



## SCYL Memorial Day Retreat: A Minister's Experience

By David J. Fekete

"I'm afraid when I go home I won't feel as close to God." A teen told me this on the last night of the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL) Memorial Day retreat at Fryeburg New Church Assembly in Fryeburg, Maine. She asked me whether praying every night and reading stories from the Bible about Jesus would help her feel close to God. I said, "Yes," and she said that's what she would do. This retreat was her first SCYL retreat, and she said she wanted to come to another one.

Earlier that evening we had had a communion service. A different teen approached Rev. Jenn Tafel and me and said, "That was the best communion service I've ever been to, and I've been to a lot." During the service—for the first time during the whole retreat—the teens were silent and somber. When

I heard them all reciting the Lord's Prayer, I was overcome by the innocence I heard, and I got choked up. It was hard for me to talk—especially when I pronounced the closing benediction. After the service, a teen came running up to me and said, "Let me

look at your eyes! Were you crying?"

"Yes," I said. She gave me a hug.

This was my first official activity as the SCYL chaplain. I'm not a parent, and at the age of 52, I wondered if I could relate to the 18 teens who attended. Teens are notorious for not showing you whether they are taking in anything you say. One teen looked like he was sleeping at one of my ses-

not like about themselves, and what they needed to do to move forward in their development as a way to illustrate repentance. Rev. Jenn Tafel played music and a video, and had the teens draw a picture capturing their vision of what life would look like if they followed through on the exercise as a way of presenting reformation. To illustrate regeneration, I played a song on the guitar that ended with the lyrics:

O the years have come and gone  
Only love will live on  
Now I'll lay my burden down.

I watched the teens during their free time. Old, dear friendships were renewed. New, dear friendships were formed. There's something special and holy about the bonds the teens form at retreats. The interactions with each other and with staff carve out sacred space—what Swedenborg calls "the holy things of love."

I felt good about the retreat. The Swedenborgian Church youth director, Kurt Fekete, administered the schedule and activities, and related so well with the teens that

he was both peer and facilitator. Lori Steinhiser, Lisa Lucka, and Rev. Jenn Tafel drove more than 15 hours each way in order to give teens in their area the gift of a Swedenborgian retreat. They were a source of support for the

continues on page 91



From left: Mary Beth Bernier, Janice Earls, Cody Steinhiser, Holly Bauer, Nina Sasser, Liz Dyer enjoying sunshine and music on the bench.

sions, but when I mentioned his name, he immediately said, "What?"

The theme of the retreat was "Salvation." I introduced the theme by talking about Eastern and Western systems of salvation. Rev. Ken Turley had the teens write down what they did and did

## The Editor's Desk



I recently attended both a college reunion and a family reunion over a long weekend. I thoroughly enjoyed myself in both circumstances.

I return to Oberlin College, my alma mater, every five years for reunions. Only between 15 and 25 percent of my classmates show up for each reunion, but everyone seems to have wonderful time. The rush of scheduled events, casual gatherings, conversations, and strolls through campus and town leave little time for sleep or quiet contemplation. It is a veritable feast of social interaction and connection.

Most striking at these reunions is the ease with which I am able to engage in meaningful conversation, personal or intellectual, with old friends, old acquaintances, and people whose faces I knew, but who I never or rarely spoke with when I was a student. It is a satisfying and rewarding experience.

This was my first family reunion. My brother and a cousin organized a gathering of the descendents of my grandfather, Oliver Wesley Ziegler in Zelienople, Pennsylvania, the town where my

cousins, my father, my grandfather, his father, and his grandfather grew up.

We picnicked at my cousin's home, which is across the road from the log cabin my grandfather grew up in, built by his grandfather. Next door to my cousin is the Lutheran church my great-grandfather built, and next to that the parsonage he built for the minister newly arrived from teaching at Gustavus Adolphus College in Saint Peter, Minnesota. The minister's family included his 15-year-old daughter Bessie, who, a few years later, married Oliver. We also visited the Mennonite meeting house down the road (now a Pennsylvania Historic Site) that Oliver's great-grandfather Abraham, the progenitor of our clan in Western Pennsylvania, built when he settled there.

I reconnected with my cousins and their spouses, who I have seen little or not at all since we were very young men, and talked with cousins once and twice removed I had met as children or not at all. I even met one cousin's great-granddaughter. We had fell easily into conversation and laughter. The time passed so quickly we agreed to meet again to continue our lively conversations about our lives and the lives of our ancestors.

I am happy to see a revival of Transitions (article, page 82) and a continuation of SCYL teen retreats (article, page 77). Giving young people the opportunity to experience reunion in a spiritual framework is among the most important work we do. We appreciate the adults, young people, and funding bodies that make this possible.

One of the joys I experience attending Annual Convention is reconnecting with old friends and making new friends from across the continent. It is a joy to socialize and converse on various subjects, personal, social, and spiritual, while meeting for the purpose of conducting serious business for the Church. It is a rewarding experience. I

hope you get as much out of it as I do, and I hope I will see you in Bridgewater for Annual Convention. ☛

Herb Ziegler

## New Chrysalis Reader: *Imagine That!*

Volume 14 of the *Chrysalis Reader* is available from the Swedenborg Foundation. The title is *Imagine That!*, and the theme is "Breaking Through to Other Worlds." Inside are essays, stories, and poems that explore worlds around us and within us, punctuated with reproductions of artwork and rubbings of brass plates depicting buildings in New York City.

This volume contains far more than its heft indicates. It contains writing that will captivate you, slow you down, and, indeed, transport you to other worlds. It is available from the Foundation for \$15.95. ☛

### Church Calendar

**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**  
**July 20–26: Paulhaven Camp**  
**July 26–August 2: Almont Camp**  
**August 2–17: Fryeburg Camp**  
**October 17–18: SHS Board of Trustees • Berkeley, California**  
**November 7–8: General Council • Location TBA**

## the Messenger

© The Swedenborgian Church of North America  
 Published monthly except July and August by The Communications Support Unit of The Swedenborgian Church of North America (founded 1817, incorporated 1861 as the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America).

June 2008

Volume 230, No. 6, Whole Number 5331

Editor: Herb Ziegler

#### Editorial Address:

Herb Ziegler, The Messenger  
 2 Hancock Place  
 Cambridge, MA 02139

tel: 617.491.5181

e-mail: hziegler@springmail.com

#### Business and Subscription Address:

The Messenger, Central Office  
 11 Highland Avenue  
 Newtonville, MA 02460

e-mail: manager@swedenborg.org

Subscription free to members of the Swedenborgian Church; nonmembers: \$12/year; foreign: \$15/year; gift subscription from a member: \$5/year; single copies: \$1.00.

**Deadline for submissions** is six weeks before the first day of the month of issue.

The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or the Communications Support Unit, or represent the position of the Church.

# On the Way to the 2008 Annual Convention

By Chris Laitner

One of the best “perks” of serving as your president is that I receive a large number of church newsletters and weekly bulletins via both the Postal Service and the internet. These missives arrive at different intervals, so there’s always something new to enjoy. What is so wonderful is the freshness of the pastoral messages and the vitality of the programs and projects that are listed in these pages.

It’s very possible that those of you who undertake the responsibility of creating these newsletters and bulletins, those who write for them and those who are the leaders and participants in the lives of the local churches, don’t always see the freshness and vitality because you’re “in it.” There is truth to the statement about not being able to see the forest for the trees. You may be looking at deadlines or working to gather people together for a program or a project, and trying hard not to fall into the “Oh, all right! I’ll just do it

myself” trap.

