

the Messenger

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The Deep Darkness that Was Dispersed by Christ's Life

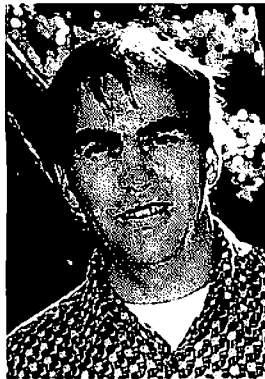
By Steve Sanchez

Swedenborg claims that Christ's advent into our world prevented a cosmic imbalance toward evil that would have caused humankind to be lost forever in darkness. In today's scholarship such a claim about the spiritual state of the world at that time represents a pretty radical idea, and the quite sensible question arises: What historical evidence exists by which we can demonstrate the truth of Swedenborg's claim? By looking at this question we can gain new insight into why the Lord came to Earth when He did, and how He prepared the way for His incarnation.

There isn't space here to probe all religions of the world at that time, but it will be illuminating to explore the Jewish religion in the part of the world where Jesus appeared. This is particularly important in light of Swedenborg's claim that there had to be a representative church operative in the world at all times to maintain the conjunction between the Lord's kingdom and the whole earth. The Jewish religion fulfilled this need by means of the Word of the Old Testament. The irony of it is that they did it by becoming representative of a holy external, without an internal connection. To begin to understand the dynamics of this, let

us take a journey back to the spiritual state of affairs of the world into which Jesus was born.

The Externals Ruled Spiritual Life in Mediterranean Society at the Time of Christ



Bruce Malina, a leading historical anthropologist, argues that the Mediterranean people had become deeply mired in a honor/shame society before the time of Christ (see *The New Testament World, Insights from cultural Anthropology*). He writes that the main desire of the virtuous man was to maintain his honor rat-

ing in the eyes of society. A virtuous

The people didn't believe, as many moderns do, that there is a heaven of great comfort; they believed that the afterlife was an empty existence, and it didn't matter whether one lived a moral life or not; everyone went there.

woman was devoted to her husband and family and knew how to safeguard her family's honor and teach the children accordingly. The Mediterranean people saw themselves through the eyes of others because to attain honor

required a grant of reputation by others. Malina writes, "Now in the first century Mediterranean world, every social interaction that takes place outside one's family and outside one's circle of friends is perceived as a challenge to honor, a mutual attempt to acquire honor from one's social equal. . . . Because of this constant and steady cue in Mediterranean culture, anthropologists call it an agonistic culture. The word *agon* is Greek for an athletic contest between equals of any sort" (Malina 37).

This sketch of the Mediterranean personality gives an idea of how the people were externally motivated in almost all their actions. Likewise, everywhere in his discussion of the Jews, Swedenborg emphasizes the almost completely external nature of their worship: "It certainly was not anything internal which affected them, for they did not know at all, nor indeed wish to know, what was internal . . ." (A.C. 4293). Similarly Malina says, "The New Testament depicts persons and events concretely, from the outside, so to say. They avoid introspection as uninteresting, and evaluate behavior on the basis of externally perceptible activity . . ."

This implies not that the person is incapable of internal reflection, but that he or she seems to avoid it completely because it is of no value to them. Swedenborg, speaking specifically of New Testament Jews, says that the Jews were providentially prevented from internal reflection in general, and about the Word and Christ in particu-

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October SCYL Teen Happenings • "The Genius of George Inness": a Response
The San Diego Church's 125th Anniversary • Straight from the Heart

The Editor's Desk

A Christmas Story



Most of Our Canadian readers are familiar with this story, or most of it, but many Americans may not be.

On the morning of December 6, 1917, the largest man-made explosion until the atomic age, rivaling the 9/11 disaster in scale, unfolded in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The French freighter *Mont-Blanc* and the Norwegian freighter *Imo* mixed signals in the narrow section of Halifax Harbor and collided. They were not in danger of sinking, but a fire erupted on the *Mount-Blanc* that quickly spread. The Norwegian crew tried to douse the fire, not understanding the warning shouts from the French crew abandoning their ship on lifeboats that the cargo was munitions and explosives.

Correction: The title on Page 129 of the November *Messenger* should have read "Annual Swedenborgian Worship Service at the Annual Johnny Appleseed Festival in Fort Wayne, Indiana."

Church Calendar

December 27–30, 2008: SCYL Winter Retreat • Almont, Michigan

January 29–31, 2009: Wayfarers Chapel Board of Managers • Rancho Palos Verdes, California

April 4: General Council web-conference meeting

April 11: SHS Board of Trustees web-conference meeting

June 25–28: Annual Convention • Seattle, Washington

Halifax, after all, was booming as the primary North American port for ships headed to Europe to aid the British war effort.

Bystanders gathered at the docks and at windows to watch the spectacle. The *Mount-Blanc* drifted into a pier, and the unspeakable happened. It exploded with the force of 3 kilotons (the atomic bomb in Hiroshima was 13 kilotons), obliterating the ship and the Richmond District of Halifax, creating a tsunami that sucked survivors onshore into the harbor, and sweeping the *Imo* onto the opposite shore. Hot metal rained from the sky over a four-mile radius, followed by ten minutes of black rain (coal dust from the ship) that covered everything. Spectators at windows were showered by shattered glass, causing widespread eye injury and blindness.

When the dust had settled, one square mile of Halifax and Dartmouth (across the harbor) was essentially leveled; 630 homes were destroyed, many by fires that quickly spread following the explosion; 12,000 houses were damaged; 6,000 people were left without shelter; almost every window in a ten-mile radius was shattered; and thousands were dead, injured, or missing.

What happened next was as astounding as the explosion. Military disaster crews, fire companies, doctors, and nurses—emergency workers of all sorts—mobilized immediately. With the assistance of other citizens they began fighting fires and finding and treating survivors. Emergency aid and relief efforts began as soon as news arrived by telegraph across Canada and the United States.

By 10 PM on the evening of December 6, the Boston Red Cross and the Massachusetts Public Safety Committee had mobilized, organized, and sent off a six-train convoy of medical supplies, potable water, doctors, nurses,

and trained emergency personnel.

The trains sped through the night; on straight stretches through the Sebas-ticook River Valley they reached speeds of over 100 mph. Scheduled trains were directed onto sidings—but I'll let the late John Gould, who for many years wrote the column "Dispatch from the Farm" for *The Christian Science Monitor*, share his father's memory of what the towns of Maine on that main line experienced that night.

Gould's father was a railway postal clerk (sorting mail overnight) on the Bangor & Boston Railroad's RPO (railway post office) for 42 years. On the early morning of December 7, 1917, he wondered why his train, the crack *Maritime Express*, Boston to Halifax and return, pulled onto a siding at Newport, Maine. Gould describes it

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Learning by Ministry with "Living Human Documents"



by Robert Leas

Almost every Swedenborgian preparing for professional ministry takes a unit of CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education). Students serve and learn through ministry at general medical hospitals, including private, university, military, and veterans facilities; prisons, hospices, where care for the dying takes place; psychiatric facilities; community hospitals; and a few in parishes and congregations. Especially today, there is a need for chaplains in rehabilitation centers and in work with the addicted.

In the past few years, more and more of the students at the Swedenborgian House of Studies at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, Califor-

nia, have chosen to go into chaplaincy or chaplaincy-related ministries. For these people, a minimum of four units of CPE are required by most health care facilities. Four units are also required by the Association for Professional Chaplains to become a board certified chaplain.

