



*E pluribus unum*

## Mauritian Reflections

BY ANDERS HALLENGREN

Harmony makes a family a paradise; discord makes it a hell.

—Edmond de Chazal

In his post-prize interviews, a Nobel laureate of literature in 2008, J.M.G. Le Clézio, arriving in Sweden from his home in Mauritius, expressed his admiration for Swedenborg. The first thing he had done on this visit to Stockholm was to inquire



Emanuel Swedenborg's summer house (*lust hus*) in his garden residence, Stockholm.

about the house of Emanuel Swedenborg. “You know, the Swedish genius, the scientist, philosopher, and theologian,” as he explained to the uninformed journalists. “And,” he continued, “then I was shown to the house where Swedenborg used to talk with the angels. How marvelous! That communication with the world of spirits reminded me of another author writing in French, the great Senegalese poet

Senghor, who likewise spoke with the spirits, angels, and demons of his African country.”

Sometimes the lack of knowledge among us Swedes is embarrassing, but we may perhaps be excused if we did not know that in Le Clézio’s island home on Mauritius there had been an active *Société de la Nouvelle Jérusalem* since 1859, an active Swedenborgian movement with many unique facets and unknown literary connections. As background to the laureate’s surprising remarks, I have taken down the following notes, which explain his strong esteem for Swedenborg.

In 1763, an eighteenth-century alchemist, mystic, and Rosicrucian named François de Chazal de la Genesté left France, set out across the Indian Ocean, and settled on the French *Ile de France*, fifteen hundred miles from Africa, later known as *Ile Maurice*, the present-day Mauritius. Before long, he connected with his younger brother Antoine Régis de Chazal de Chemarel; his brother died in 1772, leaving two sons of tender years, Toussaint and Charles Antoine. Their Uncle François, who was known as a philosopher and who had built up a large library on his estate, became their tutor. The books and the tenor of thought both fell to the inheritance of Toussaint, who in turn bequeathed the ever-growing library to his son, the learned Joseph An-

toine Edmond de Chazal (1809–1879). Edmond, as we will see later, eventually established the Swedenborg Society mentioned above, became its first chairman, and opened the first Swedenborgian church on Mauritius. This was on his own property, St. Antoine, where he built a “Hall for Worship” (*Salle de Culte*) and preached. The Roman Catholic Church, to which Edmond belonged, regarded him harshly. We can see this in pamphlets that have come down to us from the latter 1850s in which Edmond states his faith (for example in his public declaration of faith made in Riviere du Rempart in 1857). He later explained, “I am an apostate” (*Je suis Apostat*, 1859), signing himself as “a disciple of the Lord’s New Church.”<sup>1</sup> The “Lord’s New Church” is Swedenborg’s term, used in his reports on the world of spirits, meaning a loving community of all humankind.

On 11 January, 1859, the first Swedenborg society was founded in the capital city of Port Louis. The gathering was held at the home of the Lesage

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1 *To My Children*, by Joseph Antoine Edmond de Chazal (1809–1879). Translated from the French by Claude Jack Smith, with an introduction by V. F. Taylor. (Place and date of publication missing.) Copy in the archives of the Lord’s New Church in Stockholm. See further his pamphlets *Ma défense contre les injustes agressions dirigées contre ma liberté de conscience par L’église catholique romaine de Maurice* (1859); *Réponse à . . . : P. Lebrun, à sa brochure intitulée: Réponse aux deux catéchismes swedenborgiens*, Maurice (1860); and *réponse de M. Edmond de Chazal et de la Société de la Nouvelle Jérusalem à M. le révérend P. Le Brun, Maurice*, 1861.

**The Editor's Desk**



**The Far Reaches**

The number of Swedenborgians belonging to organized churches is small, but they are scattered far and wide. Perhaps the least likely place to find not one but two Swedenborgian churches is the island nation of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean; Anders Halngren details the history of Swedenborgianism on the island beginning on the front page of this issue (p. 13).

At my home church, Swedenborg Chapel in Cambridge, Massachusetts, we have two members who grew up in the Curepipe Church in Mauritius.