But be assured, the care, the concern, the ministry, the outreach, the community involvement, and the sheer life that is the church shines through it all.

As you read this, we are very close to our Annual Convention, which will be held in Bridgewater, Massachusetts this year. As a member of the denomination who lives some distance from a Swedenborgian church, I have always been happily grateful for these annual gatherings of ministers, delegates, families, and friends. It’s a touchstone—a time to celebrate the larger church.

In the year that has passed since our last convention, our church has continued to be vital. Our local churches are offering regular worship services, many with Sunday schools for all ages, and are participating in community endeavors. Our connectional online ministry, [www.swedenborgiancommunity.org](http://www.swedenborgiancommunity.org), continues to evolve and expand under the guidance of its steering committee and its minister, Rev. Wilma Wake. The Swedenborgian House of Studies is moving forward with its clearly-structured strategic plan, this spring offering two online lay education classes and brainstorming ways to move forward on the next step of its journey. We’ve seen the successful

launching of the New Church of the Southwest Desert in Silver City, New Mexico; we’ve celebrated and dedicated a new building for the ministry of the New Church of Southwest Florida; and there is some serious research going on around a potential church planting in western Massachusetts. There are other signs of our church living into the world in growing ways.

Nearly a quarter of a century ago, our denomination adopted a new structure based on well-defined guiding principles. Article I, Section 2 of our constitution defines the purpose of the Swedenborgian Church, and it is upon that guiding statement that we act in the world. The purpose remains intact, and it is now our work to find how best to continue to be the church—in ministries and individually—in this time when the social climate is vastly different than 20 or 25 years ago. It is a time of promise and potential, and during this coming Annual Convention we’ll be talking about the next steps to take on this journey to welcome, support, serve, and live even better as a church. So, bring your thoughts, your hopes, and your ideas to share. See you at Convention! ☪

Chris Laitner is president of the Swedenborgian Church of North America.

## Contents

SCYL Memorial Day Retreat: A Minister's Experience.....	77
The Editor's Desk.....	78
Church Calendar.....	78
On the Way to the 2008 Annual Convention.....	79
Emerging Paradigms: Swedenborg, Tolle, and A New Earth	80
Transitions Retreat:	
Young Adults Gather.....	82
The First George Bush.....	83
Journey Toward a New Website.....	87
Portable True Christianity.....	87
Swedenborg and Religious Censorship .....	88
A Poem for My Mother .....	89
Urbana Elects 21st President .....	89
Swedenborgian Church Statistics .....	90
Passages .....	91
News in Brief .....	91
Reflection: I Like to Fly.....	92

## Position Search Announcement

### Executive Editor of the Swedenborg Foundation

The Executive Editor is the chief operations officer who, under the direction of the board, supervises and coordinates a small professional staff in carrying out the programs of the Swedenborg Foundation.

The search is currently underway and will continue until the position is filled.

Interested parties should contact the chairperson of the search committee, James Lawrence, at [jlawrence@psr.edu](mailto:jlawrence@psr.edu) or 510-849-8232.

# Emerging Paradigms: A Closer Look at Swedenborg, Tolle, and A New Earth

Eckhart Tolle recently received notoriety from his book, *A New Earth* (2005, Dutton Penguin Group: New York), being chosen for Oprah Winfrey's Book Club. His 1999 Book, *The Power of Now*, was reviewed in the January, 2008 issue of *The Messenger*.

by Dave Brown



## Introduction

Don't take your thoughts too seriously! The descent of the Holy City New Jerusalem and the foundations for a completely transformed "New Earth" may depend on it. If we take a closer look at Swedenborg and Eckhart Tolle, they both point to a profound shift in spiritual awareness that rises above thought (the hells), connecting directly with the divine.

Prayer and meditation have long been used as a way to connect with God. One explanation is that this practice creates some "space" around our thoughts, which are constantly trying to get our complete attention. If we do not create this space, we can become completely identified with these thoughts, and our experience of the divine is greatly diminished.

Let me be clear, the mind is a beautiful and heavenly gift. But how much of your daily life is spent in pristine awareness? Unless you are a spiritual master and can rise above thought at will into direct union, then chances are high that your thoughts are in control. Swedenborg spent nearly 30 years in this pristine awareness, and humanity continues to benefit greatly from his writings.

Another useful label for excessive thought is ego: identification with thought and the material world. Truly

understanding what the ego is can take some effort simply because it can be so difficult to recognize within ourselves. Hence the usually long spiritual journey towards spiritual regeneration. Swedenborg certainly has much to say on the interplay between the mind, thoughts, affections, and the journey toward regeneration.

That voice in your head constantly trying to get your attention is the ego, or proprium. Most of the time it is simply unconscious and in the background. Whatever the label we choose, creating some space around the absolute seriousness of our thoughts appears to be a critical aspect of the spiritual regeneration process.

## Different Times and Different Uses

Tolle and Swedenborg offer different uses for different times. Swedenborg's genius is, in his voluminous writings, revealing the spiritual sense of the Word and the spiritual realms. Tolle has a different gift to share that fits differently for a different time. In the frenetic pace of our modern, globalizing, 24/7 world, Tolle's teaching is elegant in simplicity, bringing focus back to pristine awareness. Because many lives are already filled with stress, anxiety, or depression, Tolle's simplicity has proven to be extremely popular.

Beyond the teachings or doctrines of Swedenborg and Tolle, what interests me most is how they achieved their spiritual breakthrough moments. What is it about their breakthrough moments that shares the universal? More importantly,

what can each of us learn from them?

## Swedenborg and Tolle's Breakthrough Experiences

Swedenborg and Tolle describe spiritual breakthrough moments that are nearly identical. Both experienced events that created some space around the usual chatter in their minds, enabling them to connect directly with divine influx. There is a comparison of their experiences further on in this article.

No, I have not recently jumped on the Oprah bandwagon! (My ego wanted me to say that.) My introduction to Tolle's teachings occurred early in 2001. This was one of those rare occasions where a book spoke to me so clearly that I had to respond. I just happened to be on my lunch break from work, walking past storefronts, when I saw Tolle's book on display, and I instantly knew that I needed to read it.

The popularity of Tolle's teachings stems from his clarity. Tolle describes the process of spiritual breakthrough as first recognizing the ego (Swedenborg's proprium) or "pain body" within us,

**Beyond the words they use, there is spiritual power. I can read either Swedenborg or Tolle, and I am transported to a heightened realm of existence.**

transforming this through conscious presence or spiritual attention, raising our spiritual vibration above the level of thought to the point where we

are completely immersed in the divine (Swedenborg's state of regeneration). Swedenborg describes this same process in different terms: repentance (Greek *metanoia*, "to think differently after"), reformation, and regeneration.

So now that the great evangelist

Winfrey has given her stamp of approval to Tolle's latest book, *A New Earth*, many Americans are quite familiar with the name Tolle. With Tolle's emergence in popular culture, I wanted to share some insights regarding the teachings of Swedenborg and Tolle.

I see many similarities. First, they both write from a place of enlightenment. Beyond the words they use, there is spiritual power. I can read either Swedenborg or Tolle, and I am transported to a heightened realm of existence. Why?

In doing further research I came across a striking similarity. They both describe spiritual breakthroughs that are profound and permanent. In other words, it not simply a fleeting peak experience (or "peek experience") that they describe, but an ongoing state of existence. It is fascinating that their descriptions of spiritual breakthroughs are almost identical.