Clinical Pastoral Education is interfaith professional education for the pastorate. It brings theological students and ministers into supervised encounters with people in crisis. Out of an intense involvement with people in need and reflection with peers and supervisors, students develop new awareness of themselves and of the needs of those to whom they minister.

From theological reflection about specific human situations, the student gains a new understanding of ministry. Books, lectures, exegesis of the Greek and Hebrew text, and preaching are important preparations for ministry, but the student can also learn from encounters with what Anton Boisen, the founder of CPE, called "living human documents." In CPE, within the interdisciplinary team process of helping individuals, the student develops ways of care giving in interpersonal and interprofessional relationships.

A seminary professor said, "The clinical context is a major forum to encounter the many facets of human need. It is a place to relate pastoral theology to real life setting. It is the greatest contribution to leadership produced by the modern church."

Dr. Cushman McGiffert Jr., former President of Chicago Theological Seminary, said that the influence of CPE on theological education centered in four basic aspects:

1. CPE made the seminary student

Induction into a British Ministry

by Catherine Lauber

There is a very important piece in the ordination process. It comes after all the reading and writing, the field education, and the "STEPS," after answering the call to serve a congregation, and even after the ordination ceremony. It's called the induction, and it is the formal ceremony where minister



Derby New Church Induction: (L. to R.) Rev. Catherine Lauber, Rev. Rita Russell, and Rev. Mary Duckworth—September 28, 2008.

and congregation acknowledge their responsibilities to the ministry and make a commitment to each other.

I had the blessing of two induction ceremonies in September, at Derby and Oaklands, and I was a little surprised by the power of the ceremony. Both services were very moving, and I felt a special, spiritual connection with each congregation. The induction ceremonies provided the missing piece of the puzzle in providing a community of people with whom I will serve, learn, and grow, and with the Lord's help we will fulfill this ministry together. ☪

Rev. Catherine Lauber was ordained in July, 2008, by The General Convention. She was called to ministry by The General Conference in England.

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October SCYL Teen Happenings

by Kurt Fekete

In the month of October the teens of the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL) gathered for three wonderful weekends.

Massachusetts

The first retreat took place over Columbus Day weekend at the Blairhaven Retreat Center in South Duxbury, Massachusetts. Rev. Lee Woofenden, Rev. Kevin Baxter, and I led interesting sessions and worship services with twelve teens on the theme "Friends are Friends Forever—Living in Heavenly Community."

One highlight of these retreat sessions was creating collages. The teens were asked to create a visual picture of their soul with their core value or essence at the center, with meaningful images spanning around the cen-



The Blairhaven group

ter (most important around the center, less important toward the outside edges). The creations that the teens made were nothing short of amazing (see pictures).

At Blairhaven, the teens learned all

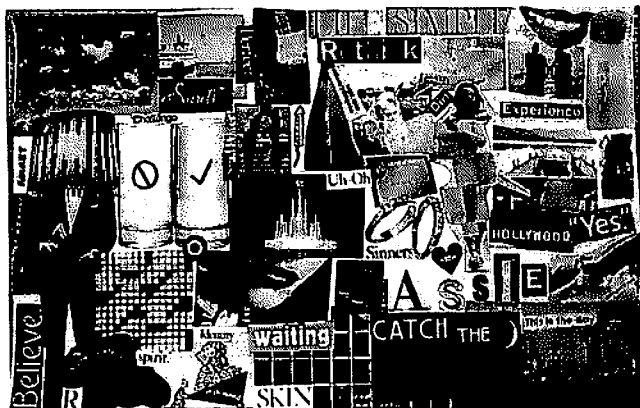
about what it means to be a friend, what qualities good friends have, and what it is like to enter the afterlife and live together in heavenly community. Recreational activities included killer croquet, Kingston Bay mudwalks, disco bowling, and a sundae-making movie party. What an incredibly fun and meaningful retreat this was.

Michigan

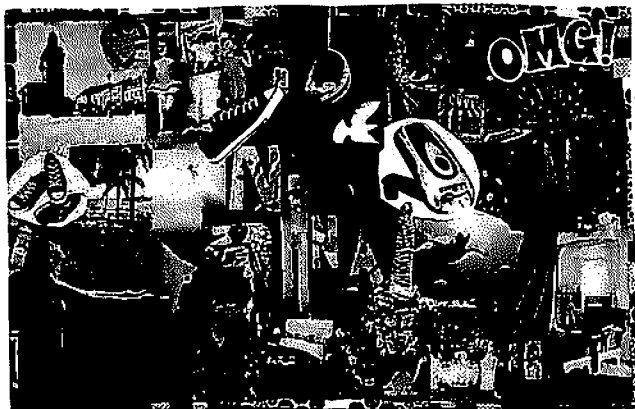
The next retreat was over October 24–26. I joined youth leaders Lori Steinhiser, Dawn Fox, and nine teens from Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio at Rose's Retreat Cabins and

Campsites, a small campground near Grand Junction, Michigan. The theme for this retreat was "Finding Your Way," and early discussions focused on physical wilderness survival techniques and strategies, including a bow drill fire starting demonstration lead by instructor David Rose. Later sessions focused on spiritual survival, in which we talked about how to cope with spiritual darkness, what to do when we encounter loss of faith, and methods to avoid becoming spiritually lost. All of the spiritual points were matched to a corresponding critical physical survival skill: staying warm = allowing God's Love in and staying hydrated = finding truth = protecting one's self from falsity (contaminated water sources).

The teens also played a game of Hounds and Hares where they traversed nature trails following a marked path in search of hidden treasure. Of course, no camping adventure is complete without a hordog roast and s'mores over an open campfire. The group departed Sunday morning after a closing prayer circle. I am happy to report that there were no casualties during this survival retreat. Everyone made it home alive, we hope with a few



Nina Sasser's collage



Cassie Young's collage

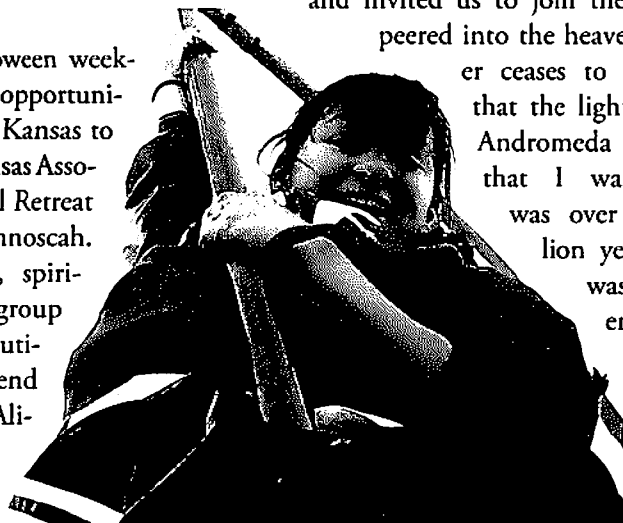


The Michigan/Indiana/Ohio teen group relaxing in the cabin. (left to right) Randy Mashak, Vincent Carroll, Xavier Carroll, Janice Earls, Audrey Gray, Naomi Anderson, Cody Steinhiser, and Matt Powers.

more tools to remain warm, confident, and secure in the face of adverse physical and spiritual conditions.

