

THE MESSENGER

Published by the Swedenborgian Church of North America

May 2007

~ BOOK REVIEW ~

Spiritually-Grounded Parenting Discovering a New Paradigm

Parenting with Spirit: 30 Ways to Nurture your Child's Spirit



By Jane Bartlett
(Marlowe & Company, publishers)

Reviewed by
Kim Hinrichs

The other day my six-year-old daughter angrily told me she wanted a different mother. We had left her after-school childcare program, and she had flung her entire body into the front seat of the car and begun to rifle through my bag for some candy or gum. I had delivered a mild scolding—it was not that big of a deal. But her response sent a shockwave of fury and depression through me. We had only been together for five minutes, and instead of having a warm mother-daughter reunion, she had insulted me. I got into the driver's seat and turned around and loudly rebuked her. I told her she could not talk to me like that. I told her how much it hurt my feelings to hear such a thing when I give so much of myself to raising her every single day. Her response? She crossed her arms over her chest and stared at me, indignant.

As we drove home in stony silence, familiar despairing questions came to my mind. What is wrong with my daughter that she behaves like this? Why doesn't she seem to understand compassion and kindness? Why can't she accept my parental authority? My feelings sank further. What is wrong with me as a mother that I have allowed this behavior to develop? Have my husband and I already failed at parenting?

I thought of a friend of mine who rules her children with an iron hand. Even though she is far too stern for my taste, she gets her children to behave. They act like proper little Victorian children, cowered into behavior acceptable to grown-ups. That behavior was looking pretty good at this moment.

By the time my husband got home from work and I told him the story, I had resolved that we needed to become more disciplinarian. We were going to set up rules and systems of

punishment ordered by degree of infraction. My own flesh and blood was not going to turn into a brat.

Fortunately for all of us, I spent the rest of the evening reading Jane Bartlett's sensitive and insightful book, *Parenting with Spirit: 30 Ways to Nurture Your Child's Spirit and Enrich Your Family's Life*. After two hours, my eyes were brimming with tears of compassion for that bratty little kid; and I was ready to undertake the rebuilding of my family's ecosystem.

Bartlett is a British mother of three. She is a progressive Christian, and she speaks broadly of having a spiritual presence at the center of family life. She presents this idea in a way that will be appealing to Swedenborgians. Acknowledging

(Continued on page 69)

Celebrations

The New Church of Southwest Florida purchased its own ministry home on March 14, 2007.
(see page 66)

The stained glass altar window in the LaPorte church has been refurbished and reinstalled. It was dedicated and blessed March 18, 2007. ✠

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Nominees for General Convention Offices
Trump Organization Donates to Wayfarers Chapel • Council of Ministers Report

The "New" New Church of Southwest Florida

Nadine Cotton

We thank and praise the Lord for providing us with an exciting new opportunity. We have just purchased a building unit in a warehouse/office complex and are looking to provide many community services from our new home. We will now be able to add to our services by having the space for worship and meetings. The emergency food pantry, clothing and household items will also be stored here.

"We Walk Amongst the People" is our motto as we put into action our Lord's injunction: feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and comfort the afflicted. The New Church of Southwest Florida is dedicated to helping people through its intentional ministry of "community presence." This means venturing out and meeting people at the cross-

roads of daily living. We deliver free bread for needy families and those living on the cusp. We also provide emergency food, clothing, bedding, and personal items to families in need. Every school day from 2 to 5:30 p.m. we give homework assistance, tutoring, role modeling, and provide constructive crafts and play for about 20 school children at the Kids' VIP After-School Program.

We need chairs and tables. We also need moveable partitions to divide our space into rooms that will house the food pantry, items for the needy, auction merchandise, and, of course, the Sunday School room, minister's office, and worship space. We need a second bathroom, air conditioning, paint, tile, drywall, and carpeting. Our purchases are estimated at \$26,000, a hefty sum, and so we continue our active fund-raising to prepare our new home for use.

We are also raising funds for our annual summer camp trip. Each year, we take 6-10 children from Florida to Almont Summer Camp in Michigan. We fly them to the church camp for a week in a fun, loving, and learning environment. Almont Summer Camp is great at helping us provide this wonderful experience for the kids.

(For more information on SCYL camps, see page 74 — Editor)

Rev. Nadine Cotton is the pastor of the New Church of Southwest Florida. Donations can be sent directly to the new facility at 10811 Sunset Plaza Circle #401, Ft. Myers, FL 33908 • Telephone: (239) 481-5535 • Email: newchurhcswnfl@yahoo.com.

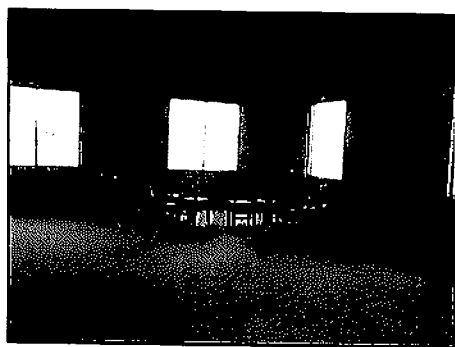
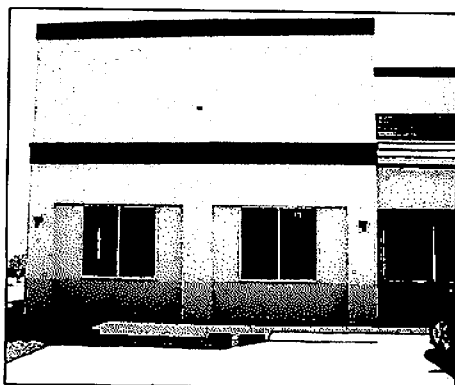


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2007 Annual Convention Mini Courses

We are hard at work planning the mini courses to be presented at Convention this year. A sampling of the confirmed courses are as follows:

- Rev. Richard Tafel will be speaking on the topic of finding a way for our church to grow.
- Rev. Andy Stinson will present *The New Church—Past Present and Future—And How it's going to radically change your life!*
- Rev. Jane Siebert will present *Soul Collage: Examining Our View of God*. This session will be a hands-on process for exploring our inmost idea of God as expressed through our visual concept of the Divine.

We are hoping for more mini-course announcements in the June *Messenger*.

