wilmington as a team, to work with Rev. Richard Tafel of the Philadelphia Church. After two years, because of growing family needs, Jerry decided to leave the active ministry and become a full-time part of the business community. He has maintained his membership in the church and is always willing to offer his support and assistance.

Rev. Randall Laakko has been the longest serving minister of this congregation, having been here since 1965 and serving as sole minister since 1967. In 2007, Laakko is joined by Rev. Sage Currie. Shaping church services has been a family affair: Randy's wife Millie Laakko has contributed by playing the church organ for many of those forty-three years.

The congregation has remained active over these many years, participating in Emmanuel Dining Room, and hosting many book studies and lectures. The congregation is a sponsor of Adopt-A-Family each Christmas, and also opens the building to community groups.

Worship has always been important to the congregation. The many

SHS Wilson Van Dusen Scholarship Fund for Doctoral Studies

Jim Lawrence

A new scholarship fund explicitly to support the highest level of training—doctoral degrees—has been established as the Wilson Van Dusen Doctoral Scholarship Fund at the Swedenborgian House of Studies. Inaugurating this fund has been made possible by the dedicated gift of \$60,000 by the family Dr. Van Dusen—his wife Marge and their daughters Joann Van Dusen Aramaki and Rebekah Lee Van Dusen. They responded to an offer by SHS to set up a permanent fund in Wilson Van Dusen's name for the purpose of furthering scholarship in Swedenborgian Studies at the doctoral level. They were able to make this gift from the funds of a charitable foundation established by Wilson Van Dusen for education in the arts and sciences, of which they were the remaining trustees. Marge, Joann and Rebekah realized that such support to the highest level of Swedenborgian scholarship would ideally suit Van's desires.

Wilson Van Dusen, Ph.D., placed tremendous value on the contributions made to the advancement of religion by scholars, and he was a life-long supporter of Swedenborgian scholarship. He often dedicated his works or made special tributes to contemporary luminaries of Swedenborgian scholarship such as George Dole, Bill Woofenden, and Hugo Odhner. The challenge of building Swedenborgian scholarship is very great, due especially to the expense required to do the training involved in obtaining a doctoral degree.

The Graduate Theological Union is the only place in the world where a Swedenborgian academic center is a part of the learning environment for accredited Ph.D. programs. At the GTU, a student can pursue a doctoral degree in biblical studies, theology, history, ethics and social theory, homiletics, liturgical studies, art and religion, or Christian spirituality and do so with the resources of the Swedenborgian House of Studies faculty and library as a part of their program.

The Wilson Van Dusen Doctoral Scholarship Fund now exists to support doctoral students at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California whose work relates explicitly to Swedenborgian Studies. It will be administered by the Board of Trustees of the Swedenborgian House of Studies and will expend interest income only. We now extend an invitation for others to make further contributions to the Wilson Van Dusen Doctoral Scholarship Fund to help it grow to better serve the future potency of Swedenborgian Studies.

I would like to thank SHS library director Michael Yockey, and (then) board members Jane Siebert, Alan Thomsen, and Rachel Rivers, who each played a role last spring in developing this gift, and especially to Kim Hinrichs, who formally developed the gift arrangement in her role as Director of Development. We are deeply grateful to the Wilson Van Dusen family for their vision in establishing this Fund.

Jim Lawrence is Dean of the Swedenborg House of Studies.

anniversary year is a time when those unfamiliar with our church will be welcomed to visit and hear its message of spiritual beliefs and understanding."

The congregation hopes to "emerge more actively engaged, with increased numbers of people in the pews on Sundays; a transforming presence in the city and the lives of its people; and

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Official Organ of the Swedenborgian Church

NOVEMBER 1968



Top, Wilson Van Dusen, as he appeared on the cover of a 1968 Messenger; Van entered the spiritual world April 25, 2005. Below, Marge Van Dusen.

Wilmington Anniversary

members have given so many hours of love and faithful service.

The congregation views its 150th anniversary as a special opportunity for outreach in the community. A statement of vision for the year, following congregational planning meetings, recognized that "the

as an organization that can sustain staffing levels, congregational energy, and community interest over the long term" from its anniversary year.

An array of celebratory events is planned for Sunday afternoons throughout the year. To learn more, visit www.ChurchOfTheHolyCity.org, or call 302-654-5014.