Alix Williams moved there as a child with her family in 1915, when her father, Rev. Dr. Charles Nussbaum-Strutt, became pastor of the Curepipe Church, and lived there until 1926. Rev. Nussbaum-Strutt, a Swiss, had been a physician, who in the 1880s met Edmond de Chazal of Mauritius at a medical conference in Paris. De Chazal introduced him to Swedenborg's writings, which led him eventually to enroll in the New Church Theological School in Cambridge, Massachusetts (now the Swedenborgian House of Studies at Pacific School of Religion in

Berkeley, California). After ordination, he was minister to the Swedenborgian churches in Tennessee, St. Louis, and Portland, Oregon, before his call to Mauritius.

Denyse Daurat was born on Mauritius and raised in the Curepipe Church until she emigrated at the age of eighteen.

Rev. Eric Allison was a General Convention minister there for a year in the early nineties. An excerpt from his 1993 *Messenger* article about his time there appears on page 21.

**Chrysalis**

My delight in reading the latest *Chrysalis Reader, Patterns: Make 'Em and Break 'Em* (reviewed on page 24), was tempered by the news that it is the last in the twenty-eight-year series of *Chrysalis* books. *Chrysalis* emerged from the efforts of a group at the Swedenborg Foundation—Alice Skinner, Darrell Ruhl, George Dole, Robin and Stephen Larsen, and Carol Lawson—who met in 1984 to look for a way to follow on the success of some films the Foundation produced and distributed as part of an effort to increase the public's exposure to the ideas of Swedenborg, without proselytizing. *Chrysalis* sought and published creative works—both fiction and personal stories, poetry, essays, visual art, and creative non-fiction—that illustrated and brought to life many of the ideas in Swedenborg's writings. Launched in 1985 as the *Chrysalis Journal*, it became the annual *Chrysalis Reader* in 1995.

—Herb Ziegler

**Kansas Association Meets at Mennoscah**

The Kansas Association held its annual meeting November 2–4, 2012, at Camp Mennoscah. The weekend meeting at the camp has a long tradition that Kansans eagerly look forward to. Rev. Carla Friedrich, the guest minister, shared her energy and excitement about “Greening Our Faith,” bridging our understanding of God’s creation with the ecological state of the world—and then figuring out how to make a difference. The meeting was well attended, including ten children and several teens who worked with the children. ☩

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**Church Calendar**

- April 13: General Council teleconference meeting
- April 15: Reports due for inclusion in *Advance Reports*
- May 3–4: SHS Board of Trustees meeting • Berkeley, California

the Messenger

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## Letter from the President



Dear Friends,

Ever wonder what our predecessors held as a vision for what would be? I invite you to take a look at one form of the resolutions that emanated for a vision this church has held in the past. Even though it was written almost thirty years ago, I found this resolution remarkably relevant (*Convention Journal 2012*, pp. 182–4, Adapted July 3, 1986).

### The Purpose of Convention

The General Convention exists to help people be open to the Lord's presence and leading especially by fostering personal and ordained ministries which facilitate the spiritual well-being of people, and which have in common a working for the Lord in bringing in the New Age—the descent of the Holy City, New Jerusalem.

The light in which we seek to walk shines from the Lord Jesus Christ in His second coming, available to us through the divine presence in our hearts and minds, and through revelation in the Holy Scriptures and in the work of the Lord's servant Emanuel Swedenborg.

With the purpose of creation being a heaven from the human race, we see the central purpose of the church as the promotion of the process of regeneration. External forms such as buildings, liturgies and organizational structures are valid only insofar as they are useful to this end. It is especially vital for an "organized religion" that its life of piety be constantly grounded in a life of charity. In the case of our Convention, constant accountability to the standards of Scripture and doctrine is the primary warrant for our existence as an organization. In particular, we are offered a vision of a New Age, a New Church radically different from the old, by which we can evaluate our present practices and directions.

So what do you think? Now every good vision must indicate something about how to fulfill that vision, in other words, every "end" must have its "means." Here are some means that were suggested back then.

### Objectives

- Facilitate the formation and growth of groups of people who support each other in understanding, loving and living "the life that leads to heaven." We will work to bring together such individuals and groups in a network which amplifies the creative spiritual energy that emerges when we work together.
- Bring doctrine and life together constructively. We will support this being done in a way that allows them to challenge and enrich each other and that encourages the diverse activities of Convention to express Convention's Purpose consistently.
- Continue our commitment to the cause of religious unity.
- In accordance with our Doctrine of Use and in cooperation with Convention's constituent bodies, improve the management and use of the physical/financial resources available for the fulfillment of our Purpose.
- Design and implement effective means of communication: means which will ensure an open and timely flow of information and will promote Convention's Purpose.
- Design, adopt and maintain an organizational structure that is directly responsive to Convention's Purpose and needs, and that includes provisions for its own self-evaluation and growth.