Ernst Benz captures this moment beautifully in his book, *Emanuel Swedenborg: Visionary Savant in the Age of Reason*. This specific moment, quoted below, follows a series of breakthrough spiritual experiences for Swedenborg in the year 1744. The following experience takes place on April 18.

At last, it was granted me by the grace of the Spirit to receive faith without reasoning, a real assurance of it. Then, I saw my own confirmatory thoughts as it were beneath me and smiled at them in my mind, and still more at those thoughts that offended and opposed them. Faith then appeared to me above the reach of reason. . . . This is pure faith; the rest is impure as far as it blends with our own understanding: we must make our understanding captive to the obedience of faith. . . . This faith, therefore, is purely the gift of God, which an individual receives if he lives according to the commandments of God and diligently prays to God for it. (p. 185)

This is a major spiritual turning point and a profound spiritual shift. The key phrase in this experience is the second sentence: "Then, I saw my own confirmatory thoughts as it were beneath me and smiled at them in my mind, and still more at those thoughts that offended and opposed them." It is a moment where Swedenborg describes "space" being given to surrounding thought. This description of "smiling at the thoughts of his mind" is a perfect description of reaching the state of consciousness that is above thought.

There are several turns of phrase that Tolle uses to explain his teachings in very similar terms, such as "watching the thinker" and more specifically, "smiling at our thoughts." "One day you may catch yourself smiling at the voice in your head, as you would smile at the antics of a child" (*The Power of Now*, p. 17). This is similar to Swedenborg's experience and his explanation of the fourth stage of regeneration as a faith of the heart. It is through this discernment process that we are able to recognize a deeper spiritual reality within ourselves.

Tolle describes this existence as "presence," and Swedenborg calls it the "regenerated state." What they both point to is beyond name and form, and can simply be described as pristine awareness. It is very much a feeling state as Tolle describes it. The first book that Tolle wrote came out of his experience of sitting on a park bench for years in this deeply mystical existence that was sometimes palpable to passers-by. People would sometimes sense that he had some profound understanding of life.

Later, people would occasionally come up to me and say: "I want what you have. Can you give it to me, or show me how to get it?" And I would say: "You have it already. You just can't feel it because your mind is making too much noise." (*Ibid.* p. 3.)

This is similar to what Swedenborg

says in *Apocalypse Explained*. He explains the primacy of affections over thought.

Affections bring forth thoughts but thoughts do not bring forth affections. There is an appearance that they do, but it is a fallacy. And when affections bring forth thoughts, they at the same time bring forth all things of man, because affections are of his life. (22, 1175.4)

The deeper sense of who we are goes far beyond the level of thought. Who we are spiritually arises out of our affections, and from those come our thoughts. They arise from our spiritual state—where we are along the path of regeneration.

## Conclusions

It is possible for everyone to reach this heightened state of awareness, and it is not only Tolle and Swedenborg leading the way on these emerging paradigms. Under different circumstances it might have been Wilson Van Dusen as a guest on Oprah.

I recently read Wilson Van Dusen's book, *Returning to the Source—The Way to the Experience of God*. This book was published in 1996, and it essentially parallels Tolle's *The Power of Now* (1999), varying only in style and language. They share themes such as emphasis on the present moment as the gateway to the divine, and how our ego gets in the way of our direct experience of this reality.

The flowering of a new consciousness is sweeping across our planet this very moment. People are awakening to this emerging spiritual reality first described by Swedenborg as the Second Coming in spirit. We are witnessing a New Heaven and New Earth being born through our personal and collective shift in spiritual consciousness. ☸

Rev. Dave Brown is a chapel minister at Wayfarer's Chapel in Palos Verdes, California.

# Transitions Retreat: Young Adults Gather

## Back at It Again

by Matthew Fleming

**T**ransitions, the young adult group of the Swedenborgian Church, held its first retreat after a four-year hiatus over Memorial Day weekend. A group of about fifteen young adults gathered May 23–26 at Temenos Retreat Center. This retreat marked a milestone in the life of our denomination: it was organized and attended entirely by graduates of the Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL) during the tenure of Kurt Fekete, the current youth director.

Much of the emphasis for this retreat came from the desire to reconnect. Old friendships were revived, memories shared, and new friends made. Our spiritual program was led by Rev. Andy Stinson, who took us on a journey through the book of Joshua, highlighting its correspondence to our personal development as we transit from adolescence to adulthood. Between structured activities, we spent our time talking, playing, and laughing.

We give our sincere thanks to the denomination, the Swedenborgian Church at Temenos, and the Ohio Association for their financial support of this retreat, and, of course, to Rev. Andy Stinson for his fantastic volunteer work for our group.

If you would like to know more about or help support Transitions, or attend our future retreats, please get in touch with us at [scyl.transitions@gmail.com](mailto:scyl.transitions@gmail.com). ☛

Matthew Fleming is a member of the Royal Oak Church of the Holy City in Michigan, and serves on General Council. He is a graduate student in engineering at the University of Saskatchewan.

## Seeing the Sacred in Our Story

by Andy Stinson

**O**ver Memorial Day weekend, over fifteen 18-to 28-year-olds (“Transitions”) gathered at the Temenos Retreat Center from the U.S. and Canada to join in fellowship and deepen their faith. As the facilitator, it was my goal to create an atmosphere for this group to deepen their understanding and experience of both each other and their own journey with God.

It was my hope that the participants would be able to see their lives in the biblical story and, as a result, be better able to navigate the lives that they are living. It was about offering a memora-



Transitions create a game to relax by.

ble experience, but also about offering tools for the their life journeys.

We grounded this time of transition in the biblical story of the Israelites’ conquest of the Holy Land in the time of Joshua. We began by seeing the divine story as our own sacred story. As we understood ourselves ‘transiting’ from an exilic time in the wilderness to a time of struggling to establish our place in the world, we began to peg our own journey to the events of the Joshua story.

On Saturday morning we began to tell our story to ourselves. Through journal writing, we wrote the story of our past year, and when we were done we were invited to look not only at the

story of what had happened, but more importantly how we framed and told the story. That idea of framing our own narrative became a main focus of the weekend.

Through this exercise we explored the notion that the events of our lives are far less important than how we choose to perceive them. The attitudes and assumptions we bring to our story are more important than the events themselves, because it is our perceptions that shape our lives.

After writing and reflecting on our narratives, we began hearing the divine story through the pivotal events of the Joshua story. We explored the pattern they laid out for us as we move from the call to battle, to triumph through shortcomings, and into acceptance. The events of the Joshua story powerfully illustrate the way the age of emergence moves and feels.

Having told our stories and heard the divine story, it was time to experience and share them. On the trails of the Temenos Retreat Center were set up seven stations that signified seven events on Joshua’s journey from call to conquest. Small groups, following the trail, stopped at each station, taking a moment for sharing, reflection, prayer, self-examination, and encouragement, seeking as they moved deeper into each task a heightened level of honest reflection and sharing with their fellow pilgrims.