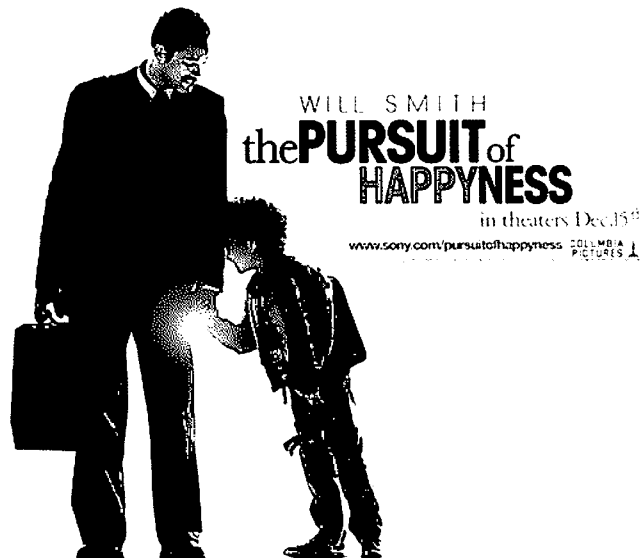
Just received the February issue of the Messenger today, and wanted to respond to one of Steve's movie reviews.

I took a different view than Steve Koke does in his movie review of *The Pursuit of Happyness* in the February Messenger. Steve comments that the story is 'a classic example of the frantic pursuit of happyness' and that the turning point comes at the end of the movie for the lead character, Chris, when he hands off a five dollar bill to his potential future employer at the stock firm. Yet if Chris was not essentially valuing happiness enough inside himself to believe he could work his way out of his situation, he would have given up long before that point in the story.

Enough happiness is not just another 'frantic pursuit'. Enough happiness matters for everyone, and is an essential ingredient in life. Until it is about enough happiness, it is also an allowable pursuit outlined in our constitution, that line of which the movie title revolves around.

Steve also suggested that Chris's son, Christopher, was "often simply another distraction," yet I think Chris's love for his son became an important part of what framed his desire to have enough happiness to cover both of them.

I saw Chris Gardner as an incurable optimist. I have never seen anyone that focused throughout what admittedly were a series of frantic circumstances—but not necessarily frantic responses on Chris's part. In fact, despite very discouraging experiences, Chris does almost everything right. When all depended on fixing one last bone scanner, all his focus was on repairing it, not on bemoaning his situation of doing it in a dark stairwell of a homeless shelter. When he stood in an elevator with clothes slung over his shoulder because he was homeless,



he instead told a colleague at the brokerage firm that he was on a scouting trip for new business. When, due to circumstances beyond his control, his clothes were dishevelled at his all-important interview for the intern spot, he simply told the truth and allowed his overwhelming enthusiasm to see him through a potentially embarrassing spot.

If Chris has a turning point in his story, I believe it is when he enlists himself for six months of unpaid training for a longshot position as a stockbroker. By having enough faith that he can expand his life's potential enough to turn an overall corner on his entire situation, he is seeing his value as God sees it for him, and taking a calculated risk to extricate himself and his son from poverty. Calculated risk has often moved people to great places, and only seems foolish to those who lack Chris's accompanying unsinkable attitude. The only thing that would have got him there faster, in my view, was prayer, which the movie does not portray him engaging in. Prayer is a way of valuing something before God and it magnifies all of our human efforts. Trying as hard as possible and allowing God to do the rest as Chris

did, does count also, but it does not replace prayer. I am thinking of the quote on the back of every Messenger issue, that (Swedenborg) "also felt that the sincerest form of worship is a useful life." Action is a worshipful follow-up to prayer, it's just not a replacement for it.

I recommend counting this movie as an important inspirational tool, perhaps for movie nite at church. Grandeur expansion is now allowable for me because I was inspired by this true life story about happiness.

Mona Diane Conner
Brooklyn, NY

Thanks for the reply. I was impressed by Chris' absolute dedication to getting himself into a much more comfortable and workable situation, but in the end it seemed that he finally just forgot himself and gave unselfishly a \$5 bill to a fellow worker when it was all he had for the day's expenses. The moral is not only to work hard for what you want and need, but also to recognize that a lot of self-concern is involved at the bottom of that effort. To challenge that self-concern is often what releases you from a self-centeredness that is the result even of working for the betterment of your family and personal world. Leaving for a moment the self-concern, the idea that it all depends on you, can then produce a change of relationship to the world. Then it can start to take care of you as well as others.

Steve Koke

I agree that what you say here is also true. God really wants happiness for everyone. It is not an either-my-happiness-or-yours thing the way that many people think it is. In that sense, we agree. Mona Conner

THE WONDER OF NATURE



Pat Reis

What part of nature attracts you? What makes you feel calm and whole? If you have never taken the time to think about these questions, I urge you to do so now. Find your bit of nature, your quiet place of healing. It might be your own back yard or a corner of a park or forest preserve. Rejoice that you have access to a natural open space—places where each of us can discover the part of us that is real, where we can screen out the outside world for a while and enjoy a place that is truly ours.

