

## Finding Our Way A Conference on New Directions in Christian Practice

Five Swedenborgians attended the "Finding Our Way" conference presented by the Harvard Divinity School at First Church (UCC) in Cambridge, Massachusetts this past December 6-7. The presenters were Marcus Borg, Diana Butler-Bass and Brian McLaren. What follows is a series of reports and reflections on the conference by four of those Swedenborgians.

### Three of the Best

by Christine Laitner



**M**arcus Borg, Diana Butler-Bass and Brian McLaren stand out among the best and most helpful authors in my growing library of information about church transformation.

This conference was a special opportunity to meet and hear them

Marcus Borg is a Biblical scholar and a leading "Jesus scholar" recognized worldwide. He is co-author of three books and author of eleven books, the most recent of which is *The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith* (2004). Borg's writing examines such basic Christian beliefs as Jesus, the *Bible* and Christianity itself. His research, scholarship, insights and understanding re-

frame many basic tenets, incorporating history, a more liberal thinking and an awareness of spiritual process and practice aligned with twenty-first century ideas.

In *The Heart of Christianity*, Borg discusses how we can rediscover a life of faith; how we can be passionate believers in today's world. Its premise is to see again what Christianity is and how it is practiced in this changing world. Christian practice, showing love to God and the neighbor through spiritual formation and caring behaviors, is central to Borg's definition of the heart of Christian-

**Christianity needs to be more about practice than belief in doctrine.**

ity. Being in a Christian community, taking part in worship, Christian formation and collective deeds of hospitality and compassion are necessary to growing spiritually and loving God. Practice is paying attention to God.

Diana Butler-Bass is the author of five books on American Protestantism. From 2002-2005 she was involved with the Project on Congregations of Intentional Practice (PCIP), which was underwritten by the Lilly Endowment. This study involved fif-

ty congregations from six denominations. The resulting book, *Christianity for the Rest of Us*, is a testament to the possibility of transforming congregations that are simply maintaining or closing into vital, growing, affirming bodies. Throughout her journey, Butler-Bass found that maintaining inherited structures—even adding "some new thing" to them—would not renew the vitality of a church community. A congregation had to ask two significant questions: "Who are we?" and "What is God calling us to do?" Then it needed to rebirth itself, honoring its past but focusing on its identified special path of outreach and welcome in the world.

In the ten core congregations in this project, different central practices such as hospitality, healing, justice, worship, diversity and beauty were central. Each congregation stepped out as an individual church, following its own felt call in its own community. Overall, Diana Butler-Bass found that renewing congregations connected tradition, commitment to Christian practice and a true concern to "live God's dream" through wise discernment practices. *Christianity for the Rest of Us* has a subtitle of importance: "How the Neighborhood Church is Transforming the

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## The Editor's Desk



Herb Ziegler

I have been reading with great interest Marguerite Beck Block's excellent book, *The New Church in the New World*, published in 1932. I recommend this book to anyone interested in history. It is not an official church history, but rather a well-researched exploration by a respected academic. It is well-written and comprehensive. Now I can't wait for someone to pick up where she left off, writing the history from 1932 to the present.

It is striking, but not surprising, to discover that, throughout its history, the Swedenborgian movement in American churches has wrestled unceasingly with variations of the same challenges that face us today.

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries churches and church leaders struggled with the difficulties of growing congregations

and attracting new members, agreeing on the role of doctrine and forms of worship in the church, and interpreting the Bible and Swedenborg's writings in a way that satisfied the conservative desire for strict adherence to doctrine and the liberal desire for a dynamic theology that frees the human spirit and the church for constant reinterpretation and renewal in light of unfolding natural and spiritual realities.

Our feature article this month reports on and reacts to a conference held in Cambridge by the Harvard Divinity School that addresses these problems in a modern context. Five Swedenborgians attended, but clearly, the crisis in survival and growth affects every mainline denomination, as evidenced by the sellout crowd.

We are thrilled to offer a report on another youth retreat, the Winter Retreat at Almont, and a report on SCYL elections. Kurt Fekete, the SCYL director, manages to provide a full schedule of retreats that enrich the lives of young people in our

churches who otherwise might feel isolated. Few denominations are able to offer such opportunities to their youth.

It is fitting that Rev. David Fekete was elected League chaplain for 2008. David was an active member of SCYL in his youth, and in response to its declining membership and activities in 1973 conceived of and launched the successful SCYL publication *Clear Blue Sky* to draw scattered Swedenborgian young people together.

In the January issue we showed how you can contribute to General Convention by purchasing online. I did not mean to promote online buying in place of supporting your local bookstore. Bookstores, if we are lucky enough to have them, are vital members of our communities. They can usually order any in-print book seen in these pages.

Herb Ziegler

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

The January Messenger has arrived, and it looks good, except that the photos do not reproduce very well.

The content is very informative, and the two articles by Chris Laitner and the one by Ken Turley represent the fact that good things are occurring in the New Church Jerusalem.

Including something by Eugene Taylor is also refreshing. I like his writing, and I seldom see anything in the *Messenger* by him. His comments about Swedenborg's correspondences are very helpful for my own under-

standing—the infusion of soul and body in the natural world and the spiritual world, and the goodness therefrom.

However, he seems troubled by the shadow side of the divine and natural world that is certainly also present, and has been from the beginning of time. The destruction of the earth by humankind, the survival of the fittest in the animal and plant life on earth are just simply there. The looming human induced catastrophe, the Armageddon of the natural world in its journey of destruction and survival, is not only an evolutionary fact, but an anxiety producing thought.

Bob Leas, Fort Wayne, Indiana

## the Messenger

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## Finding Our Way

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Faith." Diana Butler-Bass's premise throughout this book is that transformation is the promise at the heart of Christianity.

Brian D. McLaren is a prolific writer and a central voice of the emergent conversation among missional Christian leaders. McLaren's focus is the church in relation to the postmodern cultural shift surrounding it. While he has written many books on new interpretations of various Christian practices, one title, *A Generous Orthodoxy* (2004), is representative of the emergent recognition of embracing a variety of practices, as well as history, to inform the contemporary church. The subtitle of *A Generous Orthodoxy* reveals McLaren's passion to embrace and integrate the best practices and ideas of historic Christianity to move the church forward: "Why I Am a: missional, evangelical, post-Protestant, liberal/conservative, mystical/poetic, biblical, charismatic/contemplative, fundamentalist/Cal-

vinist, Anabaptist/Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, green, incarnational, depressed-yet-hopeful, emergent, unfinished Christian."