Emerging from the trail, the young adults were welcomed with food, drink, and quiet time to reflect on their journey. Ending with a “love feast” reminiscent of the early church, we included the communion ritual within our time at the dinner table, signifying that our sacred lives were not outside of the love

## The First George Bush:

### Philosopher, Minister, and Swedenborgian Relative of American Presidents

The great granduncle of George Herbert Walker Bush and great, great granduncle of George Walker Bush, the 41st and 43rd Presidents of the United States, wrote the first American biography of Mohammed, produced well-received scholarly commentaries on several Old Testament books, and championed the New Christianity of Swedenborg.

by Francesca McCrossan and  
James F. Lawrence

#### Professor Bush and Swedenborg

It is a grievous thing to be obliged to class two such men together. The former is a scholar, a gentleman, and we hope a good man. The latter was a gifted, calculating imposter, or else he was a fanatic, a religious maniac, so wild and bewildered as to entitle him to the commiseration of mankind. In either case he deserves no confidence. Yet he has the confidence of Professor Bush.

*Boston Recorder* (Calvinist)  
for November 13, 1845

In the autumn of 1845, the East Coast Presbyterian establishment was stunned, bewildered, and angry. One of their highly respected scholars had denounced his Presbyterian faith pub-

we feel with each other, but rather actually present when we gather together as friends and break bread.

The weekend ended with the participants reflecting on their experience of the divine story as their own. I felt privileged to be invited into that space and hear the stories of people's lives and their efforts to hold up the sacred within them.

I was blessed to be a part of this weekend. The work done at this gathering of Transitions calls to mind the lines of the great poet T. S. Eliot in "Little Gidding:"

We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.

Rev. Andy Stinson is chairperson of the Council of Ministers and a trustee of the Swedenborgian House of Studies.

licly, voicing his realization that the theological system of Emanuel Swedenborg was more in line with his own than with the Calvinism of his upbringing. The Rev. George Bush's reputation as a scholar and theologian had scarcely been limited to denominational circles. In his heyday, he rivaled Emerson on the public lecture circuit and was well known to scholars and laity for his views on religious topics of the day. In fact, Emerson was in the midst of his own essay on Swedenborg in his classic, *Representative Men* when Bush made his pronouncement. George Bush taught Hebrew at New York University and published well-received editions of Old Testament interpretation, but his penchant for pursuing many of the same radical idealist currents of thought as did Emerson tended to push Bush into increasingly controversial arenas.

What caused Bush to risk his income, position in society, and security for the later years of his life by taking a stand out of the mainstream? The answer provides a snapshot of religious and scholarly life in nineteenth-century America and adds complexion to the history of the American Swedenborgian church.

#### Bush's Conversion to Christianity

This George Bush, a namesake of the two most recent Republican American presidents, was born in Norwich, Vermont and raised by his father, as his mother died when he was only four years old. Although his parents were not churchgoers, wee George was quite taken by prayer as a child when he saw a small boy praying at his mother's knee.

He was not, as he has often been heard to say, taught to pray, but he went out visiting one day, when about six years old, and saw a little child pray at his mother's knee. . . . he thought he should like to pray too, and he accordingly then began. . . . He had always thought the Lord was good, and would take care of him, but he believed in the Devil also, and greatly feared him. So he used to have two prayers, one to the Lord and one to the Devil. He knew it was no use to flatter or cajole the Lord, but the Devil, he thought, might be somewhat appeased in this way. (*Memoirs and reminiscences of the late Prof. George Bush: being, for the most part, voluntary contributions from different friends, who have kindly consented to this memorial of his worth*, edited and arranged by Woodbury M. Fernald: p. 2.)

Described as a bookish young man, this trait eventually caused his family concern. (We will refrain from alluding to any irony with respect to his descendants.) His father found the boy an apprenticeship in the printing trade at the age of 15. But George was soon sent home by the printer as he kept reading the manuscripts, rather than learning the trade. This caused his father to find him a place at Hanover Academy so that he might prepare for college. He went on to study at Dartmouth College, where his father had also taken his degree. His classmates included those who would also become worthies of the time, such as Massachusetts lawyer and politician Rufus Choate.

Early anecdotes indicate that Bush was a typical, secular college student, but something affected a change in him, and upon graduation from Dartmouth

continues on page 84



## George Bush

continued from page 83

Bush entered the Princeton Theological Seminary. He was ordained in the Presbyterian Church in 1823 and taught for a year at Princeton before being posted to Indianapolis as a home missionary. Soon after, he married and he and his wife had a son. Sadly, Mrs. Bush died in 1827, and the Rev. Bush decided to return east and concentrate on a life of letters.

He had already written occasionally for literary and theological journals, but now he determined to consecrate his life to letters and learning; and in the various departments of dogmatical and ethical theology, general commentary, biblical antiquities, hermeneutics and criticism, the fruits of his industrious pen have ever since engaged the attention of scholars and thinking men. (*Ibid* 5.)

It seems his character had always lent itself to reading, writing and philosophical thought on the topics he was engaged in, and so he formalized this as his life's work, rather than taking a parish.

### Bush as Versatile Religious Scholar of Languages, Biblical Texts, and Islam

In 1831, his life of letters expanded when the newly formed New York University appointed him Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Literature. One writer notes that this was a position without salary where little was expected of him in an official capacity (*New Jerusalem Magazine*, V. 32 #7, Jan. 1860, p. 403), but we have not been able to corroborate this, as he seems to have done a considerable amount of work in that field academically. His first full-length book, *The Life of Mohammed*, had already been published the year before in 1830. It was re-published recently once his relation to the current US president was determined, as it is a strange coincidence that the

first American book-length treatment of the founder of Islam would have two direct descendants as the only American presidents to wage war on one of the major Islamic countries—twice.

A Grammar of the Hebrew Language followed in 1835, then eight volumes of commentary on books of the Old Testament. According to an online introduction to the Bush papers located at the University of Michigan, these works show “the marks of Bush’s encyclopedic knowledge and his highly rationalistic approach to theological and scriptural questions.”

But this rationalistic approach started to slowly change as Bush became interested in symbols and semiology. At this point Bush “became an important figure in the intellectual life of mid-19th Century New England,” writes Shalom Goldman, in a *Newsday* article from 1989. Goldman continues, “His mystical, non-conformist bent drove him to the intellectual freedom only the world of scholarship outside the church could offer. . . .” It was this trend toward interpreting the Bible as symbolic rather than literal that would eventually lead him to the writings of Swedenborg. In 1842, Bush began publishing a journal, *The Hierophant, or Monthly Expositor of Sacred Symbols and Prophecy*, and he writes,

Comparatively little attention has been paid to the department of sacred symbols and prophecy. Although of intrinsically surpassing interest, yet from numerous causes . . . this class of themes has been studiously shunned by the sober-minded, and the whole province to which they pertain given up as a kind of waste ground of revelation, where only thorn and thistles were expected to grow and only spiritual Quixotes would be found to wander.” (*Ibid*: 404.)

Although far from a spiritual Quixote himself, Bush seemed intellectually ripe to discover the writings of Swe-

denborg. This is further reflected in his first article in *The Hierophant*, where his language uncannily follows Swedenborg’s own. He is attempting, he says, “to show that not the millennium but the New Jerusalem is the proper designation of that august era of grace and glory to which the instructed expectancy of all good men looks forward.”

Simultaneously with his thoughts on the New Jerusalem, he began writing and lecturing on his growing theory of a “double sense of Prophecy.” His concern for his scholarly reputation is revealed in letters to a colleague.

I know, indeed, that the generic term ‘mystical’ is of import sufficiently wide to include a great deal that I should deem as offensive and mischievous as you would. It defines a mental region in which lurk a great many evil spirits of allegory and fiction, which need to be driven out by the demonifuge of an austere logic; but I must still protest against bringing everything ‘mystical’ under such a ban.” (*Ibid*: 405.)