For me, a TREE is my link with nature. I cannot imagine living without trees, seeing them everyday, admiring their shapes, colors, grandeur. Frankly, I must have trees or my soul shrinks to nothingness.

I like trees in all seasons. In the winter I love looking at the shape of their bare branches and how the snow clings to the black limbs. In spring, from a distance one can see the trees turn a light green as the leaves quietly emerge. Summer heat is always cooled by the shade of those trees (and yes, our city planners know exactly HOW MUCH coolness is created by the urban forest they constantly work to create and protect). Fall brings color to the leaves and the gushing delight of anyone who takes the time to see the many different shades of yellow, orange and red laced with brown. What a feast for the eyes.

However, I have to admit that for far too long, I did not realize how much trees meant to me. They were just always THERE – surrounding me in my childhood in southern Illinois, providing beauty during my suburban child rearing years. I even worked at an Illinois community college that was built in a forest – lucky me!

It was during my 2-½ years in New York City in the late 1990s that I became aware of my passion

for trees. And for that I have to credit the Asian Long Horned Beetle and the paucity of trees in that great city.

New York City is full of concrete. Except for its beautiful Central Park, the absence of trees is a given in this older and crowded city. Fortunately, our row house in Queens had a beautiful block-long courtyard behind it – an Eleanor Roosevelt project from the 30s – with huge Norway maples that branched over the three-story row houses. I loved to sit on the second floor balcony and pretend I was in a tree house.

Then tragedy struck. One day I saw men painting large red circles on our maples. We soon learned that the Asian Long Horned Beetle had invaded our trees – and the only solution was to remove them. In late fall, I planned a “farewell” to the trees. About twenty-five residents (most I had never before met, as New Yorkers really do keep to themselves!) came on a beautiful fall afternoon to say goodbye. We read poems; one former opera singer/neighbor sang “Trees”; my son sent a poem from California. Some young adults talked about playing in the trees as children; newcomers talked about how the trees had attracted them to this part of Queens.

Sometimes the loss of nature evokes very touching drama. For example, outside the back door of the neighborhood recluse, we found his handwritten poem tacked to one of the ill-fated trees. He never appeared (nor did he sign his name), but we read his poem as we stood in a circle below our beloved trees:

*A Circle Marks My Fate
The leaves fall and nourish the soil
That makes thick the bark
To defend against cold and scorching sun.
And the tree grows
Increasing the number of rings
Like an orbiting planet
On a tireless journey.*

*Give this tree a hug
Whose life has been stricken
By a bug.*

(Continues on the following page)



Pat and her neighbors ceremonially bid goodbye to their courtyard trees slated to be cut down due to an infestation of the Asian Long-Horned Beetle. Top, “The Lonely Tree,” Peter Zelei adaptation of an old photo.

The Wonder of Nature

(Continued from page 57)

We ended our little ceremony with a song, *This Land Is Your Land*, and I gave each participant an electric candle. Every night I would look out at the courtyard and see the lighted candles in the windows, our way of expressing our love for the trees and grieving their eventual demise. Finally, in early January, the trees came down; all the candles were extinguished. The courtyard seemed so bare. So did New York City. In April I returned to Chicago—a city that loves its trees, a place where I truly feel I belong and need to stay. Shortly after my return, I became a TreeKeeper, a volunteer who is trained to care for city trees. I adopted a corner of Grant Park that has over 150 trees; each one I have mulched or pruned or stroked or just admired. Another Asian bug is coming—the Emerald Ash Borer that has already destroyed over a million ash trees in Michigan. And again I will lose trees. But fortunately, Chicagoans plant many varieties of trees, so I may only have to say goodbye to a few of my beloved trees this time around.

You too can find that part of nature that speaks to you. Just stop, look and listen—and notice what moves you—as you navigate the natural parts of your community. It's a glorious wilderness out there, even in cities. (see www.chicagowilderness.org for more).

Patricia Reis is a freelance writer who lives in Chicago. A former public relations professional, she now devotes her energies to personal and environmental writing—as well as to the activities of TreeKeepers. On Earth Day she will be in Grant Park mulching and pruning the trees she is responsible for as a TreeKeeper.



Giving to the Denomination – EDSU

I would like to give a BIG SHOUT OUT to the work performed for all the people in our denomination by the Education Support Unit! The volunteers who serve us, led by chairperson Katie Shelley and Youth Director (and new father) Kurt Fekete have been of Use for our denomination, educating young and old.

- EDSU is responsible for mini courses at our annual Convention. These are opportunities for people to reach out, connect, communicate and learn from each other. On the lighter side, EDSU taught us how to express our feelings through the use of the roller coaster cheer or if you're in a mood, the clam clap.
- EDSU offers grants up to \$1,000 for educational work in any of our churches.
- EDSU ensures that a children's program will take place at Convention.
- EDSU is connected with our Sunday School Association (ANCSSA) because that is where we care for the education of all the children before teenagehood.
- EDSU manages the budget for SCYL.