— Paula Hilbert ☒

Convention 2007: "Crossing the Jordan" PLEASE BRING YOUR VOICE TO BE HEARD!



Christine M. Laitner, President

The process under which our denomination makes decisions, creates programs, sets policy, and effects change is based on the voice of the members through a representative assembly. From its beginnings, our denomination has conferred upon delegates the responsibility of being the voice of the region they serve. The role of delegates at our Church's annual convention is involvement in the decision-making process. Between annual conventions, the General Council, made up of elected regional lay and clergy members, continues the process of our representative government.

Annual conventions offer other excellent opportunities as well: that of reconnecting with old friends, making new friends, sharing memories, creating new memories, enjoying time together in community, and bringing active voices which will be integral to an inspirational convention experience.

The theme of Convention 2007 is "Crossing the Jordan;" and delegates and friends will be regularly involved in activities that will produce information, ideas, and decisions. The symbolic meaning of "Crossing the Jordan;" is to identify the ways in which our Church can best express its purpose in this 21st century. It is my hope that we will have delegates from every one of our 12 regional associations at this year's convention in order to have the broadest, most representative base possible for generating ideas and discussions.

During our meetings, delegates will gather in small facilitated groups to provide input to specific areas such as: the focus of the denomination for the next decade; the functional structure of the denomination in terms of the support units, the Cabinet, the General Council, and the Officers of Convention; electronic/internet presence for the denomination and local ministries and attendant needs for expertise; specific services that local churches and regional associations would like the denomination to provide; stewardship and fundraising issues and plans, both local and denominational; and the denominational budget and budgeting process.

Sometimes at conventions such as ours, delegates and friends generate great ideas and input that are never used. Three years ago, I promised that integrity and timely response would be hallmarks of my term of office, and our Convention 2007 is no exception from that promise. We will be reporting on information and ideas gathered from our breakout groups on the floor of Convention, and we will track them throughout the year if they are implemented. We will present reports in *The Messenger* and on the websites: www.swedenborg.org and www.swedenborgiancommunity.org.

This is a period of major change in many churches and denominations, including our own. It is imperative for the ongoing useful life of our denomination that you participate in this annual process so that we may have the most extensive base possible for creative decision making. Please bring your voice and ideas as association delegates or as friends to the 2007 Convention. I look forward to seeing—and hearing—you soon! ☒

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 set up with a full bathroom joining two bedrooms. The rooms are carpeted. The beds are twin long. The rooms also contain two dressers, desks, chairs, and a bookshelf. 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. 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 they 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 go 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 ☐ No

Names of those attending the Women's Alliance luncheon: _____

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. Registration must be paid in full before June 15. No registration refunds after June 1. Registration may be paid by Visa or by MasterCard. You may call Central Office to make a credit card payment by phone (617) 969-4240.

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

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		

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

Spiritually-Grounded Parenting— Discovering a New Paradigm

(Continued from front page)

the statistic decline in organized religion in recent decades, she points to an ongoing unquenchable thirst for religion now finding its expression in the growing interest in New Age practices, Eastern spirituality, personal development, holistic living and other traditions. She wryly notes, however, that “this spiritual renaissance has largely failed to nurture families. It concerns itself only with the needs of grown-ups; it’s individualistic and self-oriented. You will find a wealth of personal development opportunities for adults to discover their ‘inner child,’ but few where they can be with their outer child too!”

Bartlett believes that by ignoring the family as a locus for spiritual practice, we are losing an extremely valuable spiritual growth opportunity. She counsels that “families need to find their spiritual heart if they are to flourish.” The family is perhaps the monastic community of the new millennium—a community of individuals in which one lives in long-term, covenanted relationships, for better and for worse. And children are our most treasured spiritual teachers. “If you want to be more creative, more playful, more present in the moment and alive to the wonder of the world, you have given life to the best teacher of all these things you will ever have. You will also learn far more about your capacity for anger, fear, laughter and love.”

The book is divided into five sections: Starting Out, A Family Spiritual Practice, Spiritual Life Together, A Home with Spirit, and Going Out into the World. One of the most helpful chapters is on creating a family creed. Bartlett advises holding a series of family meetings (short and fun, with yummy snacks) to create a mis-

sion statement that encapsulates what your family is all about. It is a time to step back from the frenzy of activity and ask: what do we stand for as a family? What are our values? What do we want to do together? How do we want to help others? Bartlett instructs that all family members are to contribute (little ones can draw pictures on the brainstorming page), and that the creed can be short, the better to be memorized by all. It is a simple

*It is a time to step back from
the frenzy of activity and ask:
what do we stand for as a family?*

What are our values?

What do we want to do together?

How do we want to help others?

idea, but it will focus intentionality and community among family members.

In other chapters, Bartlett advises practicing loving family discipline, making sacred space in the home, considering your family’s media habits, using nature as a spiritual teacher, and teaching children about life and death. She also includes what may be the more predictable advice: pray with your children, create rituals for different times and occasions, encourage creativity, and inspire kindness.

Altogether, this book encourages the parent to practice compassion and intentional living, which are both powerful spiritual concepts. Family-making is all about being present in relationship. I am beginning to think that this is the most challenging spiritual practice of all; being continually present within a family network of relationships is exhausting, challenging and often painful. These are the people who know our faults and our weak-

nesses, and being truly present means being vulnerable to getting hurt. It is much more attractive, and seemingly easier, to wrap a blanket of self-centeredness around us and shut out the other, even if that other is our child. The power of self-centeredness is strong, and it takes continual effort to mitigate its strength and to remain open to hearing and accepting the other. This is the essence of compassionate parenting, and it is also the essence of any true spiritual practice.

Later that night, I thought about the incident with my daughter again. This time I focused on what might have been going on inside of her in that moment when she lashed out angrily at me. And then suddenly it was all clear. Her after-school program was lousy. Her first grade class was not allowing her to excel as she loved to do. Her best friend had drifted away from her. I had not been the one to put her to bed lately, so we were missing that intimate mother-daughter time. It was no wonder she acted up: she was up to her eyeballs in frustration over not getting what she needed. Suddenly all thoughts of discipline had vanished from my mind. My initial response had been based in my own hurt and fear, and it now seemed ridiculous. My heart was overflowing with compassion and love for her. I resolved to make several changes instantly to better care for her needs and to bring more spirituality into our home and family.