Soon thereafter he published the highly controversial *Anastasis: or, the doctrine of the resurrection of the Body, rationally and scripturally considered* (1844). “It would seem, then . . . that the judgment of reason would be, that a spiritual body is developed at death. . . . We mean the disengagement—the extinction—of that psychical part of our nature with which vital and animal functions are . . . intimately connected.” (*Ibid*: 406.)

### Bush’s Conversion to Swedenborgianism and Public Discourse with Emerson

Bush was certainly undergoing a fundamental change of spiritual worldview, and would very soon encounter the works that would finalize the shift. Bush recalled in detail the moment he was made aware of Swedenborg’s writings. He notes that while giving pub-



lic lectures in New York on spiritual resurrection,

... a lady incidentally remarked to me that the views I had advanced bore a striking analogy to those of Swedenborg on the same theme, and intimating her impression that I must have been conversant with his works. The suggestion was unfounded; but my curiosity was excited, and I determined, at the first favorable opportunity, to acquit myself with the system, and thus apply a conscious desideratum in my knowledge. Not many months elapsed before a copy of Noble's "Appeal in Behalf of the Views of the New Church" fell into my hands [and] I was deeply impressed and was compelled to form an entirely new estimate of the man and the system." (*Ibid.*)

On September 21, 1845, Rev. George Bush publicly renounced Calvinism and converted to Swedenborgianism. This public renunciation of the faith by one of Calvinism's stalwarts caused quite a stir, and helped bring the Swedenborgian denomination into the public's eye. 1845 was an important year for the Swedenborgian Church on the East Coast. The annual Swedenborgian Convention took place in Boston in early June of that year. The Church of the Boston Society was also consecrated during that Convention. And all of this came to the attention of another famous man of letters who was a Bush contemporary, Ralph Waldo Emerson. Emerson had been drafting a piece on Swedenborg to be included in his treatise, *Representative Men* (1850). He had been hesitant to include the piece because, as Emerson scholar Clarence Hotson reports, Emerson did not want to identify himself "... in the public minds with a small and unpopular, though temporarily aggressive and increasing religious body. (Hotson, Clarence; "George Bush: Teacher and Critic of Emerson." *The*

*Philological Quarterly*, Vol. X, No. 4, Oct. 1931: 371). Hotson continues,

Evidently at this time Emerson seriously doubted the prudence of lecturing on Swedenborg. What finally persuaded him to do so was, most probably, the stir produced in New York, in Boston, and throughout New England, by the public announcement six days later of the conversion from Calvinism to Swedenborgianism of the eminent theologian, George Bush. . . ." (*Ibid.*: 372.)

It is worth noting that two of Emerson's closest friends at Harvard College, Thomas Worcester and Sampson Reed, founded the Swedenborgian Church on Beacon Hill and became leading authorities in the American sect.

Hotson continues.

Professor Bush, scholar in Oriental languages, and commentator on the Scripture, had been for a number of years a pillar of orthodoxy. He fearlessly sacrificed his comfort, and almost his livelihood, in obedience to his new convictions. His conversion was a great coup of Swedenborgianism, and a blow to orthodoxy. . . . in December, 1845, Professor Bush expounded and defended his new faith before crowded Boston audiences in the vestry of the newly dedicated New Jerusalem Church in Bowdoin Street. His lecture course received extensive publicity . . .

Hotson notes that Bush defended his new faith on Swedenborg at the Boston Odeon on December 9, 1845. This lecture began a public debate on Swedenborg between Bush and Emerson. At the same venue just 16 days later, Christmas Day, 1845, Emerson overcame his hesitation and lectured on his ideas on Swedenborg, considering him mostly as a philosopher and scientist, rather than as a theologian. Bush then published a response to Emerson's lecture, carried in several local newspapers on January 18, 1846. This

public debate seems to have spurred the ire of many mainline leaders who began to criticize Swedenborgianism more openly. N. F. Cabell, a prominent Virginian who broke from Presbyterianism to join the New Church, and who wrote numerous articles in Swedenborgian publications and published a spirited defense of Swedenborgianism in the public press, reportedly remarked to a friend, "The accession to our cause of a man of mark such as Professor Bush . . . drove our opponents from the policy of silence, or secret denunciation, which they had so long and systematically pursued." (*Ibid.*: 374). In other words, the mainline denominations now felt the need to defend themselves in public from a doctrine they considered heretical and a strong threat to their livelihoods.

Emerson's attitudes toward Swedenborg would evolve, much like William Blake's had. Between 1835 and 1840 his journal notes that he viewed Swedenborg favorably as a religious leader. After 1840 he began to see him unfavorably as a mystic. Yet eleven years later, they were favorable again, and by 1861, Emerson considered Swedenborg, "as one of the world's five greatest poets." (*The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson, Supplementary Letters*, Boston: Tickner and Co., 1886: 35.) The strong influence of George Bush's lectures on Emerson's perceptions of Swedenborg is finely detailed in Hotson's doctoral dissertation at Harvard. In closing, Hotson sums up the influence this way,

A criticism which could impel Emerson to such eccentric behavior as he evinced in "Swedenborg" must certainly have had great effect upon him. The reports of Professor Bush's lectures on Swedenborg in reply to Emerson are therefore important sources of Emerson's final version of "Swedenborg; or the Mystic," and indispensable documents for under-

## George Bush

continued from page 85

standing the relation of the Concord sage both to Emanuel Swedenborg and to Christianity in general. (Hotton: 383.)

### More Controversies: Spiritualism and Mesmerism

A foremost feature on the George Bush landscape is the extent of his interest in, and for a time his advocacy of, two strands of metaphysical thought and activity both widespread and controversial in the latter half of the nineteenth century in both the United States and England: spiritu-

alism and mesmerism. Both movements shared in common a presumed or claimed experience directly with the spiritual realm. In the case of mesmerism, also called animal magnetism, and issuing from the work of Franz Anton Mesmer, there was the theory that the human body maintained a healthy state through a free flowing energy throughout, and various maladies were most often blocks and obstacles of this flow, which could be cured by restoring this flow through an invisible force called animal magnetism. Mesmer in the very earliest days had actually used magnets, but he believed physical magnets were unnecessary. Mesmer though

controversial became quite famous (new metaphysical healing theories were rife and popular throughout the nineteenth-century, including homeopathy—another movement frequently closely studied in connection with Swedenborgian principles), and many Swedenborgians, and most famously George Bush, became enthusiasts. Bush in 1847 wrote a full-length book, *Mesmer and Swedenborg*. The majority of the Swedenborgian clergy, however, were largely cautious and many skeptical. Swedenborg wrote a great deal about the spiritual basis of the human body, but he did so from a metaphysical point of view. Practice of a specific medical technique never entered Swedenborg's thought.

In the appendix of his book, Bush dealt with a subject that was to create a real storm of controversy for him within the Swedenborgian church. Appendix A was titled, "The Revelations of Andrew Jackson Davis," who was one of the early and famous spirit seers in the spiritualist craze that swept through mid-century America (leading even to Lincoln's famed séances in the White House). Bush took up the Davis cause with great energy. He was a true believer in the ability to access the spiritual world, but since Swedenborg dissuaded his readers from dabbling in overt attempts to contact disembodied spirits, the great majority of Swedenborgian clergy and laity have been unwilling to participate in Spiritualist activities. There have been exceptions, however, and Bush was one of the most prominent. A vigorous discourse ensued in church periodicals, and later when Davis seemed to come up as something of a charlatan or at the least of a less-than-consistent psychic, Bush publicly admitted his error.