For the above reasons alone, your contributions to the General Convention will support these activities which are delivered with fun and love by committed people for our Church. We are committed to EDSU as a denomination, won't you also commit to supporting this?

I want to give a SECOND BIG SHOUT OUT to the activities of the SCYL (Swedenborgian Church Youth League). As a parent who has had children pass through teenagehood and the SCYL I cannot be objective about SCYL; the teenage years are fun, full of questioning, hormonally challenging, need I say more? Probably someone you know has been part of SCYL! (maybe even you.)

Just a short list of ways SCYL is among us:

- Memorial Day and Winter Survivor Retreats.
- Minister Trading Cards (what a concept!)
- Growing youth groups in Michigan and Maine (and I'll bet more are happening now!)
- Summer camps in Almont and Fryeburg.
- Training for Youth workers. The most important outcome of SCYL has to be the feeling that SCYL engenders in the scary teen years: someone to talk to, people to share the journey with, things to think about and talk about and people to have fun with too!

Convention is dedicated to continuing support of EDSU and SCYL. Convention is us, you and I. Please give of your treasure to continue this work. Please send a contribution in and say you want it to go the work of EDSU. Thank-you. Deane Currie, General Manager, Temenos

Mona Conner was chosen to participate in *Masterworks in Miniature 2007*. Two of her framed paintings are on sale via online show, or through Gallery One in Mentor, Ohio. The first, titled *San Diego Freedom Flag* is dedicated to our soldiers in Iraq. The second, *Three Rose Petals*, was painted for the cover article *Heaven is a Rose* in the July/August 2006 issue of *Angels on Earth*, a Guideposts publication. To see the paintings, go to: http://www.galleryone.com/mw_2007_pg1.htm#san. A *People's Choice Award* goes to the painting with the most votes! To vote for one of Mona's paintings click on the following link and follow the instructions: http://www.galleryone.com/mw_2007.htm. *Masterworks in Miniature 2007* runs from March 9-24, continuing in its online version through May 24.

Rev. Jun-chol Lee	
My Favorite City to Visit	New York, NY
My Favorite Bible Verse	Psalms 51:17
My Motto	Do what you say, say what you do
My Most Treasured Possession	Bible
What Makes Me Happy	My son
My Favorite Food	Sushi
My One Question for Swedenborg	Did you really see God?
My Most Admired Quality	Honesty
My Favorite Sermon Topic	Anything—as long as it's spiritual



Rev. Jun-chol Lee's trading card, produced by SCYL to raise funds.

NEWS *Parish*

Kitchener, Ontario Canada

Youth Sleepover and Worship Service at the Church of the Good Shepherd

Saturday February 3rd to Sunday February 4, there was a youth sleepover and service at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario Canada. The Canadians all thought it would be nice to invite the Michigan youth league to join us, so four American teens spent three hours in a van driving up.

The theme of the service was "Gifts From God," which tied in nicely with Stewardship Month. Although we did spend a lot of time planning the youth service, there was a lot of fun and games too. From someone being trapped behind a chair to playing sardines in the dark church until midnight, everyone had a great time. We talked about our "cultural differences", for example, how there aren't any Swiss Chalets in the U.S., which just adds to the huge lists of Pros and Cons.

The funniest part of the weekend for me, though, was when the Americans found out that it was -30° outside. You have to remember, this is CANADA we are talking about. -30° C is nowhere near as cold as 30° Fahrenheit.

Overall, the service was excellent, and the sleepover was a lot of fun... I just hope that we can do it again, or maybe invite people from other Swedenborgian churches, especially American ones. I mean, who doesn't want to go up north to the chilly Canada? Thanks again to Janice, Ivan, Jesse, Reece, Ret and Lisa for coming up, and helping us with our service. Thank you Kurt as well! You are all invited to come back anytime!

*Sam MacTavish, SCYL
Midwest Public Relations Officer*

PASSAGES

Births

Kurt Fekete and Shelley and Ava Dolley welcome Anastasia (Zsa Zsa) Grace Dolley. Zsa Zsa was born on February 27, 2007, weighing 8 pounds, 1 oz and measuring 21.5".

Confirmations

The Swedenborgian Church of San Francisco welcomed the following new members: Douglas Stinson, Tasha Wientjes, and Merideth Cooney were confirmed on June 11, 2006; Mary Drew, Martin Chapman, Cecile Lyons, Karen Rush, Kelly Crowell were confirmed Nov. 19, 2006, by Rev. Rachel Rivers.