### Reflections

The intriguing aspect of the "Finding Our Way" conference was three common threads in the presentations by three presenters working from markedly different backgrounds.

- Change will happen in local churches, not at the institutional level, because the institutional structure of denominations inhibits their inability to respond quickly to changing thought in theology in recent years.
- Excessive seriousness stands in the way of change because it stifles creativity.
- Christianity must focus on centering more deeply on God, and congregations need to become communities of transformation (both personal and communal) through spiritual growth and Christian formation. They must support intentional spiritual practices of worship, prayer and meditation

Christianity needs to be more about practice than belief in doctrine. Practice in this sense is not just action; "practice" refers to involvement in intentional devotional activities such as centering prayer, meditation and close reading of the Bible, all aimed toward spiritual transformation. Moral and ethical practices of hospitality, forgiveness and healing need to become central to our congregations. Every Christian community has opportunities for meaningful practice in simple connections such as greeting, meeting and eating.

Christian churches need to focus on transformative spiritual practices in order to be revitalized; showing

love to God and love to the neighbor through spiritual practice and caring behaviors is at the heart of Christianity. Local churches must consciously work to identify their focus in regard to personal spiritual formation and also in the work and presence they bring to their local communities. Transformation is at the heart of Christianity. Christian congregations need to incorporate the narrative of their history and integrate a variety of spiritual practices into their communities for grounding and growth. The work of transformation is ongoing.

## Messy Church

by Sarah Buteux

"What I saw now was the community, imperfect and irresolute, but held together by the frayed and always fraying. Incomplete and yet ever-holding bonds of the various sorts of affections."

Wendell Berry, Jayber Crow



The "Finding Our Way" conference was designed to help pastors figure out what's gone wrong with the main-line churches

we serve and what we ought to do about it.

There was a time when, come Sunday morning, you and everyone you knew was in church. The choir was full, the Sunday school overflowing, and everyone who was anyone came, whether they really believed in all this religious stuff or not.

Church was just where you went on Sunday morning. It was an established part of the culture and, other than home, there was really no place

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# SCYL Welcomes New Officers for 2008

by Kurt Fekete

While many of the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL) officers return to another year of service, this year's elections also brought some fresh faces to the League, with two first-time representatives and a rookie SCYL chaplain.

We say farewell to 2007 officers Ethan Turley and Sam MacTavish as well as League chaplain, Rev. Jun-chol Lee.

Ethan served the SCYL serenely for two years, his last one as our president. He helped lead an engaging worship service at Convention 07 and graced the SCYL with his soulful music everywhere he went. We will miss Ethan greatly as he exits the SCYL, but we look forward to hearing him for many years to come as a calming and thoughtful presence in the church.

Sam MacTavish held his Midwest officer position for one year. He still is eligible to run for office in 2009 so we hope to see him continue in a church youth leadership role. We thank Sam for his caring contribution to the league.

Rev. Jun-chol Lee, pastor of the Cleveland Swedenborg Chapel and SCYL League chaplain in 2007, has mindfully served the youth of the church for many years. Jun-chol has been active in youth retreats and Almont summer camp. His straightforward meditation techniques, direct teaching methods and uncomplicated humility have contributed greatly to the spiritual welfare of our church youth. He will

## 2007 SCYL Almont Winter Retreat

by Sola Thorhallsson

The Almont Winter Retreat was really amazing, like every Almont retreat. This year, Michigan even graced us with some snow, which was very exciting for me, the only Floridian of the group.

The theme was about why God is important. Rev. Jun-Chol Lee and Rev. Jenn Tafel, along with Bill Baxter, spoke with us about life and faith. Rev. Jun-Chol explained to us the history of religion (briefly, mind you) and about different ways of connecting with God. Rev. Jenn told us about how God's love and wisdom comes into us and how we use it. Bill had us create our own world with its own beliefs, which we then shared with the group. Bill also talked with us about faith crisis, which was one of the sessions that really struck home with me.

Aside from the sessions, we pursued our usual Almont haunts—going for walks, hanging out at the skating rink, and most importantly, attacking the Coma Couch.

The winter retreat was really great, and I hope more teens can come in the future.

Sola Thorhallsson is president of SCYL, author, artist and most improved roller skater.



continue to support youth activities in the coming years, and we are grateful for his years as League chaplain.

Thank you Ethan, Sam and Jun-chol for your excellent leadership in the SCYL.

We have a great group of officers

for 2008. We welcome Sola Thorhallsson, our newly elected SCYL president. Prior to her election as president, Sola served as East Coast officer last year. She lives in DeLand, Florida, where she spends much of her time courageously conquering mountains

of homework between bouts of daydreaming of snow. Sola has been very involved with the church and has attended Almont winter retreats and conventions as a teenager. She is a gifted artist and enjoys sketching and doodling. Sola is quite interested in creating



more League service opportunities, and we look forward to working with her to accomplish this. Sola's quiet maturity, care and creativity will help her to be an excellent leader and president.



Rev. Jenn Tafel, Nina Ruth Sasser, and Rev. Jun-Chol Lee

We greet two first-time officers for 2008. We say hello to Rachel Madjerac as newly elected East Coast and public relations officer. Rachel, sister of *Clear Blue Sky* (CBS) editor Kristina Madjerac, is active in the Portland Youth Group and Fryeburg Assembly, and rarely misses a chance to attend a retreat. She brings the SCYL an abundance of energy, and is not afraid to speak up and direct a crowd (the per-

### SCYL Blog!

The SCYL blog is up and running at <http://youthleague.blogspot.com>. View a video clip of the winter retreat skating party there.

fect PR person!). You will be hearing more from Rachel, I am quite sure.

Naomi Anderson begins her first term as Midwest and service officer. Naomi hails from Brecksville, Ohio (south of Cleveland), and enjoys attending activities at Almont, like retreats and summer camp. We look forward to listening to Naomi and hearing her fresh perspectives on how the League can be better. The duties of the service officer include coordinating work projects at retreats and Convention as well as advising the SCYL on charitable opportunities to encourage, nurture and inspire so-

Canadian teens to participate in the SCYL, he will assist in planning our Convention outings in Boston this summer. Cody Steinhiser begins his third year of service to the SCYL returning as the West and fundraising/finance officer. Together with his duties assisting teens in the West, Cody will help with the finances of the League and oversee our fundraising efforts.