### Final Years and Postscript

George Bush continued his life of letters and added to his work, ministering to Swedenborgian congregations

## Thank You, Messenger Donors

*The Messenger* and the Communications Support Unit wish to thank the following individuals and organizations for their support through subscriptions and donations from May 1, 2007 through April 30, 2008. We are grateful for your support. We hope the list is complete, but if we have omitted your name, please let us know.

Evelyn Aiken  
Mark Anderson  
Stewart Ayton  
Joy Barnitz  
Alfred & Judith Bateman  
BC New Church  
John & Sharon Billings  
Anne Braun  
Gloria & Donald Costello  
Mary Crenshaw  
Forrest Dristy  
Hilda Epp  
Jeffrey Faust  
Thomas Feick  
Candace Frazee  
Fryeburg New Church  
David Krettek & Janet Fuller  
Bet Giddings  
Gloria Grabin  
Rafael & Elizabeth Guin  
Sarah Headsten  
Joy Jepson  
David Keating

Patricia LeVan  
Jennifer Lindsay  
Deborah Little  
Mrs. Jack Loving  
Ernest & Paul Martin  
Perry Martin  
Suzanna McCarthy  
George & Lynne McClure  
Michigan Association  
Edward & Marie Morey  
New York Association  
Ohio Association  
Carolyn Peabody  
William & Alice Skinner  
Barb Tourangeau  
Mark Vivino  
Lula Voth & Carol Tepe  
J. C. & Gloryann Webb  
Dorothy Webster  
Robert & Marjorie Winsor  
Martha Young & Janet Haller  
Joy Zimmer & Joyce Fekete

# Journey Toward a New Website

by Dave Brown

## Birth

After nine months of gestating and much labor, a newly designed website was born. It was born at 2:20 PM (PST), December 4, 2007, and weighed in at over 30 pages. Since then it has grown to nearly 50 pages. If you have not had a chance to check it out, please go to [www.wayfarerschapel.org](http://www.wayfarerschapel.org).

The response has been great. Since its launch, it has been viewed in over 180 countries around the world, including 2,635 visits from the United Kingdom, 13 visits from Azerbaijan and one visit from someone in Burkina Faso. As of May 19, 2008, there have been 59,564 visitors to the website. Seventy-seven percent of visitors are new.

## Considerations

A combination of design and mar-

---

in New York City and upstate New York. He died on September 19, 1860, in Rochester, New York. His conversion to Swedenborgianism was a major event in nineteenth-century scholarly and theological circles, bringing widespread public attention to the growth of the Swedenborgian denomination in North America.

The Swedenborgian Library located at Pacific School of Religion of the Graduate Theological Union (Berkeley, California) possesses over 200 original items of correspondence to George Bush, as well as most of his published works, including numerous articles in rare periodicals. ☞

Reprinted from the Swedenborg House of Studies (SHS) website: [www.shs.psr.edu](http://www.shs.psr.edu).

Francesca McCrossan, Ph.D. is office manager and academic affairs associate at SHS.

Rev. James F. Lawrence, D.Min., is dean of SHS.

keting has helped us make this happen. We placed a number of high-quality digital photos on the site to give people a better perspective of what it is like here. If you are considering updating your own site, there are a few items to keep in mind. Timeline, budget, and use are major components of this process.

The title of this article sums up what this process has been for us: a journey. Although we are pleased with the results, I must add that if you are planning to revise or create a new church website, make sure your expectations for completing the website are flexible. The original estimate I received was five to six weeks. Nine months later, we have a completed website.

## Budget

Sure, you can have your mother's friend's second cousin twice removed who knows this guy who is great at designing websites for really cheap do it. This approach may work for you, but unless you really know what you are getting you and your church into, this may not be the best option for several reasons.

Ask yourself these basic questions before embarking on the design or redesign journey. How long will it be before you may want to design something new? Can you easily make changes to the website, including photographs and content? If it is beyond your knowledge, is there anyone you can contact easily to make this happen? And lastly, if the website gets wiped out through some accident, is there any recourse to fix it and get the website back online?

Will your new website evolve along with the needs of the church? One of the main problems of having a non-professional design your website is that people move, grow, and change. Technologies also are changing and continually evolving. You do not want to pour

money into a website that you are then stuck with because nobody knows how to change it. You are making an investment of time and resources, and you want to make provisions for changes in your long-term planning. The more reputable your web designer is, the more likely it is that your website will meet your needs and goals.

## Functional Design

Who is your target population? What is its greatest use of your website? What are your strengths? The design of the website should balance function, aesthetics, and content. You want to make it accessible and informative. The balance cannot lean too heavily toward either images or words. Too many words can turn visitors away from exploring the site; too much imagery, and you lose ranking on search engines.

Balance is the key. There is much planning and design that goes into the building of a website. If you are planning on building or rebuilding your website, I will be more than happy to consult with you ([davidb@wayfarerschapel.org](mailto:davidb@wayfarerschapel.org)). Enjoy the journey, and may it be a relatively easy one. ☞

Rev. Dave Brown is a chapel minister at Wayfarer's Chapel.

---

## Portable True Christianity Issued

The Swedenborg Foundation announced the publication of *True Christianity, volume I, The Portable Edition*. This is the New Century Edition, translated by Jonathan S. Rose, omitting the introduction and endnotes. Omission of these lengthy sections provides a much less bulky volume, convenient for travel or frequent reference. The book is available from the Swedenborg Foundation for \$12.95. ☞

## Book Review

# Swedenborg and Religious Censorship

*Banned Books: Literature Suppressed on Religious Grounds* by Margaret Bald, edited by Ken Wachsbarger. (Infobase Publishing: 2006).

reviewed by Paul Zacharias

**B***anned Books: Literature Suppressed on Religious Grounds*, one in a series of four books about literature that has been banned or censored over the past 2000 years, is a fascinating read. It examines everything from the Bible to Charles Dickens to Harry Potter, and it makes for interesting reading. There's even a section on Swedenborg and the *Arcana* that I'd like to share with you. This is one of the best "outside" descriptions of Swedenborg and his teachings I've ever seen.

The following is excerpted from Bald's book:

The writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, the Swedish scientist, philosopher, and theologian, form the doctrinal basis of the Church of the New Jerusalem, or New Church, founded after his death. Swedenborg was an engineer and assessor of the Swedish Royal Bureau of Mines. He wrote many notable scientific volumes between 1730 and 1745, including *Principia*, a ground-breaking mathematical, rational explanation of the universe.

Swedenborg adopted his religious philosophy, generally called Swedenborgianism, during 1744 and 1745, when he had a number of dreams and mystical visions in which he believed God directly called him to bring a new revelation to the world. In 1747 he resigned his post of assessor to dedicate himself to spiritual matters, and for the next quarter century wrote voluminous theological works expounding "the true Christian religion," a body of spiritual laws meant to revivify all churches.

In his teachings he declared that two worlds exist, both emanating from God. The "New Jerusalem" is the spiritual world to which man will ultimately be restored by a process of purification through divine love. The second is the world of nature in which human beings live. A symbolic counterpart to everything in our world exists in the spiritual world. All creative forces, both in the spiritual world and in the natural world of consciousness, flow from the divine center of the universe. Man's spirit or soul was created to be a receptacle of divine life, whose essence is love and wisdom.