The next day, I acted very differently; and she did too. Harmony and love swept into our home. In the end, I suppose my daughter was right: she did need a new mom. One who was practicing compassion, living with intentionality, and parenting with spirit.

Rev. Kim Hinrichs is Director of Children’s Ministries at the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church. ☛

General Convention Nominating Committee Report

Vice President:
James Erickson

Recording Secretary:
Susan Wood-Ashton

Treasurer:
Lawrence Conant

General Council:
(three to be elected) Barbara Cullen,
Matthew Fleming,
Rev. Renec Machiniak

**Communications Support Unit
(COMSU):**
Rev. Carla Friedrich

Education Support Unit (EDSU):
Steve Thomas

**Financial and Physical Resources
Support Unit (FPRSU):**
Rev. Lana Sandahl

**Information Management Support
Unit (IMSU):**
Rev. David Brown

Ministries Support Unit (MINSU):
(two to be elected) Peter Brakman,
Rev. Doug Moss

**Swedenborgian House of Studies
(SHS):**
(two to be elected) Rev. Solomon
Youngmin Kim, Rev. Andy Stinson

**Committee on Admission to the
Ministry (CAM):**
Rev. Kenneth O. Turley

Nominating Committee:
(two to be nominated, one to be
elected) Rev. Deborah Winter (South-
east Association); Second position is
open. The Committee is looking for
nominees from Canada. ☪

Meet the Nominees

Vice President

James Erickson

Over the years I have submitted my biographical information a number of times for General Council and for the position of Vice-President. I have always mentioned my experiences of being a teacher, being a director of a private school, the businesses I have started, the political and other leadership positions I have held, my interests as a student of leadership and organizational structure and behavior, and my extensive involvement in my local church. I have always done so with the hope of informing the members of Convention of my qualifications and worthiness to hold the offices for which I have become a candidate.

What I have failed to mention in the past is another aspect of my interest in serving the denomination in a leadership role; that is, my view of serving and being of use. I learned the doctrine of usefulness when I joined the New Church, and I have always believed a life of service is important. I consider service, or servant, leadership as my ministry. It is not for career or ego gratification that I wish to serve; rather, it is my hope to be of use. It is with this hope in mind that I am proud to be a candidate for the position of Vice President in the General Convention.

Recording Secretary

Susan Wood-Ashton

For the third year I am honored to accept the nomination for Recording Secretary of Convention. In the 36 years that I have been a member of the Swedenborgian Church, I have been on General Council, FPRSU, Augmentation Fund Committee, and the Retirement Committee. I have also served as president of the Ohio

Association as well as Board President of the Kemper Road Church in Ohio, currently known as the New Church of Montgomery. After moving to Florida in 1985, I became a member of the New Church of Southwest Florida. It was an honor to serve on the steering committee of www.SwedenborgianCommunity.org.

The position of Recording Secretary is one with a wide variety of duties and responsibilities. I have found my first two years to be both enriching and rewarding, and I wish to serve my church for another year in this capacity.

Treasurer

Lawrence Conant

I am a lifelong member of the Bridgewater, Massachusetts Society and have served on many boards at the association and national level. I am seeking my eighth term as our denomination's Treasurer. The Treasurer's duties include accounting for the denomination's restricted and unrestricted funds, assisting in preparation and approval of the annual budget, providing guidance to General Council, chairing FPRSU, and serving on the Augmentation Fund Committee.

I have continued efforts to get clear documentation of the assets of Convention. In 2006 we had excellent discussions with the members of the St. Louis Society to clear the title to that property; we expect to file the corrected deed this year. General Council is working with Edmonton to clear Convention's paperwork on their mortgage. Finally, as I mentioned on the floor of Convention, we are working with Wayfarers to combine their financials with Convention's to present a clearer financial picture. With your vote, I can continue these efforts.

(Continued on following page)

Meet the Nominees

(Continued from previous page)

General Council

Barbara Cullen

I am very pleased to be running for a second term on General Council. The past three years have provided me with a good knowledge as to the challenges facing Convention. During this time, I feel that I have developed a skill profile to enable me to contribute fully for the next three years. I strongly believe that our spiritual purpose and goals need to be balanced with fiscal responsibility so that our denomination is here for the long term.

My local church is the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario. I have served on the Board of Directors there for most of the years that I have been a member. I have also served on many ad hoc committees for our church including Convention 2004 held in Kitchener.

General Council

Matthew Fleming

I grew up in the Royal Oak Church of the Holy City in Michigan (also known as the Detroit Society), as did my mother and her mother before her. I have also been a regular camper at the Almont New Church Assembly. The New Church runs in my veins, and I am honoured to have been asked to serve on General Council.

When I am not attending board meetings at the Church of the Holy City, I am attending the University of Windsor in Windsor, Ontario. I am currently studying Civil Engineering. I maintain an A average and am an active participant in my school's Concrete Canoe Team (that's how engineers have fun). Windsor hosted a national engineering student conference, and I was closely involved in its planning and hosting.

I enjoy searching for new opportunities and challenges, working with people and finances, and making things happen. I am truly looking forward to the opportunity to continue my learning and bringing my current abilities to work for The Swedenborgian Church in North America.

General Council

Rev. Renee Machiniak

I have just completed my first term on General Council and ask to be elected for a second term. This is the time when one is most useful in the capacity of council member; i.e., the process is familiar; the issues at hand in our denomination are clearer; and the working relationships within the council have a background, trust, and respect from time spent together. I would also like to continue to serve on General Council because I desire to be useful within the structure of the larger church, the General Convention, and to continue to work with the President and the other fine members of General Council. As I have served the Royal Oak Church of the Holy City for over 11 years and have previously served the Almont Summer School as Director for nine years, I believe that I bring to this council useful experience in the fields of pastoral ministry and church administration. I would be honored to continue to serve the church on the General Council.

Communications Support Unit (COMSU)

Rev. Carla Friedrich

I am a life-long member of the Swedenborgian Church and am currently serving on COMSU. I am a recent graduate of SHS, Berkeley, and am the pastor of the Swedenborgian Church of San Diego. I wish to continue serving on COMSU.