Kristina Madjerac begins her third term as editor of the youth publication *Clear Blue Sky*, and also serves as the communication officer. Kristina is living in Belgium as an exchange student. She remains active in the SCYL, keeping in touch from a distance via phone, internet and paper mail. She will return to the States in the summer when school is over, and

cial action and education, so we know she will be working closely with Sola on this.

Jake MacTavish starts his second year as Canada and activities officer. Along with encouraging

plans to attend as many camps and retreats as possible in the second half of 2008. Kristina put out a wonderful issue of CBS this past fall, which included an interesting article about what it is like for her to live and attend school in Belgium. We are excited to have Kristina back in her third year as CBS Editor.

Rev. Dr. David Fekete is the newly elected League chaplain. David was very active in the league as a teenager, and has experience working with youth as the spiritual director of Paulhaven Summer Camp and as teen dorm father at Almont Summer

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**T**he Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL) Officer and Chaplain elections for 2008 took place at the Almont Winter Retreat this past December. The results are:

**President: Sola Thorhallsson**

DeLand, Florida

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**East Coast and Public Relations Officer:**

**Rachel Madjerac**

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**Midwest and Service Officer: Naomi Anderson**

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**Canada and Activities Officer: Jake MacTavish**

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**West Coast and Fundraising & Finance Officer:**

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**Editor, *Clear Blue Sky* and Communication**

**Officer: Kristina Madjerac**

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**League Chaplain: Rev. Dr. David Fekete**

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# Do We Understand Heaven And Hell?

By Steve Koke

Swedenborg's book *Heaven and Hell* (HH) has quite a varied reputation. On the one hand it is the book we most recommend to the new reader of Swedenborg, for it is regarded as simple, gratifying and easy to read. On the other hand, it has been regarded as his greatest work and also as his most difficult work, two opinions which probably go together.

What makes it look like the best book for the new reader is its descriptions of the spiritual world, what you would see once you arrive there. What is heaven like, or hell? Such things are profoundly absent from conventional theology, to the point where most Christians have ended up trained to not expect or entertain what have come to be regarded as self-indulgent curiosities. Hand the book to the well-churched non-Swedenborgian and you may soon get it handed back, for something has to be going wrong.

What is more genuinely difficult about the book is its logic, the differences between that world and this one, including the differences in agenda and function between the celestial, spiritual, and natural realms. In all of them, both space and time work differently. Statements from the spiritual world require a spiritual interpretation, not the literal one we normally use here. When reading HH we are routinely confronted with paradoxical phenomena not explicable in ordinary space and time.

For example, two people in heaven can be facing each other in conversation, and each will see the Sun of heaven behind the other's back. Yet both are facing east, toward the

Lord as a sun. You can't do that here. East is east, and one of them has to be facing west. You have to reorient your thinking to suit an inner world, not an objective outer one. The apparent illogic of the spiritual world can be hard to understand. Yet, these things clarify the logical foundations of Swedenborg's system. Do we understand the book? If we do, it is typically because of long study and thought about it. Otherwise, we may miss points that affect Swedenborg's system in his other books and experiences.

## In the spiritual world everything depends on the spirituality of the observer.

To give another example: The angels of heaven can be seen as a very large human being in the sky of heaven, the Grand Man. But how do they arrange themselves to look that way? Do they abandon their work in heaven (which is up there somewhere) and fly over to their proper positions so that those below can see the Grand Man that constitutes heaven? The nearest approximation down here is the formations that the band, during halftime at football games, creates down on the field for the fans. Does heaven form only larger versions of the same kind of thing, then the millions and millions of angels fly back to whatever they were doing? The answer is no. What is seen depends on the observer and the broad or more conventional comprehension of heaven that he or she is entertaining at the time, not what the angels are actually doing. In the spiritual world everything depends on the spirituality of the observer.

Time also differs from objective

calendar or clock readings. The spiritual sense of the Word is actually the language of the spiritual world, not the material world, and its sense of time is therefore unrelated to ordinary measurements of time, including our calendar. It's much closer to what we often call "subjective" or "psychological" time.

We therefore take on a logical problem if commands come down to Swedenborg from the spiritual world and we take them literally or materially. If you make both worlds speak literally, the spiritual sense of the Word has to be considered a specially constructed coded message devoted to the special purposes of scripture while losing its status as also the language natural to the spiritual world itself.

For example, in *Marriage Love* n.522 Swedenborg is in the spiritual world observing the growth of the New Church as new crops being sown in newly cultivated ground. He then gets a divine command saying, "Go into your room, close the door, get down to your work on the book of Revelation and bring it to a conclusion in two years." Two years is then considered by various translators to be merely two years on the calendar. They know Swedenborg's neo-Latin quite well but may not understand that what they are translating is a spiritual statement, not a literal one. Yet Swedenborg is in the spiritual world at the time, which is a spiritual state of mind, not just another place. So, why apply literal meanings there?

It gets more puzzling: They may then argue that Swedenborg began work on what would become *Apocalypse Revealed* in 1764 and finished it

in 1766. Subtract 1764 from 1766 and you get 2; so, he took two years as commanded. The problem with this math is that it doesn't work well even if taken literally. A lot depends on *when* he started in 1764 and *when* he finished in 1766. A start early in 1764 would demand an early finish in 1766; if the finish date is actually late in 1766, we may have an elapsed time on the project of virtually three years. In some unrestrained cases of literal interpretation, there may even be a cry of triumph by the translator in some odd, unprofessional position in the middle of the bottom margin of a page, as if he is quite pleased with Swedenborg's literalism. There has been at least one such instance.

How much elapsed time did occur between the start date and the finish date? In Rudolph Tafel's *Documents Concerning Swedenborg* (Doc 313) we find Swedenborg writing to his close friend Dr. Beyer when he started the work and again when he finished it. The elapsed time is a little less than a year and eight months. Should we now re-introduce the problem we thought we had when Swedenborg didn't publish the ninth work (on the divine attributes, omnipresence, omniscience, etc) in the commanded works listed in *Doctrine of the Lord*? The charge was that he disobeyed the Lord; I'm waiting to see if someone will repeat it in this case.