I am interested in any responses you might have to the objectives underlying these standing resolutions. How do think we're doing? How has our church contributed to the fulfillment of the vision? How have we fallen short or just plain missed the mark? You can respond in "Letters to the Editor" of *the Messenger* or to me specifically via email at [revken@swedenborg.org](mailto:revken@swedenborg.org). I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

—Blessings, Rev. Ken

## 2012 SCYL Winter Retreat: “Oremus” (Let Us Pray)

Ten brave teenagers fought through a blizzard and a widespread flu epidemic to gather at Almont New Church Retreat Center for the 2012 Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL) Winter Retreat. The theme was “Oremus: Practically Praying,” and sessions focused on useful ways for teens to experience God in their lives through prayer. The discussions were diverse and covered various prayer traditions and techniques.

Rev. Jennifer Tafel started the retreat by putting the topic in context with a brief review of the history of the Christian Church and how we arrived where we are today. The next three sessions reviewed the Lord’s Prayer in detail, with Rev. Nadine Cotton taking the first third, Dagmar Bollinger the middle, and Rev. Renée Machiniak the end. They presented the Lord’s Prayer line-by-line with thoughtfulness, using personal stories, *Lectio Divina*<sup>1</sup>, meditation, and open discussion to illuminate, enhance, and deepen the intensity of this blessed prayer.

The last two retreat sessions covered non-Christian prayer traditions and alternative ways to pray. Rev. Nadine shared a series of videos showing how Buddhists, Hindus, and Mus-



Winter retreat group

lims seek to connect with the Divine. We practiced an “Om” chant. Rev. Nadine told us about her personal journey and how she rediscovered God through the Native American tradition.

In our last session, Rev. Jenn led the teens in a short vision quest to discover deeper connectedness and meaning from natural objects. The retreat closed with our “Exodus to Independence” celebration, where we honor and say goodbye to our eighteen-year-old teens departing SCYL and then join together in our communion worship service.

I found this retreat to be particular-



Pizza at the roller rink

ly meaningful and relaxing. A smaller number of teens allowed the group to bond more tightly and more intimately together. Discussions were more personal, and each individual soul was heard, experienced, and embraced more fully and completely. Perhaps the Lord understood the deeply profound

and holy aspect of prayer and in infinite wisdom knew that a small group was best. Of that, I am uncertain. But I am certain that this retreat provided a safe space to learn a variety of prayerful practices through which a devoted group of teens could explore and strengthen their relationship with God.

—Kurt Fekete, youth director



Kurt Fekete

This winter retreat was the first I’ve been to that was smaller than the Columbus Day Retreat that preceded it. Although we missed our friends who couldn’t make it, I think we can all agree that the cozy, low-pressure atmosphere of a small retreat was really lovely. My favorite part of the retreat was roller skating! I may have fallen a few times, gotten a blister on my foot, and not been able to walk the next day, but I sure had a great night. Every part of the Winter Retreat was fabulous though, and I can’t wait for next year.

—Celie Bauer, SCYL president



Celie Bauer

This winter retreat was smaller than most, but no matter the size it was still fun. Eating meals together, playing with all the guitars there, and writing our own special message to the teen who is moving on (which this year was Alice) are all special events that play an important part of Winter Retreat. We’re so lucky to

Continues next page



Bekka Lange

<sup>1</sup> *Lectio Divina* (Latin for divine reading) is a traditional Benedictine practice of scriptural reading, meditation, and prayer. It treats Scripture as the Living Word.

Continued from preceding page

have been able to come and see those who were able to attend. I am looking forward to the next retreat, as many others are I am sure! Memorial Day is one of my top favorites. Of course, my favorite times at retreats aren't always what we do but just being around my friends laughing, talking, and enjoying everyone together again.

—Rebekka Lange



Alice Henderson

While there were fewer teens than in the past few years, this teen winter retreat was a definite success. From *Lectio Divina* and the Lord's Prayer to vision quests and chanting, we learned about different ways to commune with something larger than ourselves. Music (so many guitars!) and Frisbee were also highlights as usual. This year I graduated from SCYL and will miss everyone but greatly appreciated the Exodus ceremony and pillowcase from the teens (which is on my pillow at school). Thanks so much to the SCYL for four fantastic years!