Kansas

Over Halloween weekend, I had the opportunity to travel to Kansas to attend the Kansas Association Annual Retreat at Camp Mennoscah. Here a small, spiritually strong group hosted a beautiful little weekend retreat. Rev. Alison Lane-Olson led discussions on the theme,



McKenzie Galliant happy to be at Camp Mennoscah.

"Dreams." I was asked to present an afternoon session on my work with the youth. I was also blessed to meet teen McKenzie Galliant, a bubbly 13-year-old girl from Pawnee Rock. The weather was unseasonably warm and sunny so we spent most of the time outdoors, walking the camp trails, wading in the Ninnescah River, talking on the swings, and playing games. It was such a gift to be able to spend so much time with one teen in such a peaceful setting.

Saturday evening a group of amateur astronomers from Wichita set up huge reflector telescopes at the camp and invited us to join them as they peered into the heavens. It never ceases to amaze me that the light from the Andromeda Galaxy that I was viewing was over two million years old. It was a perfect end to both a dream-centered retreat and a busy month of teen activities.

While walking in the woods, McKenzie mentioned to me that it was important to walk observantly. I smiled, nodded, and told her that this was good advice. May we all remember to walk observantly and touch the souls of those around us with care and understanding. ☪

Kurt Fekete is the youth director of the Swedenborgian Church.

Learning by Ministry

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"shock-proof" in preparation for the parish.

2. CPE helped students begin to understand themselves better.
3. CPE had a practice of good soul-care.
4. CPE involved other professionals to provide a contextual environment for learning.

From its beginning in 1925, CPE was a form of theological education that took place not exclusively in the academic classroom but in clinical settings where ministry could be practiced. In its origins, the goal of CPE was not to introduce a new theology but to introduce a new method grounded in the experiential exploration of the life story of individuals and society. This method can bring new understanding of the foundation of religious experience. A pragmatic approach—gathering evidence of human existence and using it to derive the essence of the religious experience of the divine—made the CPE method unique. How does the belief of a person, his or her relationship to God, impact life? Emanuel Swedenborg once wrote, "The human race is the seminary of heaven."

The elements of CPE include:

- Practice of ministry to and with individuals
- Verbatim reporting and evaluation of the practice
- Supervision by an ACPE certified supervisor
- A theological perspective on all elements of the program
- A specific period, usually ten weeks
- A small group of peers, not exceeding six
- An individual contract for learning

The "textbooks" for CPE include study of the "living human document." By living human documents

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"The Genius of George Inness": a Response

by Erni Martin

Andrew Butterfield, in the September 25, 2008 issue of *The New York Review of Books*, explores the work, impact, and influence of George Inness, the 19th century American painter, in an article titled "The Genius of George Inness," with specific reference to four current books.



Butterfield acknowledges at the start that the works of George Inness "have always provoked strong reactions and intense debate. . . . [C]ritics called his paintings diseased and perverted while his fans consider him one of the leading landscape painters of the world."

Among his fans were Swedenborgians who were entranced by the ways in which the art of Inness gave expression to his Swedenborgian faith. Present-day fans delighted in Butterfield's positive review, with the exception of a brief, one-paragraph, reference to Swedenborg. The reviewer stated,

He (Inness) took great interest in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, the Swedish mystic and philosopher, and joined a Swedenborgian church in the 1860s. Today this mystic is routinely dismissed as a crank, but in the 19th century he was considered a genius of the first order, someone of the status of Plato or Newton.

Like Inness, Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) is a controversial figure. A small bank of followers speak of him as an emissary of the Divine. Skeptics say that his mystical writings are no longer relevant.

Whatever position one takes, it seems presumptuous for the reviewer

to declare that Swedenborg "is routinely dismissed as a crank." Butterfield does not say just what he means by the word. Google lists 33,700,000 references to *crank*, including synonyms like *ill-tempered*, *eccentric*, *grouchy*, *crackpot*, *kook*, and *overzealous*.

Butterfield gives no supporting evidence for his judgment. Missing are any references to historians or theologians. How would such references stand up against positive studies and evaluations of recent decades? The New Century Edition of Swedenborg's works, with fresh translations and exciting format, has met with wide acclaim. Contemporary films on the impact of Swedenborg on people like William Blake, Helen Keller, and Johnny Appleseed are often shown to enthusiastic audiences on public television.

There is obviously a gulf or chasm between the spiritual and material per-

Whatever position one takes, it seems presumptuous for the reviewer to declare that Swedenborg "is routinely dismissed as a crank."

spectives on life, or the scientific and the mystical. A person who denies the reality of the spiritual dimension is apt to call the mystic a *crank*, just as I am inclined to think of devotees of the Left Behind series of books about the last times as kooks.

We note the fervor of extremists of both political parties in the recent presidential election campaign. Observers are troubled by the polarization represented by the red and blue states, and wonder if a common ground is possible. On issues like abortion and gay rights, passions run high, and there is the inclination to dismiss opponents

not only as unreasonable but as evil.

My hypothesis is that reviewer Butterfield has great respect for Inness the painter but cannot accept his religious views and his adherence to the mysticism of Swedenborg. One way of resolving this conflict is to label Swedenborg a crank. Discussion ended.

Are there more constructive ways of resolving conflict? Consider the academic world. Harvard College was founded to educate a learned ministry in the new world. As it evolved into a university, Harvard was often criticized for *destroying* the religious faith of its students. One Harvard president responded that the academic pursuit may sometimes lead to the giving up of the naïve faith acquired at mother's knee but progress to a more mature outlook.

Harvard is not thought of today as a bastion of Protestant Christianity, and yet it continues to honor the endowment for the annual "Ingersoll Lectures on Human Immortality," established in 1893. These lectures have been given by William James, Paul Tillich, Carol Zaleski and more than a hundred others. The 2001-2002 lecture was given by Professor Huston Smith, who focused on the mystical experiences of Swedenborg. Lecturers are not censored; speakers are free to declare their conviction of the truth of immortality, or the *impossibility* of continuation of the personality after death.

Many in the academic world, including scientists, theologians, and philosophers are aware of crude depictions of immortality held through the ages, and they don't want to be associated with such beliefs. They are familiar with cartoons in *The New Yorker*, picturing angels flitting about the clouds, complaining of ill-fitting nighties, and halos that slip down, and harps that

A Christmas Story

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this way:

Just before the Newport sidetrack switch shanty, the engineer got a red board, and deftly he braked the train and came to a stop by the Newport railroad station, where the night telegrapher handed up a dispatcher's change of orders. My dad seemed to think it was about 2 AM, on the seventh. The switchman fixed the track, and the long train backed and then ran ahead to be off the main iron.

Nobody aboard the train had any notion about why the train had been

sidetracked.

On the Newport siding that morning, my dad cleaned up his sorting table, spread out some empty mail bags to make a bed, and napped. He figured they were on the siding about an hour when an unscheduled train swooshed by east-bound on the main line, doing well over 100 mph, with its whistle cord tied down. This roused him and he readjusted his sacks and went back to sleep.

Then, at five-minute intervals, five other trains howled by in the night, whistles screeching. There was no way of knowing what was

are off tune. They are also embarrassed by literal interpretations of scripture where the holy city New Jerusalem has gates of pearls and streets of gold.