That earlier problem was a false one, as this one would be. It hasn't been handled well. It depended on a very literal reading of the command, which should have been omitted from the start with more careful concentration on *HH*. The correct procedure, especially according to *HH*, is to understand commands from the spiritual world spiritually. "Two years," we read in Potts' *Concordance*,

represents a search for the good of life, the crops Swedenborg had seen under cultivation in the fields of the spiritual world when commanded to return to the book of Revelation. That becomes a possible clue to how to avoid abandoning *Apocalypse Revealed* as he did some years earlier to *Apocalypse Explained*.

**A typical command to Swedenborg is a command to reproduce a spiritual idea in the human mind down here.**

What the high spiritual world commands are matters of principle, or goals to be achieved in some fashion, not material objects or literal details, not even books. A typical command to Swedenborg is a command to reproduce a spiritual idea in the human mind down here. However that is done, a physical book is not the center of interest so much as the topic, the idea it communicates. What the idea is wrapped in is not the decisive consideration. Such ideas were seen in the spiritual world as books, but they were actually ideas in a representative form. If an idea can't be placed in the human mind in good shape, the issues it represents will be lost, physical book or none. Hence Swedenborg's concern with possible publishing strategies are not always centered on producing a physical book but on being *effective*.

Today we would have other media in mind as well, some of which would work better than a book. Others will follow as we push our media into more impressive forms. Hence there is nothing innately divine about publishing a book in an era which knew no alternative. If the commanded works of 1763 came to him in small

caps, we would only wonder which, of the many uses of small caps, was mandated—they have been used in a variety of ways according to, for example, the *Chicago Manual of Style*. What's divine is publishing *effectively*. As he explained to Dr. Beyer, who couldn't find the book on the divine attributes, topics that are very difficult may need a more gradual approach stretching through more than a single work, or failure becomes predictable.

That would tell us that Swedenborg was at least free to expand his publishing strategies in order to successfully place very difficult ideas into human minds, the obvious intention behind the command. It was more convenient to publish single volumes with explicit, rather simple titles on the more conventional theological topics in the rest of the 1763 list.

The Lord not only commands what must in principle be covered, he always helps us think through practical problems afterwards, and he evidently helped Swedenborg organize his approach to the very difficult topic of the divine attributes in 1763. Swedenborg's response to Dr. Beyer's complaint that he could not find the *book* on the subject is instructive if we take Swedenborg's explanation seriously. It strongly suggests that there may be more to a project than just a book. Conceiving of a useful new book idea is a matter of *principle*, not yet reduced to an appropriate educational process. That then becomes the next thing to think about. In Swedenborg's case, our need to understand the divine attributes led to extended considerations of just how to teach about them in the face of our darkness and complexities. ☿

Steve Koke is a member of the San Diego Swedenborgian Church.

## Finding Our Way

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else to go. The shops were closed. No restaurants were open. There was no soccer practice or little league or band trip scheduled for Sunday. No one went out to brunch on Sunday morning or stayed home with a second cup of coffee to read the Sunday paper, because if you did everyone would assume you were dead, or worse, an atheist. And since you wouldn't want that, barring death, you went to church.

But some time after 1954, the world changed. Blame it on the Beatles, free love, hippies, Vietnam, post modernism, fluoridation, what have you; at some point in the last century people stopped feeling that church attendance was a social obligation.

Honestly, that's not such a bad thing. It hasn't been great for our numbers, but I believe this downward trend may yet save our souls. Because what I learned at this conference is that although the mainline has been in a steep decline since the 1950s, there are some churches that are bucking the trend. They are not only holding steady, but growing in number, and even more importantly, growing in spirit, precisely because people are finally going to these churches because they want to, not because they feel they ought to. And they want to because something about being there is transforming their lives.

When you go to a conference like this and you hear these stories of transformation, as a pastor you want to know what the secret is. Is it the music at these churches? Do they use PowerPoint presentations? If we add drums or light more candles, rip out all the pews or get rid of the hymnals,

will more people come?

It became increasingly clear as I listened to the speakers that there wasn't a one-size-fits-all answer. For some churches, ripping out the pews has worked. Others really like using PowerPoint. But what is most surprising, given that so many of the people now going to these churches were not raised in the church at all, has been the resurgence of ancient Christian practices—disciplines like fasting and tithing, daily prayer, walking labyrinths, going on pilgrimages, and practicing hospitality, while at the same time acknowledging and rejoicing in the advances we have made as a culture.

**It was messy—good church, living church, a church where people are real and the Holy Spirit is moving.**

Diana Butler Bass, one of the presenters, said that those churches that are able to reach into the past for those ancient practices while holding on to what is best about our present way of thinking—more tolerant, more aware, more open to people who are different—are the ones who are looking forward to a rich and prosperous future.

She closed her talk that first night with a story. She described an Episcopal Church service where her friend, who is the openly gay dean at his big old-fashioned stone cathedral, was doing a baptism. The parents brought their baby forward stark naked. The children of the congregation were given bowls of water at the back of the church, and they proceeded down the aisle and up the steps to the baptismal font where they tipped their bowls into a great stone basin until it was filled to over-

flowing. The priest in his long white robe then took the baby, anointed her with oil, and dipped her down into the font three times, causing the water to spill out over the sides. And as the congregation sang contemporary Taizé chants in Latin (modern music written in an ancient language) the children remained at the front of the church, splashing about in the water that covered the steps.

Diana Butler Bass let this image sink into our minds for a moment, and then told us that as she watched this scene unfold she felt deep in her soul that she had somehow stumbled into the church of the future.

I was deeply moved by her story, and I said as much during the question and answer period that followed. But I was also troubled, so I raised my hand and said: "As a young person of faith, your vision of this gay priest and the wet and oily baby and all the children splashing and the Latin chanting—the whole picture—it fills me with joy. It is beautiful to me. It feels real. It feels right. Why," I asked, "do you think there are so many people who find a vision such as this threatening?" She was quiet for a moment and then she said something I will never forget. "Because it's messy. It's messy," she said, "and people aren't comfortable with messy."

I had expected her to say something conventional about how church people don't like change, but the moment she said it's messy, I realized that she was absolutely right. It was messy—good church, living church, a church where people are real and the Holy Spirit is moving. Good church is always messy because life is messy. People are messy. Scripture is messy. Creation is messy. Theology and tradition and society try to impose some order on the mess, but the truth is,



if you're going to try and work with both the *Bible* and people, over time it's going to get a little crazy. And that's okay, because God works best in the mess. That's the way it's always been and that's the way it should be.