I grew up in an isolated area where *The Messenger* served as my church community; it was a critical component in my religious education. I feel COMSU provides an important service within the New Church, and I am eager to see new directions for communication open up.

In my ministry, my current focus is on using creativity and imagination to communicate our teachings and the understanding, hope, and salvation that they bring to those who live by them. I enjoy making Swedenborg's teachings accessible to people regardless of their walk in life or their understanding of faith; in other words, I want to share ideas in ways which are meaningful to the listener and in ways that those ideas can be heard. My current pet project is helping make the writings of Swedenborg available in Spanish.

Education Support Unit (EDSU)

Steve Thomas

I have been a member of the Church of the Good Shepherd since 1989. I have served the church in a variety of capacities throughout this time, including Board President for two years. I was co-chair of Convention 2004. Currently, I am in my 13th year as a consecrated Lay Leader. My main duties as Lay Leader is heading up our wedding ministry and the marriage preparation course offered to couples being married at our church. I also occasionally fill in behind the pulpit when called upon to do so.

I have taught Sunday School and served on our Worship and Education and our Church Community committees. For three years, I filled in for our full-time minister who served as President of Convention. This gave me valuable experience in leading and guiding a church.

In the future, I plan to work with our youth group which is one of the reasons I seek a position on EDSU.

(Continued on following page)

Meet the Nominees

(Continued from previous page)

I strongly believe in our youth and what they can offer the denomination. I hope to continue the good work that EDSU does in organizing mini-courses for convention as well as supporting the work of the Swedenborgian Church Youth League.

I consider it an honour to be nominated for this position and will consider it a privilege to serve if elected.

Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit (FPRSU)

Rev. Lana Sandahl

I received my Doctor of Chiropractic degree in 1981 and my Master of Divinity degree from the Pacific School of Religion in 2006. My 26 years of movement, bodywork, and spiritual medicine practice informs my appreciation of the relationship that exists between mind, body, and spirit. Through the gift and experience of touch, I am patiently and perpetually drawn closer to the wonder and mystery of the divine-human connection. I currently serve as Adjunct Minister of Rites and Sacraments at the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church.

Information Management Support Unit (IMSU)

Rev. David Brown

Greetings everyone! I am currently serving as Chapel Minister at Wayfarers Chapel after being ordained last summer at Urbana, and I am excited about utilizing my gifts of technological knowledge in advancing our current IMSU. I have taken graduate level courses in information systems including programming language, quantitative methods, and information systems management. However, it is my recent professional experience in the corporate world (e.g., banking, accounting, high-tech start-up) that I feel will have the greatest

impact on IMSU. For over six years, I have worked on the technical side of strategic and relationship marketing. This includes database analysis, database management, logistics, internet, intranet, website development and optimization, and search engine optimization. I look forward to implementing some of these skills to improve our current information systems.

Ministries Support Unit (MINSU)

Peter Brakman

In my career, I have worked as a journalist, as an administrator for a university art gallery, in public relations for an oil company and a bank holding company, and as a freelance speechwriter. My volunteer activities have included The Salvation Army; the Boy Scouts of America; public legal assistance programs; bringing art programs to low-income urban students and residents, incarcerated youth, and senior center residents; and delivering programs that provide food for hungry and food-insecure residents in Chester County, PA, where I live. I am the current President of the Swedenborgian Church at Temenos.

Ministries Support Unit

Rev. Doug Moss

I have led the Hillside Community Church in El Cerrito, CA, in various capacities for nearly three years. I was ordained as a minister in the Swedenborgian Church in 2005 and became pastor at Hillside shortly thereafter. Prior to that, I had worked in and managed several small businesses as well as writing for the *San Francisco Chronicle* and other publications. I am married and the father of two teenage daughters.

The past few years have shown me first-hand the needs of parish ministry. We have a vibrant and important message to share, but we all know most of our churches

are severely challenged with small congregations and limited funds. We must be as generous as possible to provide these ministries the wherewithal to grow, yet discerning enough to guard our precious resources.

Swedenborgian House of Studies (SHS)

Rev. Solomon Youngmin Kim

I have served Church of the Little Grain in New York for 24 years as both a devoted member and as a pastor. Our church is located in a culturally diverse section of Brooklyn. As a pastor, I have worked to build a relationship of understanding and respect among the communities in our neighborhood. I also provide spiritual support to patients of local hospitals and coordinate a group that provides entertainment and food for a local nursing home.

I have been deeply involved with the educational communities of New York City. I coordinated an after-school program for students who are having a difficult time academically. This program also educates new immigrant parents about how the New York City school system operates and their role as a parent of a student in a public school. My commitment to young people of diverse backgrounds has also been evident in the establishment of the Korean Youth Festival and the Senior/Youth Intergenerational Programs.

I have been the recipient of numerous awards for my contributions to the community including the Asian American Heritage Award, the Distinguished Ecumenical Award, various community service and leadership awards, and the Son of Micah Award.

It has been a great and joyful experience for me to serve SHS as a board of trustee member since 2004. With these experiences I intend to make SHS known to ethnic communities.

(Continued on following page)

Trump Organization Donates to Wayfarers Chapel

Mary Sabol

Mary Sabol received a check in the amount of \$902.70 from Mike van der Goes, the General Manager of Trump National Golf Club in Rancho Palos Verdes, California. This is the second year that the Trump Organization has donated a portion of the door proceeds from the January Bridal Faire Extravaganza to Wayfarers Chapel. For the third year, the Trump Organization has donated a four-color, quarter-page Chapel ad in

their Special Events Booklet that is given to all brides and special event people, valued at \$850.00.

Trump National Golf Club is located on the bluffs of the Palos Verdes Peninsula. It is open to the public and boasts beautiful waterfalls, biking and hiking trails. There are picnic tables for the local community to enjoy.

Mary Sabol is a Consultant for Wayfarers Chapel in Rancho Palos Verdes, California. She served as Chapel Public Relations Director 1995-2006. ☩



Mary Sabol and Mike van der Goes

Meet the Nominees

(Continued from previous page)

Swedenborgian House of Studies

Rev. Andy Stinson

I was born and raised in Maine. After graduating from high school, I joined the Army Reserve and attended the University of Southern Maine. In 1991, I graduated with degrees in Geography and History.