Between 1747 and 1758, Swedenborg wrote and published the eight-volume *Arcana Coelestia* or *Heavenly Secrets*, his first major theological work, a 7,000-page commentary on Genesis and Exodus. In the *Arcana* Swedenborg interpreted the Bible according to the doctrine of correspondences, by which everything that is outward or visible has an inward or spiritual cause. He believed that God inscribed within the

***Principia* . . . was placed on the Index of forbidden books in 1738, and remained there until 1966.**

historical narratives of the Bible an interior spiritual sense. Through the language of correspondences, the familiar Bible stories revealed basic divine teachings of life after death, relationships between the spiritual and natural worlds, human nature, and religion.

Central elements of Swedenborg's theology diverged from both Catholic and Protestant doctrines. He taught that rewards and punishments have no place as incentives to virtue. He denied that there were

three persons in the Trinity, believing instead in the exclusive divinity of Jesus Christ. He also took issue with the doctrine of atonement and called the Catholic Church "Babylon" for its desire for domination over men's souls. He attacked the Lutheran belief that faith without works is sufficient for salvation, holding that true faith could not be disassociated from a life of charity and active usefulness. He saw good in all churches and criticized Protestants for their self-righteousness.

## Censorship History

The *Arcana* was published anonymously in London between 1749 and 1756. He gave away many copies of the books to leading clergymen in Europe, as well as to universities and libraries. He hoped that some would accept his teachings and spread them, but most of the clergy ignored his doctrines or regarded them with contempt. In 1759 he became known as the author of the *Arcana*, and copies of the book, published in London, began to trickle into Sweden.

His writings caused great controversy in Goteborg's Lutheran consistory. In 1768 a country parson introduced a resolution objecting to Swedenborg's writings and called for measures to stop the circulation of these new ideas that contradicted Lutheran dogma. Dean Ekebon, the ranking prelate, announced that even though he had not read much of the books, he found them to be "corrupting, heretical, injurious, and to the highest degree, objectionable."

The case of Swedenborg's heresy was brought before the Swedish Diet. The chief prosecutor urged that "the most energetic measures be

continues on page 90

## A Special Poem for My Mother

By Han Sik Kim

After my mother died  
My mother, who supported my life  
My mother, who showed me the way when I was lost  
My mother, who shone like a bright light in the dark wood

After my mother died  
My favorite foods had no flavor  
My brittle bones shivered in the cold wind  
My desire for life shrank from the world like a fading flower

After my mother died  
My soul suffered the most  
My shame was great  
My world was closed off

I felt guilt, which I could not justify, even to myself  
I felt that I had lost my family, so essential to my life  
I felt sorrow, so strong that I found it hard to walk  
I felt like the long harsh winter would never end, that I would never see the sun of springtime again

Even if spring would come, I would fear  
To smell beautiful flowers, for they would remind me of her

I was the foolish son, who hurt  
The one person who thought the most of me

Holy Jesus,  
Help me to take a breath and see the world around me

Help me to appreciate the good in my life  
Help me to put the bad of my past behind me

Now, I see the beauty of the flowers in front of the New Church

I see the pink tulips and the orange tulips  
They fill my soul with hope  
Next year, I will plant the flowers that my mother loved, so others may love them, too

Pastor Ron Brugler, whose spirit has the love of a mother,  
Brings us love when he leads us in worship  
Even though I don't always understand his words,  
He always fills my soul with hope and comfort

Mrs. Anna Martinian, whose heart is filled with love,  
Takes wonderful care of me  
Over the cultural differences we have,  
Everyone in the church has made me feel welcome as if I am now part of a new family

My Lord, Jesus,  
I will follow you, even though my life is delicate as a butterfly's wings  
Through you, I can use those wings to fly

Han Sik Kim is a member of the Korean New Church in New York City. He was unable to return to Korea for his mother's resurrection service.

## Urbana University Elects 21st President

Urbana University Board of Trustees chairman William G. Edwards announced that Stephen B. Jones, Ph.D. was elected to the presidency of Urbana University in Urbana, Ohio by unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees. Dr. Jones, an outstanding academic leader who, since 2004, has served as chancellor of the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), will become the twenty-first president of Urbana University, effective July 1, 2008. The appointment concludes an extensive national search that involved faculty, staff, alumni, students, and community leaders.

"This is a great day for Urbana University," said James R. Wilson, trustee

fellow and chair of the presidential search committee. "Steve Jones is a dedicated and visionary leader, an accomplished scholar, and an engaging teacher. Steve has a powerful intellect, coupled with a demonstrated ability to lead and motivate people to deliver their best efforts at building solid futures at a university. He and his wife Judy are wonderful people, and will be an excellent addition to the community."

"I am honored and humbled by the trust and responsibility placed in me," said Jones. "My wife Judy and I are thrilled to be coming home to the lower 48 where we want to sink deep roots in the Urbana community and earn this trust daily. Our shared agen-

da will be to continue refining who we are, where we want to go, and how we will get there," he said. "We will work together to build on current strengths, while improving on what we don't do as well as we should, as part of a shared will to excel."

Branding UAF as "America's Arctic University," Jones built and led the Vision Task Force, a team of 55 visionaries who engaged the diverse internal campus community as well as the external UAF community stakeholders in transforming UAF into a more mature twenty-first century research university and the flagship of the University of Alaska system.

continues on page 90

## The Swedenborgian Church of North America: Statistics as of December 31, 2007

Associations	Churches		Ordained Ministers			Lay Leaders	Members			Delegates
	Active	Inactive	Active	Inactive	Retired		Active	Inactive	Total	
Eastern Canada	1	0	1	0	1	1	100	14	114	12
Illinois	6	0	3	1	1	0	94	48	142	11
Kansas	2	0	1	0	1	4	88	0	88	10
Maine	2	0	3	1	0	0	116	115	231	13
Massachusetts	5	0	6	3	2	0	114	48	162	13
Michigan	2	0	2	0	0	0	75	9	84	9
Middle Atlantic	3	0	6	0	0	0	85	47	132	10
New York	2	0	2	0	0	0	38	20	58	5
Ohio	3	2	2	2	2	1	72	12	84	9
Pacific Coast	4	0	15	2	5	1	286	78	364	30
Southeast	2	0	2	1	1	0	44	5	49	6
Western Canada	4	2	1	0	3	0	85	15	100	10
Unaffiliated				2						
SCYL										2
Total	36	4	44	12	16	7	1197	411	1608	140

### Religious Censorship

continued from page 88

taken to stifle, punish, and utterly eradicate Swedenborgian innovation and downright heresies by which we are encompassed . . . so that the boar which devastates and the wild beast that desolates our country be driven out with a mighty hand." The royal council issued its final report in April, 1770. It totally "condemned, rejected, and forbade the theological doctrines in Swedenborg's writings." Clergy were forbidden to read or propagate his teachings, and customs officials were directed to impound his books.

Eventually the controversy abated, and Swedenborg continued to write, dividing his time between Holland, Sweden, and England. His reputation increased in the 19th century, when he was admired by many European and American intellectuals. His book on marriage, *Conjugial Love*, condemned by Swedish authorities shortly after its publication in 1768, became popular in Germa-

### Urbana President

continued from page 89

Before coming to UAF, Jones was vice-chancellor at North Carolina State University, where he headed the university's extension, outreach, distance learning, and continuing education areas.