## The Importance of the Journey

by Kevin Baxter



The "Finding Our Way" conference showed three viewpoints on the future of the Christian movement. The speakers were evangelical, modern academic, and mainline liberal protestant, but all made the same point: even though each had a different route to get there, they all said that the Christianity of tomorrow needs to be applicable and inspirational to a person's life—in other words, transformational.

As I sat through the presentations I kept thinking to myself, why isn't the Swedenborgian Church the leader of this movement? After all, we bring the spiritual and natural together in a way that few others do. Moreover, we embody language and teachings that embody the exact principles the speakers are addressing.

### How do I really help people find faith meaningful?

It made me realize that language and theological teachings are really not enough to meet the needs of people who thirst for spiritual knowledge. The quest itself is as important an element of the spiritual journey as the answer that awaits. In fact, answers to spiritual questions can come too quickly.

I now ask myself, how do we invite the world and its questions into our tradition without detracting from the spiritual journey? This is a difficult thing for me to do when I have such a beautiful and immense resource, Swedenborg's writings, sitting on my bookshelf. How do I inspire transformation in the people around me? How do I really help people find faith meaningful?

Dianne Butler Bass, in *Christianity for the Rest of Us*, writes about an experience she had at a conference. Everyone was being spiritual through a breathing prayer meditation when she had an epiphany. No wonder the liberal church is dying; it is looking for the spiritual inside itself, when the truth of the spiritual world is not within. She opened her eyes and looked for churches that embraced the spiritual with open eyes.

How do we open our eyes? How do we open our mouths? How do we open our arms? How do we open ourselves to truly being transformed by the Lord entering our lives and our ministries? That is the future of the church, to truly embrace the transformative and regenerative power of the Lord.

## Emergent and the New Church

by Andy Stinson



The emergent conversation has taken place over the last 15 to 20 years. Emerging from the evangelical movement, it began with a group of disillusioned leaders who began to seek God in a new way. Their goal is to facilitate a conversa-

tion that is beyond liberal and conservative and has at its core a the love of Jesus and how that love is being called to be lived out in the world. Believing that the modern/postmodern shift is something that is profoundly affecting our world and the church, emergent voices talk about the church in the light of all that is changing in this world. One result is the foundation of a series of conversations that seek to reach beyond lines that have traditionally kept the left, right and center divided in their theology, practice and engagement with God.

### There is an investment in being right that often overcomes unity in Christ when denominations engage in conversation.

"Finding our Way" brought together three of the foremost thinkers in this conversation: Brian McLaren, Diana Butler Bass, and Marcus Borg. Speaking specifically to liberal protestant churches, the speakers shared their beliefs and wisdom from observations of our culture, the world and the place the church has in that changing context.

Swedenborgianism has a valuable and important voice to lend to the emergent conversation, and we have many things to learn from the voices of others dealing with same challenges we are. The power of the emergent movement lies in its quest for a conversation among the disparate voices of faith. There are three points where I see the emergent conversation relating to the New Church in the world and facilitating the decent of the Holy City: primacy of love to the Lord, illuminating the changes in the world resulting from the modern/

Continues on next page

## Finding Our Way

continued from preceding page  
postmodern shift, and commitment to living our faith in the world.

### Primacy of love to the Lord

As we have always been invitational and supportive to other faith traditions Swedenborgians have often struggled to relate to our fellow Christians. On some level, it is easier to embrace and be supportive of the practices and positions of other faiths than the different permutations of our own. In many ways, I believe it is an expression of the old maxim that “no one can fight like family,” but it goes deeper. There is an investment in being right that often overcomes unity in Christ when denominations engage in conversation. Swedenborgians are not immune from this tendency, and yet one of the foundational ideas of our faith is that we ought to put love to the Lord over love of our doctrine. Our call to love the neighbor is loving the good in the neighbor, and at times we fall short.

One of their core practices of the emergent movement is to unify around our desire to be in Christly community. We do not have to agree on matters of doctrine, but it is in sharing how we come to understand Jesus and our walk that we come to know God more fully in one another. I think it would be a powerful point of impact for our beliefs and our tradition to enter into this conversation with other Christians in a deliberate and loving way.

### Illuminating change—the modern/postmodern shift

All of the church is in turmoil. Liberal, conservative, white, black, United States, Latin America, Africa, Rome—it does not matter the location or the theology of the church.

All our institutions that were built as God’s handmaiden in this world are struggling to point people toward the gates of the Holy City. It is not simply a matter of the forms that worship takes, the type of music or the way decisions are made; it is more fundamental than the externals. The very internals of the church are at issue, being vastated all over the world as postmodernity gives rise to this new world in which technology, freedom and affluence are changing what we always believed to be true about the world for the past 500 years.

The emergent movement is en-

### The Emergent Conversation

You can learn more about the emergent conversation and listen to these speakers by going to [www.emergentvillage.com](http://www.emergentvillage.com). You can download podcasts by each of these speakers. I encourage you listen to them or read books by these authors to get a better sense of their full comments.

tering into conversation and action around what these changes mean, how the church can respond and what the real nature of church should be. For instance, Brian McLaren (as well as other emergent leaders), believes we should be working toward the kingdom of God on earth not as theocracy, but as a way of living out Christ’s love in our world. Much of this is similar to the doctrine of the New Church that Swedenborg wrote about over 200 years ago, intimating a world where heaven is getting closer and becoming more manifest in the world.

We, Swedenborgian Christians and every other kind of Christian,

must reexamine how we live in the world and what our vision of the world will be. We are no different than any other traditions of Christianity in the world on this matter. We have tremendous resources to draw upon and share with our brothers and sisters in Christ, and they have incredibly valuable tools and resources to help us learn how to live in this new world.

### Commitment to living our faith in the world

The emergent movement is foundationally missional. It is about living faith in the world, not retreating into churches or buildings or even homes, but being declaring to the world our faith in God. We have the most to learn from the emergent movement here. Note the word, missional, not missionary. The missional church, the one that seeks to live its faith out in the world, is not one that “converts the heathen” so much as one that acts in the world out of God’s love. Acts of social justice, acts of theological conversation, stewardship for the earth, self reflection and personal growth are components of what it means to be missional. In fact, it is nothing more than a commitment to growth on all levels, individual, corporate and global, through the transformative power of God.

We need to learn how to share our faith in this new way. We need to spend less energy analyzing what it means to be Swedenborgian and simply be Swedenborgian, be angels of love in the world, be people who testify by our fruits, be people who live out the mission that God has given us. We can learn so much by joining the emergent conversation, not to help us be more like them, but to express more fully who we are and to better share the real gifts we bring to

the world.