I then worked as a commercial diver and fisherman, eventually leaving fishing to attend Andover Newton Theological School and SSR in Newton, MA. I graduated in 1999 with a Completion Certificate for Ordination and a Masters of Divinity degree. I was ordained in the Swedenborgian Church the same year and accepted a call to the Elmwood New Church in East Bridgewater, MA, where I served for three years.

I also remained in the Army Reserve and was promoted to the rank of Captain, eventually becoming a Chaplain. From June 2002 to August 2006, I was on active duty in Fort Eustis, VA. In October 2006,

I accepted a call to the Church of the Holy City in Washington, D.C. I am single and live in Washington D.C. but continue to call Maine my home.

This would be my third term on the SHS board.

Committee on Admission to the Ministry (CAM)

Rev. Kenneth O. Turley

I have been in parish ministry since I was ordained in 1985. I began ministry as Director of, and helped in the process of reviving, the Blairhaven Retreat Center and Summer Church Camp. I have served parishes in Elmwood, MA, (3 yrs) and Portland, ME, (7 yrs). For the last 11 years, I have served in Fryerburg, ME. In 1998, I received an M.A. from the Swedenborgian School of Religion (SSR) in Swedenborgian Theology and the Performing Arts.

Over the past 22 years, I have served on the Committee On Worship, MINSU, and General Council. I have taught classes in worship and music at both SSR and SHS. I am

President of the Maine Association and Vice President of the Fryeburg New Church Assembly. I have supervised a number of SHS students in their camp experience at the Assembly.

I believe the new ministers coming out of SHS are essential to the growth and well-being of our denomination as they support and grow parish ministry and explore and develop new forms of ministry.

Nominating Committee

Rev. Deborah Winter, Southeast Association

I have been nominated to serve on the Nominating Committee. I have served on the Committee of Admissions, Executive Committee, Board of Inquiry, and I was Secretary for EDSU. I have enjoyed serving on these committees very much.

I am currently a children's therapist in Florida and have been doing family therapy for the past 15 years.

I would be honored to serve on the Nominating Committee. ☩

SCYL Opportunities for Fellowship

We continue to invite the teens to join us at Convention 2007, information provided at the top of the registration form on page 68.

We also have the following camp opportunities for 2007. Teens, mark the family calendar and start talking about it with your parents. We hope to see you there!

Memorial Day Weekend Teen Retreat. May 25–28, Fryeburg, Maine. The theme of this retreat is “Season of the Soul.” The cost of this retreat is \$50, but there are scholarship funds available for help with teen travel and the cost of attendance. If you need financial help to attend, contact Kurt and we can easily and confidentially help cover

costs. Our retreats are open to teens of all faiths, ages 13–18. Please contact Kurt with any questions and concerns, kfekete@hotmail.com or call Kurt at (866) 333-SCYL(7295).

Paulhaven Youth Camp. Paulhaven serves youth, ages 10 through 18. It is set for July 15–21, 2007, and we are having a Medieval theme this year. We plan to discuss the mask that we wear, what is behind it, and then look at the bible in the same light: what is underneath, how to uncover and discover it. For more info, write Dianne Epp-Roesinger, dianne_epp@hotmail.com

Almont Summer Camp. Almont is for all ages, although teens must have adult sponsors. It will

run the last full week of July, the 21st through the 29th. Almont’s theme this year is “Biblical Holidays.” Those interested in attending this year can contact registrar Barb Tourangeau at gmabarb373@aol.com or camp director Kevin Baxter at kevin@baxtonia.com for more info.

Fryeburg Assembly. This camp is also for all ages, and teens must have adult sponsors. This year, it will be the first two weeks of August, the 5th through the 19th. Folks can contact camp director Debbie Cook at deborahscook@cs.com for info.

—Kurt Fekete, SCYL
Youth Director ☒

The Price of a Child

The government calculated the cost of raising a child from birth to 18 and came up with \$160,140 for a middle income family. But \$160,140 isn’t so bad if you break it down. It translates into \$8,896 a year, \$741.38 a month, or \$171.08 a week. That’s a mere \$24.24 a day! Just over a dollar an hour. You might think the best financial advice says don’t have children if you want to be “rich.” It is just the opposite.

What do you get for your \$160,140? Naming rights: first, middle and last! Glimpses of God every day. Giggles under the covers every night. More love than your heart can hold. Butterfly kisses and Velcro hugs. Endless wonder over rocks, ants, clouds, and warm cookies. A hand to hold, usually covered with jam. A partner for blowing bubbles, flying kites, building sand castles, and skipping in the downpouring rain. Someone to laugh

yourself silly with no matter what the boss said. For \$160,140, you never have to grow up. You get to fingerprint, carve pumpkins, play hide and seek, catch lightning bugs, and never stop believing in Santa Claus.

You have an excuse to keep reading the adventures of Piglet and Pooh, watching Saturday morning cartoons, going to Disneyland, and wishing on stars. You get to frame rainbows, hearts, and flowers under refrigerator magnets and collect spray painted noodle wreaths for Christmas, hand prints set in clay for Mother’s Day, and cards with backward letters for Father’s Day.

For \$160,140, there is no greater bang for your buck. You get to be a hero for retrieving a Frisbee off the garage roof, taking the training wheels off the bike, removing a splinter, filling a wading pool, coaxing a wad of gum out of bangs, and coaching a baseball team that never

wins but always gets treated to ice cream.

You get a front row seat to history: witnessing the first step, first word, first bra, first date, and first time behind the wheel. You get another branch added to your family tree, and if you’re lucky, a long list of limbs in your obituary called grandchildren. You get an education in psychology, nursing, criminal justice, communications, and human sexuality that no college can match. In the eyes of a child, you rank right up there with God. You have all the power to heal a boo boo, scare away the monsters under the bed, patch a broken heart, police a slumber party, ground them forever, and love them without limits, so that one day they will, like you, love without counting the cost.

—Anonymous from *The Fryeburg New Church, December 2003 Bulletin* ☒

Mission and Goals for Sunday Schools

In May, 2005 the American New Church Sunday School Association Ad Hoc Committee on Vision, Mission and Goals completed a mission and goals document for consideration of the societies. Following is that document as submitted by Rev. John Maine, Chair.