Deaths

Alexander—Barbara Alexander, 83, who played the organ for the Elmwood New Church for over 40 years, passed into the spiritual world after a long illness on Saturday, Feb. 10. Her funeral service was held on Friday, Feb. 16, Rev. Donna Keane officiating. It was attended by over 100 people, former students from her days as a nurse in the E. Bridgewater school system, and lots of family and friends. She will be sorely missed by all who knew her.

Howe—Marion Howe, born February 29, 1920, entered the spiritual world on February 9, 2007 in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Marion was active member of Swedenborgian Church of San



Marion Howe with granddaughters: left to right: Lexi Guiner, Marion Howe, Lisa Spievak-Saam, Keri Spievak.

Diego and was raised in the New Church of Jerusalem (Swedenborgian) Los Angeles and the Wayfarers Chapel in Palos Verdes. Her mother, Cornelia Ayer Smith of Boulder, Colorado was active in the church before her birth. Howe's father was Walter Wells Howe of Burlington, Vermont; her brother, Dr. Frederick Howe. Marion Howe married Joseph Spievak August 1942.

Survivors include daughter Susan E. (Spievak) Correnti, son, James R. Spievak Esq., three grandchildren Lisa Spievak-Saam, Keri Faith Spievak, Alessandra "Lexi" Correnti-Guiner, and great-grandson, Ian Joseph Saam.

A memorial service was held March 3, 2007 at Wayfarers Chapel, Rev. Carla Friedrich and Rev. Jonathan Mitchell officiating.

Mrozinski—Nezera M. Mrozinski, age 91, lifelong active member of the LaPorte New Church in LaPorte, Indiana, entered the spiritual world August 8, 2006, at her daughter's home in South Carolina. A candlelight Celebration of Life service was held in the LaPorte sanctuary September 23rd, 2006, the Rev. Freeman Schrock officiating.

Special Exhibit Through May 15: see www.GTU.edu for more info

The San Francisco Swedenborgian Church is the focus of a three-month exhibition at the Flora Lamson Hewlett Library, Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California.

The exhibition will include works by William Keith, Bruce Porter, paintings, photographs, drawings, furniture, textiles, rare books and objects associated with the "Worcester Group" which has played a seminal role in the development of the California Mission Style and the Arts and Crafts Movement in America.

A chair from the sanctuary, and three large photos of the church will be included in the exhibit, along with more than 100 artifacts and items from the Arts and Crafts movement.

The Hewlett library is located at the Graduate Theological Union: 2400 Ridge Road in Berkeley (one block north of the University of California). Free parking is available at the Pacific School of Religion parking lot.



Convention 2007: Crossing Jordan

Marjie Leas and Chris Laitner

Crossing the Jordan symbolizes a new beginning in faith and truth, and what better location to bring to life this Convention theme than the shores of clear, refreshing Lake Michigan! This idyllic vacation setting, and the shaded campus of Hope College will provide Convention attendees with a sense of renewal and optimism as they gather to do the work of our Swedenborgian Church. We, your hosts from the Michigan Association (The Royal Oak Swedenborgian Church, The Lansing Swedenborgian Church, and the Almont New Church Assembly), anticipate your arrival among us and are preparing opportunities for your enrichment and enjoyment. Look at what we plan to offer:

Location, location, location! The city of Holland is on the western shore of the State of Michigan, minutes from the beautiful sugar sand dunes and beaches of Lake Michigan. There is a quaint and bustling downtown—pedestrian friendly—which caters to visitors year-round with unique shops and restaurants.

“Downtown” is literally one block off the campus of Hope College, where we will be housed in well-kept dormitories (various options are indicated on the reservation form), meet and eat in the same expansive facility (Phelps Hall, close and convenient!), and worship in an inspiring gothic-style stone church.

Fun and fellowship! The Convention meetings and business sessions hold their own attraction for those of you who are regular attendees, but the fun and fellowship will not stop there!

We are planning a great Saturday outing for families and friends to gather at a beachside park for sunning and swimming, followed by a picnic cookout.

After watching the famous “west

coast” Michigan sunset, we’ll regroup in the college Klerch, a cabaret-like space that will be wired for sound as we conduct our own “Convention Idol” karaoke contest. Churches and associations are encouraged to prepare contestants to enter the fun and compete before a panel of esteemed judges who will assist the audience in voting for the victorious vocalist of the evening.

Special Ceremonial “Mingling of the Waters”! To open our Convention, we invite each church, association, camp and/or retreat center to bring a container of water from their region to our Wednesday evening opening session. Waters from the ocean, a local lake or stream, a spring, or even the church kitchen sink – whatever source is representative of and meaningful for your group – will be brought forward in a procession and poured together into a fountain that will mingle the “truth” we all contribute. The bubbling waters will remain active throughout our session as a symbol of our vision for greater truth.