—Alice Henderson

This winter retreat was amazing! We learned about many different types of prayer as well as why, when, and where we pray. Throughout the winter retreat, my favorite part was just being with my friends. Retreats are the perfect time to have fun and connect with your friends. We played music, roller skated, and played Frisbee with each other. This was an awesome teen winter retreat!



Skylor Daisy

—Skylor Daisy

## 2013 SCYL Officers

The 2013 Swedenborgian Church Youth League (SCYL) officer and chaplain elections took place at the Almont Winter Retreat this past December.

- President: Celie Bauer
- East Coast and public relations officer: Liz Dyer
- Midwest and fundraising & finance officer, activities officer: Tony Kalinowski
- Canada and service officer: Joseph Ferr
- West Coast and activities officer: Skylor Daisy
- Editor, *Clear Blue Sky* and communication officer: Bekka Lange
- League chaplain: Rev. Renée Machiniak

Five SCYL officers return to another year of service and we welcome one new teen to the League. We say goodbye to 2012 officer Alice Henderson, as she has aged out of the SCYL. Alice has been such a blessing in her one short year of service. She joined the SCYL late in her teen years and, although we will continue to see her at camps and perhaps annual conventions, she must leave teen retreats behind. We thank her for her service and will miss seeing her at retreats.

We have a great group of officers elected to serve in 2013. Celie Bauer, Skylor Daisy, Liz Dyer, Joseph Ferr, and Bekka Lange all return as officers. Celie returns as president for her second consecutive term. Bekka returns as *Clear Blue Sky* (CBS) editor. She worked very hard in 2012 transitioning CBS from printed format to electronic blog (<http://scylcbs.wordpress.com>). Bekka has done some amazing work on the blog. It is fun, informational, and colorful, with lots of pictures. Please visit if you get a chance.

We have a well-seasoned group of officers this year, so we should be able to accomplish many of our goals. We welcome Tony Kalinowski as our Mid-



2013 scyl officers: Tony Kalinowski, Celie Bauer, Bekka Lange, Skylor Daisy, and Liz Dyer (Absent: Joseph Ferr)

west officer. Tony is a deep thinking, thoughtful young teenager who has been active in our tween retreats as well as being an Almont Summer Camp lifer. Tony attended his first annual convention last year and really enjoyed it.

After five years of service to SCYL, Rev. Dr. David Fekete departs his post as league chaplain. David loved being the youth chaplain and took his position very seriously. He remains a friend to all teens and welcomes their conversations and deliberations. We welcome Rev. Renée Machiniak as newly-elected 2013 league chaplain. Renée is new to this position but is no stranger to the teens of SCYL. Rev. Renée has visited with and conversed with many of the teens at Almont summer camp, Winter retreat and annual conventions. The teens know her and love her. She is a wonderfully insightful, intelligent,

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## Archival Gold

# Our Swedenborgian Heritage

BY LOUISE WOOFENDEN

*This article is reprinted from the February 1993 Messenger. It was the fifth in a series of biographical sketches that Louise Woofenden wrote for the Messenger. It is reprinted as a tribute to her erudite and engaging contributions to the Messenger and the Swedenborgian Church. (Recently deceased, her obituary appears in "Passages" on page 23.)*

Go West, young man! Swedenborgianism is a subversion of everything decent and sensible—an extermination of human decency; this grotesque and upheaving system brings fires of desolation; it exterminates the idea of God's omnipotence. We are called upon to tear up our Bibles, and believe it, on peril of our immortal souls, yet it is only dreams, dreams, dreams! The dreams of the Joe Smiths and of Swedenborgians, only that Joe Smith had common sense, and Swedenborg was a learned fool; and those who receive his writings, perfect fools. This hideous and rapid credulity, this sneaking and driveling system attacks Christianity and runs, or like Judas, betrays with a kiss, or stabs in the dark.