Mission

Guided by the Lord in his Second Coming, the Sunday schools of the Swedenborgian Church seek to prepare children for lives of regeneration.

LOVE (Strategy and Goals)

The strategy by which the Sunday schools fulfill this mission is known by the acronym LOVE, which stands for Learning, Openness, Vitality and Emerging leadership.

Learning

Regeneration is a process of life-long learning, a growing encounter and maturing relationship with the Lord in his present Coming in the Spirit. Sunday schools seek to foster a love for learning about the Lord and His Holy Word that will teach what is truly loving and wise through the provision of compelling, age-appropriate learning experiences that are creative, challenging and fun.

Openness

The heavenly reality is a unity in diversity and the way to heaven is by many paths toward the one God known by many names. Sunday schools are open to all children as safe, affirming places that welcome and acknowledge their individual differences and provide them with opportunities to learn about people and paths different than their own.

Vitality

Everything of religion has to do with life and the life of religion is to do good with passion and joy. Sunday schools foster a sense of immediacy and relevance by grounding their teaching and process in the life-experience of the child and by encouraging the child to explore their gifts and apply their learning, thereby laying the basis for a useful and joy-filled life.

Emerging leadership

The Lord is coming now, that those who receive Him might be fulfilled in serving His purpose, the creation of a new world, the New Jerusalem. Sunday schools provide regular opportunities for children to take on increasing responsibilities in the life of the church that are recognized and celebrated by all, and which will prepare them for adult ministries of leading and evangelizing.

The Rev. John Maine is pastor of the Church of the Holy Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario. ☒

KIDS ANSWER

Why God Made Moms

How did God make mothers?

1. He used dirt, just like for the rest of us.
2. Magic plus super powers and a lot of stirring.
3. God made my Mom just the same like he made me. He just used bigger parts.

Why did God give you your mother and not some other Mom?

1. We're related.
2. God knew she likes me a lot more than other people's moms like me.

What kind of little girl was your Mom?

1. My Mom has always been my Mom and none of that other stuff.
2. I don't know because I wasn't there, but my guess would be pretty bossy.
3. They say she used to be nice.

What did Mom need to know about dad before she married him?

1. His last name.
2. Does he make at least \$800 a year? Did he say NO to drugs and YES to chores?

What would it take to make your Mom perfect?

1. Diet. You know, her hair. I'd diet, maybe blue.

If you could change one thing about your Mom, what would it be?

1. She has this weird thing about me keeping my room clean. I'd get rid of that.
2. I'd make my Mom smarter. Then she would know it was my sister who did it and not me.
3. I would like for her to get rid of those invisible eyes on her back.

—From <http://jmm.aaa.net.au>



Alliance of New Church Women Appeal for Funds

Katie Shelley, President

At Christmastime, a gift to my Dad was clearing out the attic, which had become a cumbersome time capsule of my childhood toys and school papers. From the outset of the attic project, I kept myself going (and throwing) with a mantra, "the objects are not the memories," and a clear vision of how my life moves forward regardless of the fate of my biology notes. However, I also found precious treasures that I thought were lost forever: jewelry that had belonged to my paternal grandmother, pearls given to me by my sister at her wedding, and my first-grade journal. It was a comfort to have a few things that connected me to my history, even as I said goodbye to other relics.

An unexpected gift from the past was there, too, in a pile of old birthday cards. Apparently, I had set the entire bunch aside, not realizing that there was still cash inside some of them. Those gifts, combined with assorted bills and coins from an old piggy bank I found, amounted to more than \$50! Though we

joked that the found money could be my storage fee at \$2.50 per year of attic use, my Dad insisted I take it as gas money for the long trip home.

The life and needs of the church keep moving forward, too. If you could look inside the attic of the Alliance of New Church Women, there is a wealth of a legacy that has been passed down from women for generations. But that old "birthday money" will not be there forever. We must contribute back into the stream of life to keep the usefulness flowing. Year after year, money given in the form of dues, mite box donations, and general fund contributions allow the women of the Alliance to maintain regular giving to our church's camps in Almont and Fryeburg, the Swedenborg House of Studies, the Youth League, Gathering Leaves, and to individuals such as Kei Torita in Japan. All of these gifts are given to people and groups who can spread the gift to others in the form of ministry. So, even though it may, at times, go to something as mundane as "gas money", the gift

really goes much further. Consider that a gift of \$50 would be less than \$1 a week for one year. Would you give \$1 of "gas money" once a week to a young woman in your church so that she could attend a Swedenborgian gathering? Maybe that is one way of thinking about what our legacy will be to the next generation.

I thank you in advance for your help in keeping this organization alive and moving forward into the future. ☩

Women's Alliance Officers, 2007-2008

President: Katie Shelley

1st Vice President:
Thelma Hawkins

2nd Vice President: Beth Harvie

Secretary: Barb Tourangeau

Treasurer: Jeannette Hille

Mite Box Chair:
Barbara Boxwell

Religious Chair: Sage Currie

Publication Chair: Open

Round Robin Chair:
Marilee Phinney

Nominating Committee Chairs:
(2007) Polly Baxter
(2008) Betsy Coffman
(2009) Nancy Freestone
(2010) Denyse Daurat
(2011) Missy Sommer ☩

Membership Form

North American Alliance of Swedenborgian Women

MAIL TO: Jeannette Hille, 4240 Larch Pl. N, Plymouth MN 55442

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____

Membership: \$5.00 Mite Box \$_____ General Fund Giving \$_____

Total Enclosed \$_____

Please make your check to North American Alliance of Swedenborgian Women (or N. Am. Alliance) and return it to Jeanette Hille by May 31, 2007.

Impressions of China

Dear Editor,

I recently read an article about China in the January issue of the Messenger. My wife and I have lived and worked in China for several years. As Christians in China, we were able to worship legally and openly with our Chinese brothers and sisters. The church we attended regularly was part of the protestant church in China, and we worshipped with Christian friends at homes and other non-registered sites. None of these worship places were illegal, but some Christians still prefer to practice their faith privately having experienced or fearing the criticism that was rampant during the Cultural Revolution.