I encourage you to explore what the emergent writing or meeting has to offer, bringing your full faith to the table. Pick up a book, or find meetings (called cohorts) in many areas through the website We have a lot to offer the emergent movement, and it has a lot to offer us. Let's get our voice into the conversation where we can expand our understanding of God's love for us and the world. ☞

Chris Laitner is president of General Convention.

Rev. Sarah Buteux is pastor of the First Congregational Church of Hadley, Massachusetts. Her sermons are available as podcasts at [www.first-churchhadley.org](http://www.first-churchhadley.org).

Rev. Kevin Baxter is pastor of the Cambridge Church.

Andy Stinson is Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

## Dispatch from Fryeburg

by Ken Turley

Like my faith in God, regularly examining things from a perspective of doubt and skepticism keeps them fresh and strong—so it is with my professional relationship with ministry.



After nearly 25 years, I'm still just beginning to figure out what it means to be a minister. Recently, I was in one of my two- or three-times-a-year moods when I was wishing I did something else for a living, anything else—preferably digging ditches or humping brush (a technical term that means hauling tree limbs and scrap cuttings to the chipper), or anything else that was physically demanding and emotionally and mentally not.

It was one of those times when I was deep in the downside of things. What is more, Laurie and my mom were devoting the afternoon to preparing, and the evening to throwing, a baby shower at our house for our "adopted daughter" Shirley Thunderhorse. With the threat of a dozen women and as many kids, most of them knee high or less, I decided to get out of there—for everyone's spiritual well-being. So I went to our summer camp in Bridgton and was looking forward to a few quiet hours by myself, hopefully followed by a "boys night out" jamming with my hunting buddies.

I had arrived at the camp, settled my stuff and was just beginning to settle myself in, letting the fading light off the lake and the welcoming dark of the forest calm my mind and emotions. I was just beginning to forget I was a minister when the phone rang. It was Laurie telling me that the lo-

cal funeral director had called and was asking if I could do a memorial service on Monday. I began contemplating another lost day off, mixed with wondering if I knew the person and if I could get through this service without getting too deeply enmeshed in the emotional depths of pain and loss and my own helplessness at not being able to take away loved ones' suffering. Then it was that Laurie said, "It's for Katherine Seavey."

The name was vaguely familiar and floated around inside my head for a minute without making any connections. And then it dawned on me: this was the woman I had known as Kay Seavey! She had been in a nursing home for over five years now and her husband, Earl, had died even before that.

**Then, in an instant,  
everything I had been  
thinking and feeling went  
out the window; like  
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everything changed.**

Then, in an instant, everything I had been thinking and feeling went out the window; like the spirit moving across the face of the water, everything changed. I was flooded with memories of sitting in their cozy living room so many times and talking with her and Earl while trying to keep their sixty-pound dog off my lap. All the stories they shared, mostly of hunting and early years in Fryeburg long before my time, flowed through my mind. Earl told me about all his favorite hunting places, and they shared their favorite camping and fish-

continues on page 13

### Church Calendar

**February 23:** Strategic planning meeting • General Council and invited guests • Las Vegas

**March 17:** PUSH (Augmentation Fund Committee) conference call meeting

**April 5:** General Council conference call meeting

**April 11–12:** SHS Board meeting • Berkeley

**April 15–17:** Committee on Admission into the Ministry (CAM) meeting • Berkeley

**May 28–29:** Memorial Day • Central Office closed

**June 29–July 1:** Council of Ministers • Bridgewater, Massachusetts

**July 2–July 6:** Annual Convention • Bridgewater, Massachusetts

**July 11–14:** Gathering Leaves • Purley Chase, England

## AFC Gives Itself a PUSH in the Right Direction

by Kim Hinrichs

At its annual meeting last September, the Augmentation Fund Committee got serious about continuing its transformation into a more accountable granting body. The Augmentation Fund was established in 1912 "for the support and extension of the New Church ministry and missionary field." In recent years the primary activity of the committee has been providing financial assistance to churches by augmenting funds for ministers' salaries.

Over the past few years, AFC has instituted new policies and procedures to require more accountability and to more effectively help the denomination. This process culminated in the decision to rename the The Augmentation Fund Committee the PUSH Committee (Promoting Usefulness, Sustainability and Health). The name of the Augmentation Fund, which the committee administers, has not been changed.

The committee revisited the original goals of the fund and its uses throughout its history, and then developed a new mission statement:

The mission of the PUSH committee is to promote the sustainability, health and growth of societies of the Swedenborgian Churches of North America by awarding grants for initiatives that foster the emergence of a growing Christian spiritual consciousness in light of the revelation of Emanuel Swedenborg.

In addition, the committee re-stated the purpose of the fund to bring it up to date. The purpose of the Augmentation Fund is:

1. To provide grants to fund salaries of ministers ordained by the Swedenborgian Church of North America.
2. To fund theological student ordination expenses as required by the Committee on Admission to the Ministry and approved by the PUSH Committee.
3. To fund salaries of ordained ministers employed in denominational positions.
4. To support initiatives that facilitate the health and sustainability of societies of the Swedenborgian Church of North America.

The value of the fund is over \$6 million, which generates annual income of around \$265,000 that is

available for grants.

One of the main goals of the PUSH committee is to help churches become self-sustainable. The salary grants are intended to provide short-term help to churches on a long-term path toward vitality. The committee hopes to be able to support new and promising initiatives.

The committee will accept grant proposals for 2009 by August 1, 2008. PUSH guidelines and forms will be available on the denominational web site soon. If you'd like to know more, please contact PUSH Committee Chair Rev. Kim Hinrichs at [Kimberly.hinrichs@gmail.com](mailto:Kimberly.hinrichs@gmail.com).

Kim Hinrichs is director of outreach at Swedenborg House of Studies.