During the last two centuries, thousands of serious books have been published on mysticism, angelology, and near-death experiences. In 1988, McDannell and Lang collaborated on *Heaven—A History*, which included a lengthy section titled "Swedenborg and the Emergence of a Modern Heaven." The authors declare on one hand that "the popularity of books about near-death experiences, such as Raymond Moody's *Life After Life*, underscores the continuing interest in first-hand accounts of the other world." On the other hand, they conclude, "The modern heaven—exemplified by the visions of Swedenborg, the writings of Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, and Mormon theology—has become the minority perspective during the twentieth century. Rich and detailed accounts of the afterlife, accepted in the nineteenth century, are labeled absurd, crude, materialistic, or sheer nonsense."

The battle continues to rage in the fields of physics, philosophy, psychology, and religion as to the rationale for believing in the spiritual world or life after death. The British and American

Societies for Psychical Research have amassed huge files of case studies in an effort to *prove* immortality to the scientific world. The strict scientific model does not allow for a realm of reality that goes beyond the material dimension. Most psychologists equate the mind with the brain and find no basis for believing in a soul that exists apart from the brain.

Swedenborgian Helen Keller said,

My mystic world is lovely with trees and clouds and stars and eddying streams I have never "seen." I am often conscious of beautiful flowers and birds and laughing children where to my seeing associates there is nothing. They skeptically declare that I see "light that never was on sea or land." But I know that their mystic sense is dormant, and that is why there are so many barren places in their lives.

Butterfield's review of the genius of Inness the artist was brilliant, but it is disappointing that he seems to betray an anti-mystical perspective and found it unnecessary to substantiate his judgment and identify those authorities who *routinely dismiss Swedenborg as a crank*. ☞

Rev. Ernest O. Martin is a retired minister living in Duvall, Washington.

afoot, but the postal clerks presumed their train had been taken off the main iron to give the right of way to something that ran in six sections. And they were right, except that they didn't find out until daylight when their train got orders to proceed and arrived in Bangor at breakfast time. ("The Halifax Disaster, Seen from a Railway Post Office." *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 20, 2002)

Imagine the mixture of excitement and fear children and adults alike felt, aroused from slumber with a spine-tin-gling chill by those piercing whistles.

The trains struggled over the last miles of the journey, as a blizzard had struck Nova Scotia and eventually dropped sixteen inches of snow on Halifax. But the rescue workers arrived a mere thirty hours after the disaster, and their efforts saved many lives and palliated many injuries. The final toll was 1950 lives lost and 9000 injured.

By now you are probably asking yourself, "Where is the Christmas part of this story?" Here is the final chapter.

In 1971 the Nova Scotia Tree Growers Association sent a 50-foot Balsam Fir to the City of Boston as thanks for the aid it provided in the 1917 disaster.

Every Christmas since then Boston has received a 45–50-foot Christmas tree from Nova Scotia, now sent by the provincial government, in thanks and remembrance. The lighting of that tree in The Prudential Plaza has become a favorite holiday event for Boston's denizens, anticipated as a high point of Christmas celebration.

Christmas is a good time to pause and remember all who have gone before us and shown the way to love our neighbors, just as a child born in Bethlehem so many centuries ago would grow to teach us. Have a loving and blessed Christmas. ☞

—Herb Ziegler

The Deep Darkness

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lar. The cause for this I will discuss later, but I want to point out here that it would appear that Malina is describing the observable effect of which Swedenborg is explaining the cause.

The external nature of the Jewish and Mediterranean person's relationships extended also to God and the gods. In *The New Testament, a Historical Introduction to Early Christian Writings*, Bart Ehrman says that most ancient people did not believe

in the afterlife, and of those that did, they imagined it as a shadowy existence that was to be put-off as long as possible. The people didn't believe as many moderns do that there is a heaven of great comfort; they believed that the afterlife was an empty existence, and it didn't matter whether one lived a moral life or not, everyone went there.

The people in the ancient world were not living to secure a place in the afterlife, but in the life of the world before them. Life in the present for them was always on the edge. Common diseases or injuries could be fatal, such as a tooth abscess. A woman could easily die during childbirth. A drought could cause starvation for a village; food and water distribution was limited. The poor commonly dumped their sewage in street gullies. Disease sometimes wiped out whole villages (Ehrman 19).

It appears the people had no personal relationship with God from their own reflective conscience, but that they were motivated by a need to win favor with the gods, to appease the gods, so that they could survive. It is significant to note that Erhman (and others) say that the gods did not require the people to acknowledge proper truths: "doctrine played virtually no

role in these religions: it scarcely mattered what people believed" (Erhman 27). Such an outlook is contrary to developing an internal relationship. Swedenborg writes extensively on the need for humans to rationally understand doctrine in order for a person to make it his or her own, or in other words, internal. It appears the Mediterranean mind did not engage in this at all.

Consequently, according to Swedenborg, the Lord had no choice but to vastate all internal things out of the Jewish nation so that they would not profane

the Word. Swedenborg says this was caused by their own vain inclination to be above all others. Nevertheless, to be the representative church of the Word, the Lord required the Jews to uphold the Ten Commandments in their law; that they did so can be seen in their painstaking observance of the Torah, casuistry, and in the purity laws.

Polytheism, Sorcery Practices, Hereditary Evil, and More

Pagan Belief in polytheism was everywhere in the ancient world. Ehrman writes, "Everyone in the ancient world knew that there were many gods for many things." This is well known, but it is significant because, in Swedenborg's theology, polytheism leads a person to think in a merely natural way. He asserts that the psyche of humans is made in such a way that to receive higher light of heaven, a person must recognize the one, omniscient, omnipotent God in a human form. This is an insight of profound implications; it draws a sharp line between polytheism and Monotheism, between paganism and Christianity.

Swedenborg claims that the spiritual atmosphere of heaven itself prevents its inhabitants from expressing the words "two Gods"; it is like scratching finger-

nails on a chalkboard to them. This is because the spiritual substance of heaven's atmosphere is composed of the indivisible life of the Lord in the form of love and wisdom. Contrary to appearance, the human soul does not have intrinsic life but is a receptacle of the one and only source of life—the Lord. We are all made for heaven, and we are made in his image; we are a microcosm of the macrocosm. Therefore, the highest levels of our psyche can only open up when we are in recognition of Him.

The Jewish nation constantly tended to revert back to worship of pagan gods in the Old Testament. Jews were engaged in an external form of worship that eventually became a hereditary trait. This habit protected them against profanation and allowed the holy external of their worship to be used as the means of conjunction with the Lord through the Word. I will explain this process in a moment.

First, it should also be noted that demonology, sorcery, and exorcism reached its peak at the time of the incarnation. An undue presence of evil would be an expected occurrence at the time of Jesus, since in Swedenborgian metaphysics, an essential cause of the incarnation is that the Lord came to subjugate the hells, which had overtaken the first level of heaven. Here is a fascinating passage from Swedenborg on the power of demons at the time of Jesus:

They who before the Lord's coming had been of the church and had been evil as to life, were in such falsity as had not been before, and shall not be afterward. The reason was that they who were called "Nephilim," also "Anakim" and "Rephaim," and were not yet shut up in hell, but wandered about and infused dire and deadly persuasions wherever they could, thus also into evil in the church. When the Lord was in the world, these were cast by Him

... demonology, sorcery, and exorcism reached its peak at the time of the incarnation.

into their hell. . . . Unless this had been done, very few could have been saved, for the falsity they infused had a direful persuasive power, and was deadly, such as never had been, and such as never can again be.

A great deal of study could be put into this but here I will only briefly quote Guigenbert from *The Jewish World in the Time of Jesus*.