—Mr. Turner, Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, Illinois College, Jacksonville, 1843

George Field had come to town! Field had first come to town in America when, in 1835, he emigrated from England to New York at the age of twenty-five with his wife and infant son. He set up school for a living and was one of the first members of the New York Society. But the lure of the West made him determine, in 1838, to settle in Chicago. On his arrival in Detroit that fall, he found that the last steamship across Lake Michigan had put up for the winter, so he re-



Louise Woofenden with her son Trevor at FNCA, August 2012

mained in Michigan. He again opened a school, but it was only an intermittent operation, for his real calling was that of a New Church missionary. Towards the end of his life he wrote *Memoirs, Incidents and Reminiscences of the Early History of the New Church in Michigan, Indiana, Illinois and Adjacent States: and in Canada* (1879), which details almost every step of his journeys, crisscrossing his territory, lecturing, preaching and baptizing (ordained in 1834, he performed some 500 baptisms).

Burning with zeal, he spent all but a few months of each year on tour. Going to lectures was "the thing" in those days, and he was accustomed to speaking before audiences of over 500 people, who sat spellbound through his three-hour lectures. Typically the first night of a series would have a modest attendance, perhaps a few hundred. As the word got around about these teachings which were full of common sense and enlightenment, succeeding nights would find the hall crowded, with people standing outside or perched on the sills of open windows in the church, courthouse, or school where he was speaking.

Arriving in Kalamazoo, Ypsilanti, Edwardsburg, Richmond, Elkhart, LaPorte, Canton, Jackson, or any other town or village, he would post handbills or put an ad in the local paper. He worked up several series of talks:

one of twelve lectures on the Creation (Primeval Language, Origins of Mythology, Proofs that Genesis Is Not Literal History, The Creation and Flood, etc.) and others on resurrection, the second coming, the blood of the Lord, and many other topics. The local newspapers would review each lecture as it was given and report, often favorably, on the content. Field was described as very modest and extremely erudite, not given to flowery oratory but speaking, with great elegance of diction, in a quietly forceful and logical manner.

Now on the scene would march the local Protestant clergy, one of whom had probably given the use of his church building for the lecture. They were irate. Could it have been that because of the interest aroused at Saturday's talk only a few people showed up for the Sunday afternoon services in their churches? That night Field might find the hall locked against him. Sometimes the ministers boycotted the lectures, but often they attended, and used the discussion period to deliver wild condemnations. Or they announced lectures of their own in refutation, which usually resulted in a counter-lecture by Field, or at the very least a lengthy rebuttal in the newspaper. He was almost always able to show that his detractors had not read so much as a word of Swedenborg, but were relying on copies of some condemnatory work such as Enoch Pond's *Swedenborgianism Examined*. In one case the second half of *Conjugal Love* had been scissored out of the book and circulated among important local residents as typical of Swedenborg's philosophy of marriage. In Goshen, Indiana, the local paper went so far as to assert that George Field was the man named Field who was the absconding

*Continues next page*

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cashier of the Wildcat Bank in Battle Creek which had failed some years before he had set foot in that city. Professor Turner's response was typical of what Field faced over and over again as he spent years tracing and retracing his path through many towns. Added to his difficulties was his wife's death when his three boys were still very small, which induced him to board out in New Church homes where he could leave his children when he went on the road, taking them with him as they got old enough. Some years later he remarried.

At the beginning of the *Memoirs* Field observed:

. . . though none of us may be able to recount, with the Apostle Paul, that we have been flagellated with stripes, as he was, beaten with rods, stoned, ship wrecked, been in perils in the sea and among false brethren. . . still, there are yet many events connected with the first promulgation and establishment of the Church of the New Jerusalem, at least in the western region, that are not devoid of interest.

When we realize that Field was often denied money by the church, and financed many of his tours solely by teaching or clerking, or from the door receipts at his talks, and that he traveled alone by horse and buggy in all kinds of weather, it almost seems as if he had experienced the same treatment as Paul!

As an example, his report for 1853, covering eight months, lists seventeen different places visited, with 124 lectures:

. . . for fully three-fourths of the time travelling was toilsome, difficult and perilous. The roads were like a ploughed field, soaked with water—only full of holes and ridges; or, as on the prairie sod, sometimes flooded and saturated or like a shallow lake. Twice I had to get

other horses to haul my buggy from bottomless mud holes; once nearly drowned in fording the deep and rapid Vermillion, swollen by heavy rains; once to pass through a wide lagoon of water four feet deep, and cross a bridge under it; sometimes drenched through with rain, at other times almost frozen with a bitter north-west wind, blowing like a hurricane over a prairie where, for miles, neither house, fence or tree could be seen; and riding after dark on the open prairie, and guessing the road in the depth of winter; sometimes losing my way on these waste wildernesses, or passing the night in rude houses, only next to being in the open air.