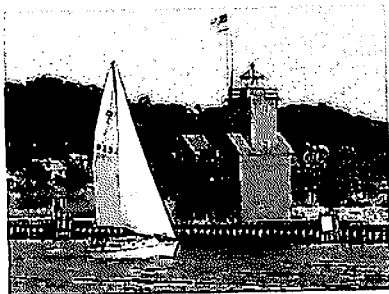
Relaxation and recreation! Opportunities for individuals, small groups or families abound in western Michigan. We will have information on sites of interest for nearby visits in the greater Holland area, day trips to surrounding towns and beaches, or longer explorations of the beauty of our state. (Be sure to register for the Pre-Convention Motor coach Tour of Northwestern Michigan with Sandy at 989-636-7674 or at scoveart@charter.net) Come early and stay late to take advantage of



Top: Hope College's Dimnent Chapel where worship services will be held. (2) The Phelps dining facilities will be the site for meals; meeting facilities are in the same building. Attendees will stay in (3) Gilmore or (4) Cook residential facilities.

“Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9



Above, top: The lighthouse known as Big Red. A view of Michigan's sandy beaches near Holland. Surf's usually up on the western shore! Left to right, members of the Michigan Association B.J. Neuenfeldt, Sandy Coveart, Chris Laitner overlook the Lake Michigan beach at Holland near picnic site for Saturday afternoon/sunset cookout at Convention. Top right: Holland, Michigan is famous for its tulips and tulip festival. Take some bulbs home!

the summer weather and world-class scenery.

Crossing the Jordan

The theme for the 2007 Annual Convention is “Crossing the Jordan,” taking inspiration from the Book of Joshua, chapters 1 and 3.

Over the course of our convention, we will look at the process of crossing the Jordan River as it relates to the life and work of our church in the twenty-first century and as it relates to each of us as we live our lives.

The Wednesday evening, June 27, Opening Celebration will highlight Joshua 1:1-9, the Lord's commission to Joshua to lead the people forward across the Jordan into the Promised Land. The evening's opening will be focused on the Lord's promise to assist in change and to be present with the people as they move forward.

Thursday, June 28, will open with the Memorial Communion Service, followed during the day by the first business sessions and first mini-courses. On Thursday evening, the Swedenborgian House of Studies Board of Trustees will honor this year's graduates and highlight the work of the House of Studies over the past year.

This is the “preparation of provisions” day, supported by the language of Joshua 1: 10-11. Friday, June 29, will open with Swedenborgian Church Youth League worship service. This day will contain

delegate sessions and mini-courses, and, in the evening, the Ordination Service will be held. This day we will focus on the specific tools and directions, both physical and spiritual, needed for moving forward into a new state, taking inspiration from Joshua 3: 2-5.

Saturday, June 30, will see the morning offering the main worship service of Convention with the Rev.

(Continues on the following page)

Will the Pre-Convention Motor-Coach Tour of the Northwestern Lower Peninsula of Michigan happen? It depends on YOU!

We need 35 people signed up by May 1, 2007.

We're not there yet!

See the back page of your February Messenger for details of trip or contact Sandy Coveart RIGHT NOW for more info.

Experience some of the most beautiful parts of Michigan for \$120/person on this overnight trip. Call 989-636-7674 or e-mail to scoveart@charter.net ASAP!

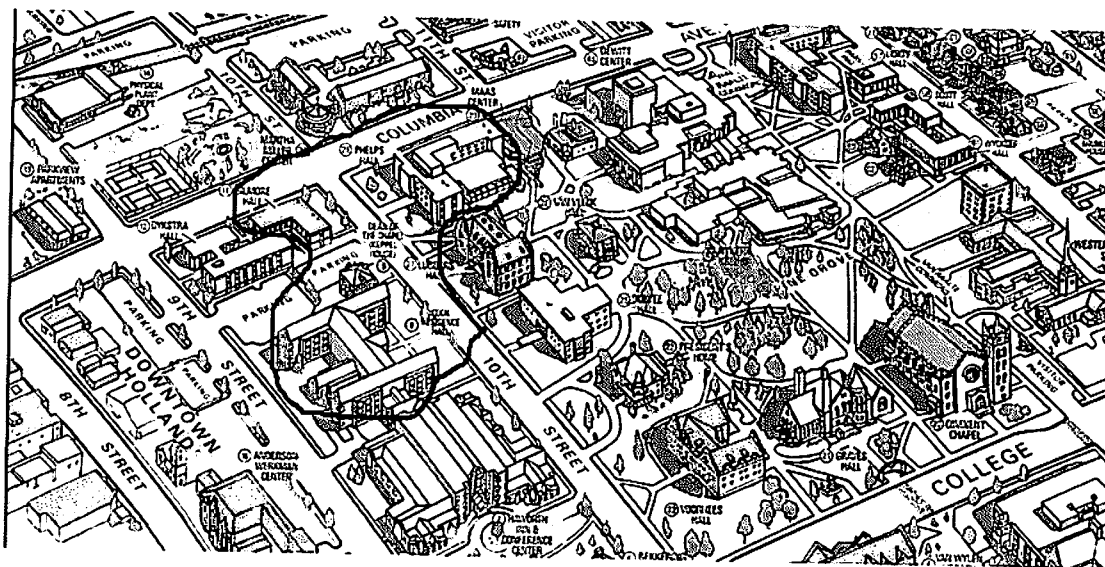
Convention

(Continued from page 15)