As a teacher, I noticed that most of what my students knew about the U.S. came from Chinese news or Hollywood movies. Most of what I knew about China came from reports of dramatic and repressive events. As I read Mrs. Tafel's report I wondered about the sources of her statements about "a

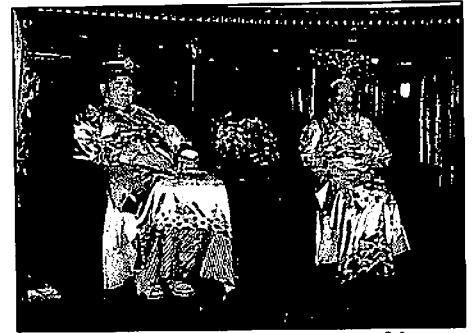
professional class of beggars" and health insurance and her opinions about individual freedoms and totalitarianism. Did her tour guides in China give her this information?

We have a lot of negative history to overcome in order to fully educate ourselves about the complexity of China that tourism and media do not present.

In China I was surprised by how lightly Chinese people traveled. People may take a week long trip with only a toothbrush, a washcloth and perhaps a change of clothes. If we were to travel, as Jesus did, unburdened and with an openness to welcoming God's presence in everyone, we would find that we are given more than we can carry home.

I was blessed to meet people in China who are deeply faithful and who do not hold bitterness or animosity toward their country. I wish to stand beside them and work together to solve problems that we face as a global community.

—Greg Huang-Dale, Fryeburg New Church ☩



Rev. Harvey and Mareta Tafel.

RESPONSE

Dear Editor,

I am overjoyed to hear about the more open practice of religion in China. When I studied Chinese history, the country was in the midst of the Cultural Revolution. We never imagined that we would be able to visit China. Our tour guide gave us a hard line about religion, yet I got the feeling that he would have said more if he had not been inhibited by something. All of our encounters with the Chinese public were mixed with friendliness and the need to sell to us. Our tour guide in Shanghai told us about the beggar situation.

—Mareta Tafel ☩

Council of Ministers

Eric Allison

I am pleased to report that the Council is becoming increasingly professional in its level of operation. The standards for acceptance of those in the ministries have been raised, and all members are required to have some professional training each year to maintain their status as a voting member of the Council. We have a periodic E-newsletter for the ministers. The Council is using peer supervision more than ever. The creative energy in the council is certainly flowing, and we are blessed with many very talented people bringing forth innovative ideas. It is inspiring for us to meet together and see how the Lord has blessed us

with such vision.

Being aware of the serious financial crunch, every member of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers has given at least \$100 to Convention. Our goal is to enlist every single minister to give at least that amount. It is our hope that we could lead the denomination toward a new level of giving. Convention treasurer Larry Conant has pointed out that if every member of Convention gave \$100, we would not have a deficit. It is that easy. There has been a culture for a long time of not giving to the denomination but expecting something to be given to us. That way of thinking has been slowly taking

the vitality away from our denomination, and we are quickly running out of money. I believe it is time to replace that old model with the view that when we all give, our power to work together increases and the blessings flow more freely.

At this year's Convention, Swedenborgian author and inspirational speaker Vaishali will lead the main training session for the Council. Having someone of her caliber meeting with us is pretty exciting. The New Jerusalem is unfolding.

Rev. Eric Allison is the Chair of the Council of Ministers and Pastor of the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound in Redmond, Washington. ☩

News and Announcements

Cheryl Honey, Winner of the 2007 Jefferson Award

Cheryl Honey, Parishioner of the Church of Puget Sound, Redmond, Washington, received the 2007 Jefferson Award, also called "The Noble Prize" of service. The award honors ordinary people who do extraordinary things for other people. Cheryl is the very embodiment of a person who overcame considerable adversity as a single "welfare mother" of four children. She founded the Family Support Network <http://familynetwork.org/> whose mission is to weave a grassroots web of support for young and old alike and create a more caring, just, and civil society. Because of her, you can sign up to offer a gift of help to another person or connect with someone who can help you.

The Decade to Overcome Violence, 2001-2010

The Massachusetts Council of Churches has designated 2001-2010 as "The Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace." At a recent gathering, a workshop was held entitled "The Daughters of Abraham: a Women's Interfaith Book Group" and was led by three women—a Christian minister, a Jewish woman, and a Muslim woman. The idea is that women of three Abrahamic faiths meet to deepen their knowledge of each other's faiths. Anyone interested in starting a book group or interested in joining one can go to www.DaughtersofAbraham.info.

Wayfarers Offering Swedenborgian Theology Courses

Wayfarers Chapel, Rancho Palos

Verdes, California, is offering "The Swedenborgian Theology Course" which will run for eight weeks, April 18–June 6. Attendees will use the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg to enhance their understanding of Jesus, the Bible, and their own personal spiritual journeys. The 8-week course is for anyone interested in learning more about the teachings and history of The Swedenborgian Church.

Wayfarers is also offering a book club on Thursdays, April 9–June 7, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. The focus will be on "The Life of Angels". Emanuel Swedenborg reported that angels are human beings just like us; but while we have physical bodies, angels have spiritual bodies. How do angels live? What do they wear? How do they communicate? What jobs do they perform? How do they worship? Attendees will read the answers to these questions while asking themselves the essential question: How can we prepare here and now for the life of Heaven?

For more information on these classes, contact jonathanm@wayfarerschapel.org

Pacific Coast Association 2007 Annual Meeting

The Pacific Coast Association is comprised of the five Swedenborgian Churches on the West Coast. This year's meeting will be held at the Ralston White Retreat Center in Mill Valley, California, August 24–26. The San Francisco Swedenborgian Church will be hosting this year's meetings. For more information, please contact Stelli Munnis at (415) 346-6466, ext. 10, or info@sfs swedenborgian.org.

A Blessing

By Rev. Kathy Spears

As we breathe deeply, we open our hearts to receive the God of all life, the source, the sustenance, the home. Holy One, hear the prayers of the many, urgent prayers for healing in our hearts, our families, our communities, our nation, our beautiful mother earth. Grant us the grace to allow God's infinite spaciousness and peace into the busyness and constraints of our daily lives. Let us breathe our many worries, our many hurts, our many days into the infinite, absolute, eternal peace of the One. As we breathe in the breath of God, let us cherish ourselves. As we breathe out the breath of life, let us cherish the world.