Field served short stints as minister in Detroit, St. Louis, and Toronto, but most of his life was spent on the road. He believed that of the thousands who heard him, only a few would become active receivers of the doctrines, but he hoped his work would provide a base for the spread of the church. Among the many names he mentions as receivers, we find such well-known New Church names as Murdoch, Keller, Bowman, Dickinson, Weller, King, Titus, and Parker.

As time went on, the doctrines became more and more known and respected by the clergy of other faiths. Several left their denominations for the New Church. Even Professor Turner at length came to appreciate and respect the teachings, though apparently he never accepted them *in toto*. He later became a good friend of Field, which speaks well of the character of both.

Making another telling comparison with the early Christian Church, Field once remarked that as soon as Christianity had become one of the established religions and was in less danger of persecution, different groups began arguing among themselves, separating into sects and twisting and changing Christ's gospel. In the same way, he said, when the New Church was no

longer persecuted, its members began to disagree on the application of its various doctrines and to divide into factions and opposing groups.

This applies to his own case, for Field held strongly the opinion that new members must be rebaptized in the name of the ONE God, and communion served only to those who had. A disagreement on this and perhaps other points severed him from his post as minister in Detroit and left a rift which was never mended.

In 1904 (Field died in 1883) one of his sons wrote from Detroit:

I have tried not to feel bitter, but I cannot help it. When my father left here, the so-called New Church Society was paying him the magnificent sum of \$260.00 per year, while negotiating with an entire stranger for the same services for \$2,500. Did they think that my father had arrived at that time in life when either his physical or mental powers had begun to wane, and that a younger man might be the means of drawing more outside attention to the Church and Society than he? If so, why was not there someone among them that had the manliness to have quietly sat down and talked the matter over with him, and told him how they felt about the matter. But no, they treated him like some will treat an old and faithful horse, who after long years of toil they quietly open the barn door and say, "You can go now, we have gotten all we want of you."

As Field grew older, he eventually gave up his missionary journeys and retreated from any office in the Association or Convention. He seems to have continued his lifelong practice of engaging in theological debate through the medium of the printed word, in newspapers and periodicals. In a sense he was a missionary to the end. ☩

Louise Woofenden was an archivist in the library of the Swedenborg School of Religion.

## Mauritian Reflections

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brothers, Napoléon and James. Also present was Émile Michel, a painter, and in addition, there in the background was Edmond de Chazal with the important and inspiring George Herbert Poole, who had arrived from Adelaide in Australia in 1846 and from the very beginning of his visit had propagated Swedenborg's thought. That is not to say, though, that it was Poole who had brought Swedenbor-



The island of Mauritius is located off the southeast coast of Africa, east of Madagascar. It is the main island of the Republic of Mauritius, with Port Louis as the capital.

gianism to the island. There are strong indications that the spiritual soil had already been prepared by earlier influences, initially by the import of books by the de Chazal family, and especially by Edmond's father, Toussaint.

At that time, the greater part of Swedenborg's works had been published in French, and even earlier, during Swedenborg's own lifetime, French mysticists, occultists, hypnotists, and Freemasons had been fascinated by the Swedish theosophist (1688–1772). Swedenborgianism's deep roots and wide branches in the de Chazal family are clear from the fact that the name crops up among the most active Swedenborgians in the twentieth century, both in France and on Mauritius. It seems, however, like Lesage, that the artist Émile Michel also had significant contact with France. In fact, Michel began the importing of Sweden-

borgian literature into Mauritius.<sup>2</sup> To some extent, too, Swedenborgianism on Mauritius can be traced back to the Englishman Charles Augustus Tulk, as profound a thinker as he was controversial, the son of John Augustus Tulk, one of the very first Swedenborgians in the world.<sup>3</sup>

To understand this, we first turn back to the "mystic Australian," Poole. Research in Swedenborgian sources shows that George Herbert Poole was an Englishman, was trained in languages, and had held a teaching post from 1846 to 1849 at the Royal College, a high school on the then-British possession of Mauritius. In England, he had been a close friend of C.A. Tulk; and when Poole re-

turned to Mauritius in 1859, he won many converts to his own faith in Swedenborg's teachings. Among them was Émile Michel, who started a correspondence with Jacques-François-Etienne Le Boys des Guays (1794–1864), known for his many French translations of Swedenborg and for having

2. Karl-Erik Sjöden, *Swedenborg en France* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell international, 1985), Pp. 111, 128, 147f., 198. As late as the 1960s we find New Churchmen in France by the name of Maurice de Chazal and Louis de Chazal, and today there are still families named Chazal, living in different parts of the world, some of them Swedenborgian. The deep philosophical interest of that family is still indicated today by works such as *Les lumières et l'idée de la nature: textes réunis par Gérard Chazal*, Editions universitaires de Dijon, 2011; and as it happens the Nobel laureate Jeanmarie Gustave le Clézio coauthored *Les années Cannes: 40 ans de festival* (Renens: 5 Continents, 1987) with the cineast Robert Chazal.