Jones has also served as the director

of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and an associate professor, and subsequently assistant director, of the School of Forestry at Pennsylvania State University. While concluding his Ph.D. at the State University of New York, Dr. Jones was the director of the Northeast Petroleum-Forest Resources Cooperative. Prior to his career in academia, he worked twelve years with the Union Camp Corporation, a paper and allied products manufacturer.

Raised in Maryland, Dr. Jones holds a bachelor degree in forestry and a doctor degree in resource management from the State University of New York in Syracuse.

Dr. Jones and his wife have two married children and grandchildren.

William G. Edwards concluded, "I am confident that the Urbana University community and stakeholders will be well served by Dr. and Mrs. Jones. This is an exciting time to be a part of Urbana University, as we continue our mission of building solid futures for our students." ☛

ny and France. It attracted attention in the United States in 1909 when it was seized by Philadelphia postal authorities on grounds of obscenity.

The Catholic Church condemned only Swedenborg's early scientific work, *Principia*, published in 1721. This was placed on the Index of Forbidden Books in 1738, and remained there until 1966. In the Soviet Union, all of Swedenborg's works were banned in 1930 in an effort to suppress mystical and religious works generally. ☛

Rev. Paul Zacharias lives in Kitchener, Ontario.

## Passages

### Births

Jason and Tenley Hannah and two-year-old Logan of Phoenix, Arizona welcomed the arrival of **Lauren Avery Hannah** on April 24, 2008. Grandparents are Elvin and Veneta Lane; great-grandparents are Eric and Betty Zacharias; all of Hutchinson, Kansas.

**Jackson Scott Moelich** was born February 20, 2008 to Aaron Moelich and Sara Cain. Grandparents Jane and Kevin McFeaters and Kellen Moelich, and great-grandparents Phyllis and Jim Hopper and Bobby and George Taylor, belong to the Laporte New Church in Laporte, Indiana.

**Mack Louis Potucek** was born to Heidi and Patrick Potucek and his big sister Paige May 13, 2008. Grandparents are Phyllis and Jim Hopper of the Laporte New Church. Jackson and Mack are cousins!

**Shane Anthony Kodie** was welcomed into this world by parents Chuck Kodie and Christina Yaconi of the La-

porte New Church on May 7, 2008.

**Connor Aaron Halle Menon** was born to Arianne (Halle) and Rahul Menon on March 20, 2008. **Miles Daniel Balcerak** was born in Noblesville, Indiana, on November 13, 2007, to Amy (Halle) and Brad Balcerak and joins his sister, Laine Halle Balcerak, 2. Grandparents to these two baby cousins are Barbara and Dan Halle of the Laporte New Church.

### Confirmation

On Sunday, April 6, long-time friend of LaPorte New Church **Garrel Cole** was confirmed into membership. Standing up with Garrel was his friend Susan Castner.

### Membership

**Margaret Trytten** and **Steve Mason** became members of the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound. Margaret and Steve have been active in the church for several years.

### Marriages

**Emma and Stefan Ramsey** of the Swedenborgian Church of Puget Sound were united in marriage on Saturday,

April 20th, 2008. Emma's mom, Cheryl Honey attended.

**Rev. Jennifer Tafel** and **William Prout** were married on April 19, 2008 at Wayfarers Chapel, the Rev. Richard L. Tafel officiating.



## News in Brief

**Alison Lane-Olsen** has accepted the call to be minister at the Pretty Prairie New Jerusalem Church in Pretty Prairie, Kansas. She will assume her duties in the fall, when she moves with her husband Adam and son Monroe. ☪

**The Swedenborgian House of Studies** hosted a spirituality summit for invited participants from May 9-11. The focus was to consider what aspects of Swedenborgian theology are most relevant for modern life, and how best to share them with the world. The summit convened on the campus of Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. SHS dean Jim Lawrence and outreach coordinator Kim Hinrichs facilitated. ☪

On June 11, **Jeffrey Wood** and **Rev. Wilma Wake** will lead a workshop in Portland, Maine on creating care-taking networks. After meeting a neighbor who had terminal lung cancer, Jeffrey Wood started putting together a care network. Soon he found himself creating a non-profit organization to develop other care-taking networks for people with medical needs. Dozens of such groups have been organized in this area, and the concept has spread around the nation. ☪

### SCYL Retreat

continued from 77

teens at the retreat. I found it equally enjoyable to work together with my ministerial colleagues and have fun with the teens.

This is an important ministry for our church and for our church's youth. We were all brought a little closer to God. Teens and staff alike were gifted with remains that God will dwell in as we return home. I felt the closing communion service was so moving for everyone because the whole retreat was a communion. ☪

Rev. Dr. David J. Fekete is SCYL chaplain and pastor of the Edmonton Church of the Holy City in Edmonton, Alberta.

### I Like to Fly

continued from 92

ment as long as I know what my ultimate goal is and where I am headed. Just sit back, relax, and enjoy the trip. And if you're lucky, you might get a seat partner that has read an interesting book, or thought about the condition of our earth, or has an interesting life story to share.

Yeah, I like to fly and I like my life right now, too. Thank you, God, that I was able to make the changes I needed to find my life again. May you all be so fortunate. ☪

Reprinted from the *Plains Banner* (Kansas Association newsletter). Rev. Jane Siebert is a chaplain living in Pretty Prairie, Kansas.



## 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.

## Reflection

### I Love to Fly

By Jane Siebert

I enjoy flying. I know some of you are thinking, "she's crazy. It's too crowded. People are rude. You lose your luggage."

Oh, I have felt all of these things and I have lost my luggage, or rather the airline has, multiple times.

There was a time when I realized that I hated to fly. I had a business convention in Los Angeles over the weekend and had to be in Cincinnati Monday morning. I requested an aisle seat and didn't want to look out or talk with anyone. I was like many of the business travelers that I see engrossed in their laptops, oblivious to the world around them. I thought, "what am I doing? Is this what I want out of life? I don't like the 'me' I'm becoming."

When I realized I hated to fly, it opened a new awareness in me that I hated much about my life—my job, the amount of time I spent away from home, the world of business, and my dog-eat-dog existence. So I left that job and didn't fly for quite awhile. In fact, I hibernated and camped out at Lake Cheney—yeah, it was that bad.

That was 10 years ago, and it seems a lifetime ago—and in some ways it was. First of all, I had to figure out who I was,



separate from my job. I started the journey of getting to know myself. I went back to graduate school, was ordained, and started preaching and working as a chaplain. I found the truth in Emanuel Swedenborg's statement: "Where the heart is, there is the worship (and joy)."

And now I am back flying, and enjoying it. Last month, on a flight back from San Francisco, I had a clear day for flying and it was truly amazing. I wondered, "What caused that fold in the earth and why is it now flat on top? Why is that lake green and the other one blue and the one right below as dry as a bone? I wonder if there is a geologist on this flight that could answer my questions."

"There is so much earth where no one lives. Why do we crunch together in cities like Detroit and Los Angeles and Phoenix, when there is all this open space? And then off to the right there are just a few houses, isolated in the midst of the mountains, with few roads and no power lines. I wonder why people choose to live there. Are they happy?"

"Where are we right now? I know this plane plans to land in Dallas, but I have no idea where we are now. Is this Utah or Arizona or New Mexico?" It's kind of like life—sometimes I feel I am just along for the ride. I don't need to know exactly where I am at a given mo-

continues on page 91

The Swedenborgian Church of  
North America  
The Messenger  
11 Highland Avenue  
Newtonville, MA 02460

Address Service Requested

Non-profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage

**PAID**

Plymouth, IN  
Permit No. 105