CONVENTION CALENDAR							
JUNE	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	JULY
Sunday							Sunday
24 Council of Ministers Meetings	25 Pre-Convention Bus Tour of Scenic Northwestern Lower Michigan. To participate contact Sandy Coveart, 989-636-7674 or e-mail to scoveart@charter.net. We need 35 or more to sign up for this or it will not happen! \$120/person.	26 9-5 PM Gen. Council Pre-Convention Meeting 7:30 PM Opening Celebration	27 9-5 PM Memorial Communion Business Sessions Mini-Courses SHS Graduation	28 Youth League Worship Service Delegate Sessions Mini-Courses Ordination Serv.	29 Convention Worship Service Delegate Meetings Beach picnic & leisure activities Karaoke contest	30 Closing session & Brief Worship 11 AM Convention Concludes	

Eric Hoffman as the Convention Preacher. Communion will be celebrated during the service. After lunch, there will be a brief delegate session, and then we will enjoy a variety of special afternoon events culminating with an outdoor evening meal beside Lake Michigan. Later that evening, we will assemble in the Hope College student union ("The Kletz") for a major karaoke contest followed by a time to dance.

Sunday, July 1, will begin with the closing session of business, followed by a brief closing worship service at which we will see the "sending forth" of the people into the work awaiting us all in the new land. The 183rd Convention will end (before noon) with the closing of the Bible at the end of the service with Joshua 1:9 as the benediction.



This aerial drawing of Hope College shows the main chapel at the lower right corner. Shown in the area bounded by the black line drawn are the dining/meeting facility, Phelps (upper right of circle) and Gilmore and Cook Halls, which are just across the street from Phelps. Parking lots are found between Gilmore and Cook residence halls. At the lower left, you can see downtown Holland, a block away from the residence halls.

We hope you'll join us at Hope to share hopes and visions for the future of our denomination. Come cross the Jordan with us at Convention 2007!

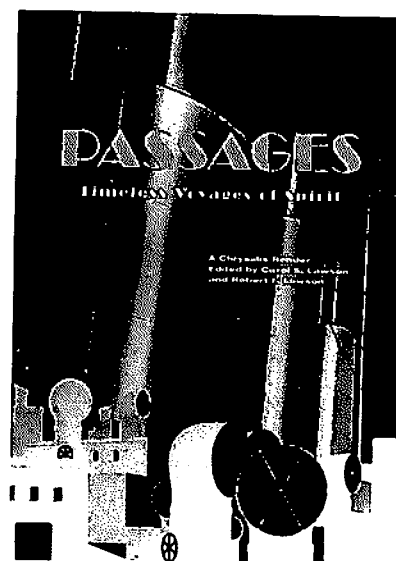
To register, use the form found on the following page.

New from Chrysalis Books: PASSAGES

A great bedtime read—the new Chrysalis collection of art, poetry, fiction, and prose is now available at http://www.swedenborg.com/book_store.asp or call 800-355-3222 x10. A book lover wouldn't go to bed without it. Timeless voyages of spirit. \$15.95.

"No matter which byways we choose, we are all traveling our own paths of adventure. *Passages* leads to watershed events, moments that provide new understandings of who we are as we journey through life."

—Rob Lawson, Editor's Note



Convention 2007 Registration Form

"Crossing the Jordan" Hope College, Holland, Michigan June 27 to July 1, 2007

Convention 2007 will be held in Holland, Michigan on the beautiful campus of Hope College.

Lodging: There are two choices available:
Gilmore Hall: Rooms are designed for two people. The rooms are furnished with 2 beds, 2 desks and chairs, 2 dressers. Floors are tiled. There are bathrooms on each floor.
Cook Hall: The rooms are in a "suite" set-up with a full bathroom joining two bedrooms. The rooms are carpeted with tile in the bathrooms. The beds are twin long. The rooms also contain two dressers, desks with a bookshelf and desk chairs. There is internet available in each room. Linens are provided.