Everywhere people saw indications of the work of evil spirits; every misfortune, every illness, and particularly under the name of possession, all disorders of the nervous system were ascribed to them. Josephus writes a good deal about demons and thinks about them even more. And the fact Apocryphal books of the Old Testament are similarly full of demonology is at least a proof of the power it exercised over the imagination of the Jews about the beginning of the Christian era (101–103).

It appears that hereditary evil had been accumulating for centuries, and had become a dark and palpable force on earth. Because of this, and other reasons, the church had become predominantly natural, and without charity. This means that the accumulation of evil could go on unabated, because to overcome temptation, and thereby turn evil back, one must act from genuine religion and internal perception. Without human beings who are shunning and overcoming temptation, there is nothing to stop the constant accumulation of hereditary evil.

Another historical circumstance indicative of this situation is the Mediterranean and Jewish belief about sin and death. They did not at all believe as moderns do about sin and death. Ehrman explains their view as follows:

It (sin) is instead a kind of cosmic power, an evil force that compels people to live in alienation from God. The human problem under this model is that people are enslaved to this demonic power and are unable to break free from their bondage. . . . The power of sin is related to another power, the power of death. In the participation model, death is not simply something that happens when a person stops breathing. It is a cosmic force that is intent on enslaving people; when it succeeds, it totally removes a person from the realm of God. Here again the situation is desperate; all people are subject to the overpowering force of death, and there is nothing they can do to set themselves free (Ehrman 355).

Jewish eschatology conceived of the firmament as full of an extensive demonology and angelology. There was an eventual predominance of demons, and these demons were said to be able to roam back and forth from the firmament to earth. Satan was said to be able to transform and disguise himself as the gods of the gentiles (Guigenbert 102). These circumstances echo the dark imbalance Swedenborg speaks of, particularly when one compares Swedenborg's statements about the insidious demons called Nephelim and Anakim, and the dire havoc they caused in religion.

How the Jewish Nation Was Brought into External Worship

The externalization of the Jewish nation was an earthly vastation, and the method for executing it was leveraged, according to Swedenborg, on the principals of hereditary evil. To profane, a person must be able to acknowledge the truths of the Word and then later deny

The question now is, how could a people who contain the truths of religion externally only, function as the means of conjunction through the Word?

2008 Journal Available

The 2008 *Journal of the Swedenborgian Church* is ready for distribution. You can order the *Journal* in one of three forms from Central Office:

Full *Journal*:

\$15.00 plus shipping*

Mini *Journal* (directories)

\$ 8.00 plus shipping*

CD of full *Journal*

\$ 2.00 plus shipping*

Central Office can email you the Mini *Journal* for FREE!

Also, you can simply view the full version online at www.swedenborg.com. This version does not include personal information such as addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

These measures are intended to reduce the high cost of printing and mailing the *Journal*.

*Approximate cost of shipping and handling:

US: \$2.50 per *Journal*

Canada: \$5.00 per *Journal*

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them. This leads to the worst possible state in the afterlife, and the Lord was preventing them from this. This is how the vastation was accomplished: a person is only responsible for sins of commission, but *they are not responsible for inherited evil imbibed from the past generation*. So the Lord gradually removed from the Jews all internal knowledge of the Word, by allowing their external form of worship to gradually become a hereditary trait. As the race ad-

continues on page 156

Fair Trade—Empowering Farmers and Saving the Environment

As spiritual people, we are called to practice our faith in our daily lives. One of the ways we can do that is by raising the standard of ethics in our purchasing and consuming. I invite you to read closely the following, and check out the website at the end to see if it doesn't move you to examine and make some changes in your shopping habits.

—Ken Turley

Fair Trade Certification empowers farmers and farm workers to lift themselves out of poverty by investing in their farms and communities, protecting the environment, and developing the business skills necessary to compete in the global marketplace.

Fair Trade is much more than a fair price. Fair Trade principles include

- **Fair price:** Democratically organized farmer groups receive a guaranteed minimum floor price and an additional premium for certified organic products. Farmer organizations are also eligible for pre-harvest credit.
- **Fair labor conditions:** Workers on Fair Trade farms enjoy freedom of association, safe working conditions, and living wages. Forced child labor is strictly prohibited.
- **Direct trade:** With Fair Trade, importers purchase from Fair Trade producer groups as directly as possible, eliminating unnecessary middlemen, and empowering farmers to develop the business capacity necessary to compete in the global marketplace.
- **Democratic and transparent organizations:** Fair Trade farmers and farm workers decide democratically how to invest Fair Trade revenues.
- **Community development:** Fair Trade farmers and farm workers invest Fair Trade premiums in social and business development projects like scholarship programs, quality im-

provement training, and organic certification.

- **Environmental sustainability:** Harmful agrochemicals and GMOs (genetically modified organisms) are strictly prohibited in favor of environmentally sustainable farming methods that protect farmers' health and preserve valuable ecosystems for future generations.

TransFair USA, a non-profit organization, is the only independent, third-party certifier of Fair Trade products in the U.S. and one of twenty members of Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO). TransFair's audit system, which tracks products from farm to finished product, verifies industry compliance with Fair Trade criteria. TransFair allows U.S. companies to display the Fair Trade Certified label on products that meet strict Fair Trade standards

Fair Trade Certification is available in the U.S. for coffee, tea and herbs, cocoa and chocolate, fresh fruit, sugar, rice, and vanilla.

Environmental Benefits

Fair Trade Certified environmental standards include

- Conservation areas must be identified—buffer zones around water

bodies and watershed recharge areas are left uncultivated and safely guarded against agrochemicals.

- New planting in virgin forests is prohibited, and cultivated areas within the farm should be regenerated with natural flora and fauna to promote agricultural diversification.
- Producer organizations cannot gather material from protected areas, and material gathered from wild, uncultivated areas must be done sustainably, ensuring long-term viability of native species.
- Agrochemicals on the FLO Prohibited List may not be used, sold, handled or distributed by the producer organization.
- Producers must safely store and dispose of all agrochemicals and their containers and cannot air-spray agrochemicals over buffer zones, residential areas, rivers and other significant water sources.
- Agrochemicals are used only when absolutely necessary, and producer organizations must continuously work to reduce their use and toxicity level.
- Hazardous waste must be disposed of safely, and organic waste must be disposed of in a sustainable manner.
- Producers must be educated about how to properly handle waste in order to protect water quality, soil in-

Cruise the Alaska Coast and Glacier Bay

Cabins are still available for the post-convention Norwegian Cruise Lines Alaska/Glacier Bay Cruise round trip from Seattle, June 28-July 6, 2009.

For prices, payment schedule, and reservations, email Nancy Apple (ncapple@yahoo.com). Please indicate "Alaska Cruise '09" in the subject field.

For details about the cruise, ship, and cabins, go to <http://www.ncl.com> and look up the ship, Norwegian Pearl.

A refundable deposit of \$100 per person will hold a cabin for you. Send a check payable to Puget Sound Swedenborgian Church, c/o Nancy Apple, 5607-D 204th St. SW, Lynnwood, WA 98036

Please include names of all passengers and contact information—phone numbers & email. Indicate the type of cabin preferred—inside, outside, or balcony. All Aboard!

SHS Board of Trustees Fall Meeting

The Swedenborg House of Studies held its fall meeting at the Mercy Conference and Retreat Center in Burlingame, California, October 10–11. Members received reports from staff, committees, and the chair; engaged in a spiritual outreach and planning discussion; met in standing committees for discussion and planning; and received a presentation on social ministry from Sister Mary Ann Clifford Rodriguez, director of the Mercy Center.