Amen. ☩

Church Calendar 2007

May 5, 2007
Investment Committee
Newton, MA

May 17, 2007
Wayfarers Board Conference Call

June 24-27, 2007
Council of Ministers Meets
Hope College, Holland, Michigan

June 27-July 1, 2007
Convention 2007
Hope College, Holland, Michigan

June 27, 2007
General Council
Hope College, Holland, Michigan

July 1, 2007
General Council
Hope College, Holland, Michigan ☩

Births

Brown—Mikayla Lin Brown, born February 9, 2007, 5 lb. 15 oz, to proud and happy parents Rev. Dave and Amara Brown. Dave is a new minister at Wayfarers Chapel, Rancho Palos Verdes, California.

Baptism

James—Maeve Eliza-Rose, daughter of Martha James Steadman and Cory Jackson, was baptized into the Christian faith February 25, 2007, at the Fryeburg New Church, Fryeburg, Maine. Rev. Ken Turley officiated.

Confirmations

Mullen—David Mullen became a member of the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound, Washington March 22, 2007. David had been attending and supporting the church in many ways for the past two years, and the church welcomes him as a member.

David and Emily Hames, Bill and Michelle Nielson, Lynn Anderson and Jackson Buxton, and Terry Madden were confirmed into the New Church March 18th, 2007, at the Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church in St. Paul, Minnesota. Rev. Eric Hoffman officiated.

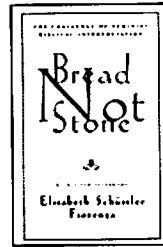
Deaths

Oswald—Patricia Oswald, a long-time member of the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church who often spoke of her awareness of the spiritual world, departed from this world November 15, 2006. She is survived by her husband of more than 60 years, Chuck Oswald. A memorial service for Pat was held at the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, November 18, 2006. Rev. Rachel Rivers officiated.

Thurston—Violet (Hutchins) Thurston entered the spiritual world March 1, 2007, in Fryeburg, Maine. A family service will be held May 12, 2007. Rev. Ken Turley will be officiating. ☛

Mind Your "He's" and "She's"

Bread Not Stone, The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation



by Elisabeth Shussler
Fiorenza (Beacon
Press, publishers)

Reviewed by Sylvia
Cantu

I am the guest editor for this month's issue, and my idea was to present you readers with articles focused on mothering and women and the divine feminine in honor of Mother's Day. I spent a large amount of time looking for writings on the feminine aspects of God. But while looking for the feminine face of God, I found *Bread Not Stone*, a book that talked about a "feminist biblical interpretation." I was dispassionate, at best, when I opened the book. I expected that the author would simply tell me to substitute the word "she" for "he." Instead, I was pleasantly surprised to have been presented with new (to me) ideas about the written words of God.

The author focuses on the fact that the Bible was written in a patriarchal society; therefore, it is "androcentric" or "male-focused." She says that we need to find the essence of the messages of the Bible, and that those messages are not sexist. Further, she believes that "sexist language creates the linguistic invisibility and marginality of women" and suggests that if language is so very powerful, perhaps we need to stop using simple words.

In the stories of the women of the Bible, women are often portrayed, at first glance, as dependent, derived from men, and character-

ized by stereotypical roles and images. Biblical stories that focus on women tend to focus on them only if they are exceptional women or presenting a problem. If the reader is not careful, those stories can trivialize women's contributions.

What is worse is that the Bible has been used as a weapon against women. She warns us to be careful not to use the androcentric text of the Bible to reinforce patriarchal structures and inculcate oppressive values. As an extreme example, let's say a Christian woman is an abusive situation with her non-Christian husband. The minister might counsel that the Bible says the wife should remain submissive to the husband so that he might be won over [to the Lord] without a word. [Ref.: 1 Peter 3:1]

Women are known to use the Bible against themselves as well. The Winkler trial, wherein the wife shot her husband who was a minister, will be interesting to watch from that standpoint. The defendant has already made statements that she was evil even though her attorneys maintain that she was physically and emotionally abused.

So it would be better for us not to read the Bible and substitute "he" with "she" on a whim. Instead, we should keep in mind that references are male and female simultaneously. If we can mentally remove the androcentric language, we can see the messages of hope and love and courage for all of us. And by reading the Bible with new eyes, we will become enlightened in new ways. ☛

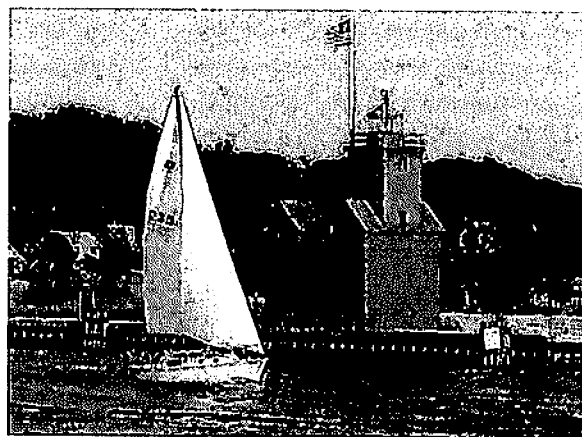
Emanuel Swedenborg was born January 29, 1688, in Stockholm, Sweden. Although he never intended a church denomination to be founded or named after him, a society was formed in London 15 years after his death. This 1787 organization eventually spawned the present General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. 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.

PRE-CONVENTION MOTORCOACH TOUR HURRY!! SIGN UP NOW!!

We have a tour planned on a deluxe motorcoach that will depart June 25 from the 2007 Convention site at Hope College in Holland, Michigan. We will travel up the west shore of Michigan's lower peninsula and stay overnight in Mackinaw City with its lovely beaches and excellent views of the Mackinac Bridge. Tuesday, June 26, the bus will return by a different route with some spectacular inland visits and eventually turning west back to Hope College.

The fee of \$120 covers one night in a hotel, entrance, charter, and National and State Park fees. Lunch and dinner costs on tour days are yours. Please note that since the tour departs on Monday morning, you will need to arrive at the Convention site by Sunday night, June 24.

Would you like to be a part of this wonderful two-day tour? The Pre-convention Motor Coach Tour cannot take place without a minimum number of people. If you want to be part of it, please contact Sandy Coveart immediately. Sandy can be reached at scoveart@charter.net or (989) 636-7674. ☩



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