Teen Program: The Convention sponsor program allows youth aged 13 - 17 to attend Convention without parents. The adult sponsor attends Convention and agrees to perform certain duties and take responsibility for the minor in place of the parent. Parents must arrange for and notify a sponsor prior to Convention. Children under the age of 13 cannot attend Convention without a parent or legal guardian. Parents must complete and mail the Convention Registration Form located in The Messenger. A letter providing some information about the teen program along with a Sponsor Information Form and Medical Release Form will be sent to

you. I am thrilled that your teenager can join us this year at Convention. For more information, assistance or clarification regarding the youth program or logistics please contact Kurt Fekete, Youth Director, at kfekete@hotmail.com, toll free at 866-333-7295. We look forward to seeing lots of teens this year and we're certain that the teens will discover Convention to be a fun and spiritually enlightening event. The program begins Wednesday and is supervised by Kurt Fekete. To see more about Hope College browse to www.hope.edu.

Name(s) _____

Address, City, State, postal code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Names and ages of all children accompanying you _____

Home Church (for your nametag) _____ Attending Women's Alliance luncheon? ☐ Yes:

Name (s) _____

Special needs (dietary, handicap access, roommate requests, etc.):

All prices are in US currency. If you wish to pay with Canadian funds, please add 20% and a handling charge of \$4.00 for each Canadian check. All bills must be paid in full before June 15. No registration refunds after June 1. Bills may be paid by Visa or by MasterCard.. You may call Central Office to make a credit card payment by phone (617) 969-4240.

REGISTRATION	# Persons	Total
Rates:		
Adult \$90		
Youth League Teen \$75		
Child (11-13) \$55		
Child Under 11 \$45		
Family Maximum \$275		
Late Fee after June 1 \$80.		
Total Registration Fee		

Visa _____ MasterCard _____ Expiration Date _____

Number _____

Name on Card: _____

Signature _____

Send Checks payable to The Swedenborgian Church to: Central Office, the Swedenborgian Church, 11 Highland Ave., Newtonville, MA 02460

ROOM & BOARD:	# of days	# of persons	Total
Rate per day per person			
Gilmore Hall			
Single \$64.00			
Double \$50.00			
Cook Hall			
Single \$83.00			
Double \$63.00			
Total R & B:			
Grand Total			

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.

Earth Day: Doing Our Part for Mother Earth

Continued from page 52

non-spirituality of the non-human world.

Many of us see Emanuel Swedenborg as bridging that gap between religion and science. In his own views on the connection between the natural world and the human being, Swedenborg saw all of creation as a reflection of God's nature; this included the animal, plant and mineral kingdoms, though angels and human beings are viewed as the most accurate reflections of God's nature.

For Thomas Berry, this separation that many of us have come to feel has led to a loss of any feeling of an ethical obligation toward the non-human world. If, however, we are people of faith who acknowledge God as the source of all creation, we cannot forget the spiritual component that connects all living things. Somehow, we have to recapture an outlook of the world in which we think of creation not as a collection of objects, but rather as a communion of subjects. How do we recapture a sense of sacredness and community with and for all life?

Some would say this is exactly our task as people who believe in the love and wisdom of a God who continues to support our life, every minute of every day. The natural world, with all its beauty and diversity, is the ground of our religious imagination. In part, our ideas of God are so wonderful because we have lived on a planet that is "chock-full, every nook and cranny, with marvels and mysteries, dark beauty, happy encounters and splendid landscapes"

(Thomas Berry, *Best Medicine—A Healthy Globe*). God's revelation to us lies in the Scriptures, but also in the story of how our universe began and evolved, and brought forth all living creatures; awe and wonder are primary spiritual qualities. If the scientific community has handed in their verdict on the state of the planet, and yet we aren't changing our habits fast enough to ward off greater disaster, it seems our will isn't quite in alignment with the truth we know. Perhaps the best way to help our will along, is to continue to help nurture our sense of the sacred and the wonder of life. As Al Gore said when he accepted the award for best documentary at the Oscar's this year, "our will is our one renewable resource."

Nurturing our sense of the sacred can start in our own backyard. For inspiration, we can look to figures like Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778), Swedish botanist and founder of the modern classification system for plants and animals. Linnaeus made a great attempt at a gigantic survey on nature, which at the end of his life, included some 2300 pages, an overwhelming task. Students would flock to his lectures and botanical gardens. Linnaeus would teach about the different species and their uses; he kept extensive diaries of his garden and "noted how leaves and petals settled down for the night..." (Hubener, *Carolus Linnaeus*). We may not need to come up with our own 2300 pages, but if we haven't already taken a deep delight in the created world, let us start somewhere within this communion of subjects with whom we share our home.

Rev. Alison Lane is pastor of the Swedenborgian Church in Chicago.

The Swedenborgian Church
of North America
The Messenger
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Newtonville, MA 02460

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