### 2008 PUSH Grant Recipients

The committee received grant proposals totaling over \$388,000 for 2008. While the committee was unable to fulfill all requests, it did decide to temporarily access prior years' unexpended income to fund the most promising proposals. The PUSH Committee is pleased to announce the following recipients of grants for 2008:

Grant Recipient	Location	Amount
Church of the New Jerusalem	Cambridge, Massachusetts	\$22,000
Swedenborg Chapel	Cleveland, Ohio	\$25,000
Church of the Holy City	Edmonton, Alberta	\$23,000
Hillside Community Church	El Cerrito California	\$35,000
Korean New Church	Brooklyn, New York	\$20,000
Lansing Swedenborgian Church	Lansing, Michigan	\$1,500
The Portland New Church	Portland, Maine	\$17,273
Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound	Kirkland, Washington	\$28,000
Church of the Holy City	Royal Oak, Michigan	\$12,500
Swedenborgian Church of San Diego	San Diego, California	\$29,500
Swedenborgian House of Studies, outreach	Berkeley, California	\$17,000
Swedenborgian House of Studies, student requirements	Berkeley, California	\$20,000
The New Church of Florida	Fort Myers, Florida	\$39,000
Virginia St. Swedenborgian Church	St. Paul, Minnesota	\$25,000
<b>Total Grants Awarded</b>		<b>\$314,773</b>

## MLK Connection to Swedenborg Revealed

by Jim Lawrence

Morehouse College in Atlanta acquired the Martin Luther King Collection last year and recently provided a tantalizing preview of King's interest in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. A page of King's handwritten notes in *A Modern Anthology of Emerson* are on display at the Atlanta History Center, and they address Swedenborg and his writings.

The Morehouse web site says in part:

Perhaps the least known significant facet of the King Collection is the contents of his personal library, which comprises approximately 1,000 volumes, ranging from childhood books, to school and college texts, through classics of history, literature and philosophy and, of course, sociology and theology. Many of these books are either closely annotated by King, or else bear presentation inscriptions from their authors.

Exciting as the inscribed books are, the volumes—theological and secular—that King studied as part of his formal and ongoing education are even more important as evidence of the early and continuing influences of his intellectual development.

King's interest in a text is immediately discernible by the quantity of his annotations. Some books receive only a signature of ownership, or a few cursory underlinings or marginal check marks. Others dramatically engaged his attention, and in these he either carried on a virtual conversation with the author (as in Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, whose end leaves and

margins are crammed with King's handwritten questions and comments) or took the printed text as a starting point for his own work (as in *A Modern Anthology of Emerson*, which bears on its preliminaries and first few text leaves a full autograph essay on Swedenborg and issues of slavery and freedom).

Morehouse is adamant about keeping everybody away until the collection is fully cataloged, so we do not know the extent of King's notes. It is predicting another year of work before it is ready to present the collection to the world.

It is intriguing that the little essay on ES in King's hand on the front end leaves of the Emerson anthology was especially interesting to Morehouse. In addition to featuring King's notes on Swedenborg in the History Center display, Morehouse refers to them on its web site. The reference hints that King's notes go on for several pages.

We eagerly await the opening of the entire collection to scholars. ☛

Jim Lawrence is dean of the Swedenborg House of Studies.

## SCYL Officers

continued from page 5

Camp last year. He is pastor of the Church of the Holy City in Edmonton, Alberta. This is David's first time in the role of League chaplain, and we all look forward to his wisdom and spiritual guidance. Please congratulate all of our 2008 SCYL officers and our League chaplain. This is an incredibly motivated and skilled group. I see great possibilities for the SCYL this year. I look forward to working with this team, and I hope that you get to know some of them better in the coming year.

Kurt Fekete is director of SCYL.

## News in Brief

The **Portland New Church** has launched an adventure this year called STAR—Spiritual Transformation and Renewal.

Members will use *Returning to the Source: The Way to the Experience of God* by Wilson Van Dusen as a guide for exploration. Mystic and psychologist Van Dusen provides a practice guidebook to spiritual transformation using the writings of Swedenborg as well as insights from other spiritual traditions.

Each member will receive a monthly STAR packet that includes questions from the book for journaling or sharing with a spiritual partner. Weekly worship services will highlight various aspects of the monthly theme. Read more at [www.theportlandchurch.org](http://www.theportlandchurch.org)

The **Portland New Church** will host a Spiritual Buffet on Transformational Thursdays in February.

People drop in on Thursdays anytime between 5:00 and 6:45 PM for any of these activities: quiet meditation, refreshments and chat, and spiritual conversation.

**Rev. Ken Turley** has been elected to represent the Maine Association of the Church of the New Jerusalem on the Maine Council of Churches (MCC) Board of Directors. MCC was founded in 1938 by, among others, Rev. Louis Dole (father of Rev. Dr. George Dole, who was born in the Fryeburg parsonage and is now serving the Bath New Church), who served as minister at both the Fryeburg and Bath Churches.

MCC is pursuing justice for the four Native American tribes in Maine who still suffer from poverty, discrimination and lack of educational and employment opportunities. ☛

## Dispatch from Fryeburg

continued from page 9

ing spots. Earl and Kay were deeply involved in the church when I arrived over twelve years ago. Earl taught me how to do the pick-ups when we still used to gather stews, chili and pies cooked in people's homes for the fair. At five AM we would drive around town making anywhere from five to ten stops, and then deliver everything to the fair booth by seven.

They had some great stories, and both Kay and Earl had lived hard lives. They were on the small side physically, but Earl was powerfully built and tough as nails, and not somebody I would want to wrestle, even just for fun. And Kay had a hard leanness with the look in her eye of a pioneer woman who had endured plenty, and who was going to go right on doing so.

I loved Kay and Earl for the hardships they had endured and the experiences they had learned from to become the kindly, caring, helpful, humble people that I knew. I had forgotten how grateful I was to them, for without even knowing it they helped me a great deal in the sometimes difficult transition into the position of "the new pastor" in a small town.

It was after this phone call for Kay Seavey's funeral, and the four calls I made after that setting up arrangements, that I began to see with my mind's eye the many calls that would follow creating the connecting network of people moving out through this community we call the Fryeburg New Church. I saw clearly with a new appreciation that as pastor of this church my role, my purpose, my function, my use, is to be present as a nexus of communication and spiritual connection. And within

that, it is to be with people over time and through their moments of transition as a representative of, and an expression of, God's caring love. It is to be a presence for the individuals and families and the community in the times when their foundations are shaken. Just being here day to day over time allows me to serve as a kind of spiritual light house in the dark, foggy and sometimes stormy times in the lives of the people of this community. My role is to provide a centering presence and an expression of God's benevolence in the joyful, ecstatic and often emotionally chaotic times of birth and celebration as well as in the painful, fearful and often emotionally devastating times of loss and grief. When I had finished my calls, and the arrangements with the various people who served in various functions around the unfolding of this memorial service were complete, I sat back and saw, in a whole new way, just how important the role of pastor is.