The meeting was attended by Rev. Jim Lawrence, dean of SHS; Rev. Kim Hinrichs, director of outreach and development; Rev. Jane Siebert, chair; Loraine Cuthbertson, clerk; Jennifer Lindsay, treasurer; Rev. Robert Leas (elected vice-chair this meeting); Rev. Young Min Kim; Rev. Andy Stinson; Rev. Kathy Speas; Herb Ziegler;

and new members Bill Coffman, Tom Neuenfeldt, and Lisa Oz.

The staff and the board continued analysis and discussion of the impact and implications of the absence of SHS students on the PSR campus. Although students can still fulfill their academic requirements at other seminaries and their Swedenborgian requirements through on-line courses and independent study, many expressed concern that an essential element of formation was missing if students never met as an academic and spiritual community. Acknowledging the challenges many students face with families, jobs, and economic circumstances, the board and staff are investigating solutions that might include required short-term intensive classes on the PSR campus.

The board received a thoughtful student report submitted by student representative Steve Sanchez. Students are favorably disposed to the interactive web learning tools that SHS has adopted, and look forward to be more con-

nected and interactive through the web in the future.

Kim Hinrichs reported on increased giving over the past two years and detailed her efforts to facilitate planned giving. She also reported on progress towards establishing SHS as a center for spiritual studies. (Kim has begun work towards a PhD in spirituality at the Graduate Theological Union.)

Dean Jim Lawrence presented an overview of his doctoral work in spirituality and the history of Christianity. Swedenborg's revelation of inner meaning in the Bible is a door through which to interface with biblical studies and a long tradition of searching for inner meaning found in many traditions. (See "Where Does Swedenborg Fit in Today's Conversations About the Bible?" in the May 2008 *Messenger*.)

The board voted to enable the dean to appoint research fellows at SHS. These are unpaid positions for scholars doing research in an active arena of

continues on page 158

tegrity, and food safety.

- Possible causes of erosion or affected water resources must be investigated, and at-risk land must be regularly monitored and evaluated.
- Producers must adopt basic principles to enhance fertility and soil structure, such as tillage, irrigation and crop rotation, with a system of monitoring and evaluating compliance.
- Producers must use irrigation to minimize water consumption, and only use fire to clear or prepare land when it's the preferred ecological option.
- Producers cannot grow genetically modified organisms (GMO), or use products derived from GMOs in primary production or processing.
- Producers must monitor possible GMO usage by neighbors,

and take additional precautions to protect their crops or seeds from contamination.

On top of this, Fair Trade supports small-scale local farmers, promoting environmental diversity, as opposed to large scale agri-business, which is primarily responsible for the current rapid destruction of the rain forests.

The coffee is primarily shade grown. This means much of the natural plants and forests are kept in tact providing habitat and eco-systems for local plants and animals.

To find out more about this wonderful way to be an environmentally and socially conscientious consumer, please check out www.fairtradecertified.org and begin to purchase more and more fair trade products. ☸

Rev. Ken Turley is pastor of the Fryeburg New Church in Fryeburg, Maine.

Learning by Ministry

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Boisen meant both the people who receive care and the self, the giver of care. The textbook emerges out of the life-giving experience by research into the life story of individuals and the presentation of case histories. What is it that a person feels, sustains, guides, and heals in relationship to God, to others, and to society that nurtures and sustains him or her?

The greatest strength of CPE is the resultant personal growth—intrapersonal awareness, self-acceptance, and emotional maturation. The experience offers an opportunity for introspection, the better to see and claim personal resources. The integration of theology and the student's personality through ministerial experience are vital. ☸

Rev. Robert Leas is a CPE Supervisor Emeritus, and a trustee of SHS.

News in Brief

The **Portland (Maine) New Church** theme for 2009 is "Climbing The Spiritual Mountain: 12 Tools For Your Backpack." The year will be spent immersed in the deep and powerful process of spiritual growth. The focus will be Swedenborg's process of "regeneration" in daily life. The stages will be divided into twelve, one for each month. The church will use the twelve steps as one tool for implementing regeneration in daily life.

The **Swedenborg Library** in Chicago hosted a presentation by Jim Kenney about scientist Francis Collins, called "Common Ground: A Scientist and His God." Does science necessarily undermine faith in God? Or can it support belief? Francis Collins, director of the Human Genome Project, is a former atheist who found faith

when he became a doctor. A staunch supporter of biology and evolutionary theory, Collins insists that religion and science are perfectly compatible.

The Annual Christmas Classics and Holiday Favorites' concerts at **Wayfarers Chapel**, performed by the popular Wayfarers Chapel Musicians, will be Tuesdays, December 2 and December 9. Tickets are available at the Visitors Center in Rancho Palos Verdes, California, (310) 377-7919.

On October 14, the **New York New Church** hosted a Victorian Society in America lecture titled "Heavenly Secrets: About Swedenborg and American Art," presented by Bailey Van Hook, Ph.D., professor of art history, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and author of *Angels of Art Women and Art in American Society, 1876-1914*. Among Swedenborg's American followers were sculptor Hiram Powers, landscape

painter George Inness, and illustrators Howard Pyle and Jessie Willcox Smith. Each tried to convey the spiritual world and process of spiritual growth described by Swedenborg.

The **Korean New Church** of New York City raised \$2135 for the Red Cross International Relief Fund from the June 29 Benefit Concert for the People of Myanmar and China. Many performers and volunteers helped make this a very special event.

At the 2008 Annual Convention, the **LaPorte New Church** (Indiana) presented a check from its members to General Convention for \$1605 in response to the annual appeal. 2008 marks the third year in a row that the Laporte church has given back to General Convention. Although their own church budget is tight, and their own financial needs are great, the Laporte members consider it a blessing to

The Deep Darkness

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vanced from generation to generation their evils, in regard to the Word, became more and more inherited evils so that eventually even when they heard the Word, they "heard, but did not hear"; in other words, they were completely blind and ignorant to the internal truths of the Word. When internal ignorance of the Word by the Jewish nation became a hereditary trait, they could no longer profane it.

The question now is, how could a people who contain the truths of religion externally only, function as the means of conjunction through the Word? This is indeed an unexpected and extraordinary mystery. Swedenborg has a definite explanation for this (though many of its steps remain a mystery); he calls it a miraculous process. He explains that good spirits in the spiritual world that were with the Jewish people converted the external worship of the Jews into a holy exter-

nal, and then the angels of heaven were able to convert this into a holy internal. It appears this process was carried forward by the perception of angels, starting from the lower levels, up to the celestial level. It helps to understand this process when we recall that in a representative church, value turns on the office of the person representing, and not on the state of the person in that office. It may also be worth pointing out that the miraculous process described above follows the pattern of influx by discreet degrees in the same way that correspondences does. A further explanation given by Swedenborg is that a veil was put over the mind of the Jews so that they had no perception of the miraculous process of conjunction they were being used for (A.C. 10602).

Conclusion

Though far from conclusive, a socio-cultural study of the Mediterranean world into which Jesus was born produces information and perspectives that are consistent with the idea

that the spiritual state of the universal church at the time of the Lord's advent was terribly threatened. It should be possible by historical analysis to show that people were unable, because of a lack of internal conscience, to connect with God in such a way so as to stop the overwhelming accumulation of evil. The process the Lord went through to prepare Jews so that they could not be harmed in this dire situation explains a great deal about the observable character and conditions of the Jewish nation at that time. There are many indicators that people were overwhelmed by an array of evil forces.

It is my primary hope that this study set the table for an intimate awareness (in the you the reader) of the magnificence of what the Lord did for us by being born on this earth. ☪

Steve Sanchez is a student at the Swedenborgian House of Studies at Pacific School of Religion, and this Christmas meditation is an abridgement of a much longer research paper undertaken in his theological studies.

squeeze a bit and give back in gratitude for the grants they have received in the past. Their goal is to eventually donate \$100 per member per year. ☸

Chicago Library Sponsors Burnham Program

On March 12, 2009, the City of Chicago will celebrate the centennial of Daniel Burnham's Plan of Chicago. As part of that celebration, the Swedenborg Library in Chicago is co-sponsoring a lecture at the Art Institute called "Finding Burnham in the Archives: Swedenborgian Revelations and the Plan of Chicago," presented by Kristen Schaffer, PhD, Professor of Architecture History, North Carolina State University.

Daniel H. Burnham's views on architecture and his ideas for the City of Chicago are more fully revealed in his notes, letters and drafts than in the published Plan of Chicago. These materials enrich our understanding not only of the public architect and planner, but also disclose the Swedenborgian religious beliefs and moral values of the private man.

The Library is celebrating the 2009 Centennial of the 1909 Chicago Plan with a calendar that features a dozen watercolors of sites related to Daniel H. Burnham's Plan by Lily Gaines. The suggested donation is \$3.00.

The Swedenborg Library is located in the Chicago Temple Building (First United Methodist Church Building) 77 W. Washington St. (at Clark) in the Loop, room 1700. For more information, call 312.346.7003 or go to www.SwedenborgLib.org. ☸

A Sunday School teacher asked her class why Joseph and Mary took Jesus with them to Jerusalem. A small child replied, 'They couldn't get a baby sitter.'

Swedenborgian Church Seeks Operations Manager

The General Convention of the New Jerusalem (Swedenborgian Church), a small Christian denomination of forty-four churches with a central office in Newtonville, Massachusetts, is searching for an **operations manager**. This is a key position in the denomination responsible for the daily operation of the central office as well as the management of General Convention information, personnel, and events.

Essential Duties and Specific Responsibilities

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

- Respond to phone and email inquiries.
- Prepare and distribute annual journal.
- Prepare and distribute annual appeal letter.
- Collect and compile annual reports for General Convention.
- Prepare materials for annual convention.
- Maintain denomination calendar, including meetings and conference calls of all denomination entities.
- Maintain archives in storage and respond to requests for materials in storage.
- Maintain minutes and other records of Convention committees and support units.
- Communicate with Central Office landlord as required.
- Maintain and update various church websites as required.
- Monitor and maintain office equipment and services.
- Make recommendations to General Council on needs of Central Office.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

- Serve as liaison between all denominational bodies.
Boards, Support Units, General Council, Seminary, Churches & other Bodies.
- Serve as Employer Contact for all denominationally employed personnel.
Messenger Editor, ODB Editor, Youth Director, On-line Minister, paid Officers
- Create and Maintain a Volunteer Database and co-ordinate communication between volunteers and Support Units, Camps, Boards and other volunteer opportunities.

EVENTS MANAGEMENT

- Plan and implement the annual convention.
- Attend meetings of the General Council and annual convention.

Note: The above are examples of key duties and responsibilities, and are descriptive rather than restrictive in nature. Other duties and responsibilities may be assigned.

Required Experience and Skills:

- A college degree and three years experience leading a staff team with high performance standards, including mentoring, coaching, supervision, and performance evaluation.
- Strong written and oral communication skills.

To Apply

Send resume by December 31, 2008 to Susan Wood-Ashton, recording secretary of the Swedenborgian Church, 522 Fifth Ct., Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410-5105 or ConventionSec@gmail.com.

SHS Board Meeting

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Swedenborgian thought. Fellows would provide scholarship for publication on the SHS website in return for their appointment and use of the library.

In light of a drop in value of the endowment due to the downturn in the economy, the board voted to replace its spring meeting with a web-conference meeting. The Common Fund is doing well in comparison to the rest of the market, and income is anticipated to hold up well.

Concern was expressed over the cost/benefit ratio of the SHS Library, particularly in light of the absence of resident SHS students. The board reaffirmed the importance of maintaining a well-organized, accessible research library with a professional librarian.

SHS is working with the Committee on Admission to the Ministry (CAM) to accommodate meetings with ordination-path students through web conferencing software. Francesca McCrossan is training students and Andy Stinson is training CAM members on use of the software. ☼

Straight from the Heart

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gave up the fight. Isn't that incredible? And he beat it so many times.

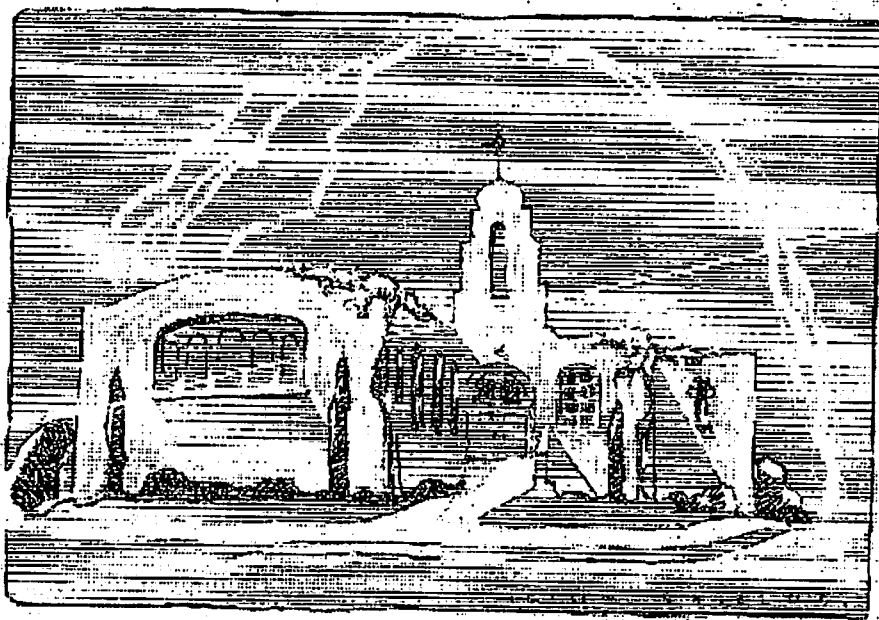
I was convinced he would live forever. I still believe he will live forever—in his wife, children, grandchildren, and everyone else he touched in his too brief but full, purposeful, and productive life. I know he is in heaven with all of his loved ones, thankfully—thankfully finally free of the pain. I look forward to holding him again, dancing around the room, and calling it another day.

Love you, Dad. I always have, since before I was born. ☼

Lori Steinhiser is a member of the Laporte New Church in Laporte, Indiana.

PCA Annual Meeting

San Diego Church's 125th Anniversary



The Swedenborgian Church of San Diego

by Mareta Tafel

The Pacific Coast Association (PCA) met at the Swedenborgian Church of San Diego October 31–November 2, 2008, where members joined in celebrating the church's 125th anniversary. The mission-style church has a new coat of bright white paint that sparkles against the rain-washed blue skies of Southern California. Looking at it reminds one of being on a Greek Isle.