Given the variety of skills and abilities required, the centrality, the constant visibility, the responsibility and the ongoing emotional engagement with so many different people that serving in this role requires, it is perhaps understandable why this job is not for everyone. Many who sincerely want to serve, simply are not equipped to do what is needed in the right way; some burn out way too soon and some fail with devastating consequences. But it is also easy to see how rewarding it can be when things go well, and how meaningful it can be when we stay centered in God and move through troubled times together, when the community comes together to serve both God and "the neighbor" in sometimes joyful, sometimes sad, but reverent and

more importantly relevant ways, and when the community rests in a place of spiritual peace and trust and well-being. These are the rewards of being a minister.

Jack London said something about wanting to burn brightly across the sky, even if it meant burning out quickly. He didn't want to just flicker along unnoticed. To be a good minister you cannot think like that. If you burn out quickly and are gone, you've damaged yourself and your absence makes you no more use to anyone. The challenge is to burn bright enough and constantly, but only with such an intensity that can be maintained over time.

It is on this day when I felt like chucking it all, when I wanted to be anywhere but where I was, wishing that in some way I could be anything but a minister, that because of a phone call for the funeral of a past parishioner, that I see with new eyes and new appreciation what being a minister means. The death of Kay Seavey has brought me new life. Thanks be to God, to Kay, and to the people of this church community for allowing me to be their minister. ☩

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

### Reminders

- The Swedenborg House of Studies has accepted a challenge from an anonymous donor to match gifts from new donors (up to a specified amount). Please consider contributing with your tax-deductible (US residents) donation.
- The 2007 Journal of the Swedenborgian Church is available for distribution. Contact Central office at 617.969.4240 or [centalo@swedenborg.org](mailto:centalo@swedenborg.org) for details.

# Passages

## Births

**Rev. Alison and Adam Lane-Olsen** are the proud parents of a new baby boy, **Monroe Francis Lane-Olsen**, born December 23, 2007. They live in Nashotah, Wisconsin. Maternal Grandparents are Elvin and Vene-ta Lane, and great grandparents are Rev. Eric and Betty Zacharias, all of Hutchinson, Kansas.

**Dan and Jen Jueneman** of Hanover, Kansas are the proud parents of a baby girl, **Leigha Marrie**, born No-

vember 16, 2007. Maternal grand-parents are Jill and Tom Duis.

## Baptisms

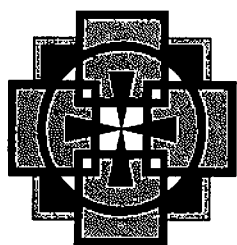
**Marie Elizabeth (Williamson) Archer**, daughter of James and Betty Williamson, was baptized into the Christian faith on December 30, 2007, at Fryeburg New Church, Rev. Ken Turley officiating

**Nina Ruth Sasser** was baptized into the life and faith of the Swedenborgian Church on December 29, 2007, at the annual SCYL retreat at Almont Retreat Center, the Revs. Jun-chol

Lee and Jennifer Tafel officiating.

## Death

**Virginia Lorraine Erickson**, 93, a longtime member of the First New Jerusalem Society of Philadelphia, passed into the spiritual world on January 23, 2008. She had worked at Wachovia Bank until her eighties and was active in the church choir until last year. Her gentleness and grace will be greatly missed by those who loved her. A remembrance service will be held at Temenos later this spring, officiated by her pastor and friend, Rev. Susannah Currie.



SWEDENBORGIAN  
HOUSE OF STUDIES

*at Pacific School of Religion*

## The Swedenborgian House of Studies is pleased to announce...

### Online Courses and Study Groups starting in April!

Would you like to learn how to live with more acceptance of yourself and your life journey? Would you like to discuss with others the real purpose of your life and of creation itself? Would you like to deepen your understanding of Swedenborg's thought and how it applies to your life? Then come and learn with us!

#### Everyday Mysticism

**April 14-June 2**

Explore the meaning of mysticism and spirituality and find out how they are present in our everyday lives, potentially opening us to new realms of growth and understanding. We'll look at Swedenborg and other mystics through history, and then look at what mysticism means in today's world and in community with others. Throughout the course, we will balance head and heart to relate the ideas to our own spiritual journeys. *Teaching Minister: Rev. Wilma Wake.* Fee: \$175, or \$135 if 3 or more register together.

#### Introduction to Swedenborg

**April 14-June 2**

This course will offer an accessible and comprehensive introductory step for those not familiar with Swedenborg or those who would like to deepen their understanding of Swedenborg. We will learn about Swedenborg's own spiritual journey and then examine some of his core ideas: the spiritual meaning of the Bible, the centrality of love, heaven, spiritual growth and the dawning of a new age. *Teaching Minister: Rev. Jun-chol Lee.* Fee: \$175, or \$135 if 3 or more register together.

#### Start a Reading Group with A Book About Us!

Rev. George Dole's newest book, *A Book About Us: The Bible and Stages of Our Lives* takes us on an accessible journey through the most widely read book on the planet. Along the way he invites us into relationship with the text as we reflect on how its core narrative corresponds to our own life journeys. We invite you to start a local reading and spiritual discussion group in your church or neighborhood. George will act as a resource person to the group leaders. Free.

**For more information, please go to [www.shs.psr.edu](http://www.shs.psr.edu).**

## 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.



## Come to Convention 2008 in Bridgewater, Massachusetts

Mark your calendar for July 2–6, 2008. The Massachusetts Association invites you to Convention 2008, "Shout With All Your Might," at Bridgewater State College in Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

The Council of Ministers will meet June 29–July 1.

You can arrive before July 2 to explore eastern Massachusetts and the Boston area.. Bridgewater is within an hour of historic Plymouth and Cape Cod. Boston and Cambridge are accessible by commuter train, and the Bridgewater station is right next to the campus. The Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church is within walking

distance of the campus.

The campus is flat, our venues close together, and our rooms air conditioned.

The campus can be reached by public transportation from Logan airport in Boston. The major airlines including Jet Blue, fly to Logan. Southwest flies to T. F. Green airport near Providence, Rhode Island, about an hour away by car. There is ample parking, and Bridgewater can be reached without driving through Boston.

This year you will be able to register online at the Massachusetts Association web page, [www.swedenborgma.org](http://www.swedenborgma.org), beginning in March.

**"And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him."**

*Joshua 6:5*

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