Attendees were treated to a variety of art-related programs introduced by a welcome-card displaying a watercolor of the church including a variety of live music acts.

Peter Economy and Patricia Orlieb, authors of *Orange Rush—Life of Eliza Lovell Tibets*, a book about the founder of the orange empire of California, gave a presentation.

Eliza Tibets was a suffragist, abolitionist, and pioneer Swedenborgian. She would want us to remember her for the boldness her faith gave her and for the two innovative, intentional com-

munities she helped found: an integrated community in Virginia after the Civil War and one in Riverside, California, designed to be as self-sufficient as possible. To this end, Eliza planted the first navel oranges there (watered with dishwater) and is now known as Mother of the Citrus Industry. Swedenborgian principles can inspire us to be bold and innovative!

Richard Reames, author of *Arborsculpture—Solutions for a Small Planet*, presented a lecture and slide show, sharing what inspired him to begin arborsculpting, an ancient art form. He prunes, bends, and grafts trees into recognizable shapes, including chairs you can actually sit in. The craft of arborsculpting is quite old. Reames showed many slides of the results, including small structures that one could live in. In *Earths in the Universe*, Swedenborg writes:

They then represented their sanctuaries before the spirits of our earth, who said that they had seen north-

Passages

Births

Joe Tucker and Amy Reichardt, members of the Cambridge Society, were blessed to welcome twin boys **Noel Stephen Tucker** and **Linus Patrick Tucker** into their family on July 20, 2008.



Baptisms

Brian and Teresa Darling, members of the Royal Oak Church of the Holy City, and three of their children, **Kristina, Brian, and Bree'jonette Darling** were baptized into the life of the Christian church during the annual meeting of Michigan Association at the Almont New Church Assembly in Brandau Bay on Saturday, October 4th, 2008, the Rev. Renee Machiniak officiating.

Lincoln Holczer, born May 3, 2008, son to Susan and Steve Holczer, was

baptized into the Christian faith September 28, 2008 at the Calgary New Church, the Rev. Mike Gladish officiating. Lincoln is the grandson of Sharon and Alan Williams, and great grandson to Lisa Reddekopp. Following the moving sacrament was a sermon on baptism.

Colton Niehman Maris was baptized into the life of the Christian church in Addison Township, Michigan, at the Maris family home on Sunday, October 12th, 2008, the Rev. Renee Machiniak officiating.

Deaths

Albert Geis, 93, passed away on November 4th, 2008. A memorial service was held on November 8, Rev. Ronald Brugler officiating. Albert and Bernice, his wife of 57 years, were devoted members of the New York Society. His daughters Linda, Paula, Holly, Wendy, Donna and Liala attended the memorial service. Albert brought his family into the New Church after reading Ralph Waldo Emerson's thoughts on Swedenborg's writings.

William Witzell, 89, of New Port Richey, Florida, passed away on Sept. 10, 2008. Born in Rutherford, New Jersey, he was a retired office manager for a pharmaceutical company, had been a WW II U.S. Army Air Corps veteran, and was a member of the New York Society. ☛

Swedenborg's Influence on Dickens' A Christmas Carol

The Swedenborg Society sent Charles Dickens a review copy of *Heaven and Hell* in 1841, for which they received from him a letter of thanks which included the phrase "it will not go unread." Two years after that, *A Christmas Carol* was published. In this story, Scrooge meets and converses with spirits. His passage in and out of the spirit world is the bulk of the plot, reminiscent of Swedenborg and his mystical experiences. ☛

Excerpted from "Swedenborg and Dickens" by Ron Lampard in *The Swedenborg Society Magazine* No. 7, 1996, published by the Swedenborg Society, London.

ing more magnificent; and as I also saw them, I can therefore describe them. They are constructed of trees, not cut down, but growing in their native soil. They said that on their earth there were trees of wonderful growth and height. These from their beginnings they arrange in order, so that they serve for porticos and walks, and by cutting and pruning the branches when they are tender, they fit and prepare them so that while they are growing they may intertwine and unite to make the base and floor of the sanctuary, and rise on the sides for the walls, and bend above into arches for the roof."

The business meeting ran overtime to accommodate important discussions and a momentous vote to accept the New Church of the Southwest Desert

as a member of PCA. Rev. Sky Paradise gave a rousing report, and received a standing ovation after the unanimous vote of acceptance.

All ministries and churches of PCA gave reports. The 2009 budget, which included a \$1,000 gift to the General Convention of the New Jerusalem, was approved.

At the service Rev. Carla Friedrich, pastor of the San Diego Church, led the Sunday service. General Convention president Chris Laitner gave a blessing honoring the San Diego Church's 125th anniversary, and Rev. Dave Brown of Wayfarer's Chapel offered communion. Prayer and music rounded out the worship. ☛

Mareta Tafel is vice-president of the Pacific Coast Association.

Mite Box for 2008-2009

The Women's Alliance Mite Box recipient this year is the New Church of the Southwest Desert, newly planted in Silver City, New Mexico, and led by Rev. Dr. Sky Paradise. This church is sixteen members strong and growing.

As a new church it is in need of funds to sustain and expand its ministry. The proceeds from the Mite Box will help it grow.

Please make out your check to The Women's Alliance, indicate it is for the Mite Box, and send to:

Jeannette Hille
4240 Larch Place N
Plymouth, MN 55442

About the Swedenborgian Church

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.

American groups eventually founded the General Convention of Swedenborgian churches. As a result of Swedenborg's spiritual questionings and insights, we as a church 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 said, "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.

Straight from the Heart—a Eulogy For Joe H. Gayheart

by Lori Steinhiser

I admired my dad a great deal for so many reasons. He was incredibly friendly and likeable, a gentle and personable man known and respected by many. It seemed like there wasn't anyone he didn't know—and there were always stories to go along with the name.

He was intelligent and wise. I never outgrew the childish belief that my father knew everything, because he sure seemed to. He had a boundless knowledge base and a true talent for making up what he occasionally didn't know that was entirely believable, or at least pretty darn plausible, and better than anything I had come up with.

He was a terrific teacher—patient and thorough. He was always willing to explain how something worked, how to use it, maintain it, and fix it. Because of him, not only can I never throw anything away because it could always be fixed or used for some other purpose, I can also wow my friends with things like changing the oil in my car, changing a flat tire, or repairing a toilet that won't flush.

He was an honest, hard worker and

a good provider. My dad modeled a superb work ethic, teaching my brother and me to be responsible, dependable people who can be counted on to go above and beyond the call of duty.

I am grateful to my father for his love, forgiveness, and unending support through those rocky teenage and college years and beyond. How many parents would buy car after car for a teenager that couldn't seem to keep from wrecking them? Not this parent.

Thanks to my dad, I have an insatiable appetite for reading and learning, a deep love of nature, and a sincere desire to help others and be useful. So many things that are at the core of who I am came directly from my dad.

I am so very proud of, and inspired by, my dad's courage, determination, persistence, and sheer will as he faced cancer and all the challenges, pain, and suffering that came along with it over the past thirteen-plus years. I really am in awe of how he managed his disease and literally kept himself alive by carefully and endlessly studying his cancer, his treatments, and his care. And he did this until the very end. Maybe it was all just plain stubbornness—another attribute I can thank my father for—but I don't think so. While he knew more than anyone that he was in a battle he knew he wouldn't win, he still never

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