3. *Arcana* (USA), Vol. I, no. 2 (1994), pp. 19ff., 42ff.; Vol. II, no. 4 (1996), pp. 29ff.

founded the New Church Society at Saint-Amand-Mont-rond (the department of Cher in central France) in November 1837—and also for his correspondence with George Sand and Alexandre Dumas.<sup>4</sup>

Poole took up his teaching profession in Australia from 1850 to 1865, first in Sydney, as reflected in the history of the New Church in New South Wales, an organization that survives at the present day. Poole then fully immigrated to Mauritius in 1865, where we find him on the Rue du Rempart, in a house owned by Edmond de Chazal, who earlier had been, by all testimony, a thorough-going skeptic. It was probably Poole, Lesage, and Michel who finally convinced Edmond, and he became the central figure of the society.<sup>5</sup>

### The Echo of the New Jerusalem

After that founding meeting in Port Louis in January, 1859, almost a decade after Poole left the island after his earlier visit, Edmond de Chazal donated a piece of land for the proposed society. A year earlier he himself had started corresponding with Le Boys des Guays and The New Church Society in France. In consequence, the little group of friends built *La Société de la Nouvelle Jérusalem* in the capital city of

Continues next page

4 On this society and the creation of a French manuscript collection (now in the Swedenborg House in London), cf. K.-E. Sjöden, "Ett århundrade av den Nya Kyrkans historia i Frankrike," offprint of *Nya Kyrkans Tidning* No. 3–4, Stockholm 1977. After Le Boys des Guays' death, the collection passed to Edmond Chevrier, author of the valuable *Histoire sommaire de la Nouvelle Église Chrétienne* (1879), which has a description of Edmond de Chazal in an informative appendix (pp. 238–243). The Swedenborgian author Anna Fredrika Ehrenborg tells the story of the French Swedenborgians in her book of travel, *Tjugufyra Bref från Frankrike, Tyskland och Sveits* (Upsala, 1856).

5 In his introduction to *To My Children*, V. F. Taylor mentions letters and diaries that testify how long and severe was the hesitation before Edmond was finally converted and took part in the founding of the New Church.

The people here are extraordinarily helpful. If you ask for directions, they will get in the car with you and direct you to your destination and then accept no money and walk a mile or more back to where you met them. Not once has anyone ever been rude to us. Without exception people have gone out of their way to be helpful. It's hard to believe they are so nice and don't want any money in return. . . . I have never met a more generous people. They are always welcoming. They do not look at North Americans with dollar signs in their eyes. The people here apparently do not have an identity crisis—they seem to like being Mauritian. They feel unique, are proud of their country in a non-militaristic way, and seem content with their life. They know that they are a third-world country and look at the US and England as rich places but don't seem interested in being like anybody but themselves. Every person I have met has asked me with genuine excitement, "How are you liking Mauritius?" I have traveled in poor countries where people were proud of their country, but I also sensed shame and disappointment, and some bitterness and resentment toward me because I came from a place more economically well off. Here I sense absolutely nothing but self-assured pride and contentment.

—Eric Allison from the manse, New Jerusalem Church,  
Remono Street and Curepipe Road, Mauritius.

Excerpted from "Mauritius: What is It Like" *New Church Messenger*,  
February 1993.

Continued from preceding page

Port Louis. In the fateful year 1861—America's Civil War, the emancipation of the serfs in Russia, the unification of Italy—Edmond de Chazal was not only the leader of the active Swedenborg Society, but also the editor of its monthly journal, *L'Echo de la Nouvelle Jérusalem*, the very first purely religious periodical on Mauritius. Here the liturgy of the New Church was published; here one learned of baptisms and marriages. The journal introduced many contributions from France, including some by the lawyer J. A. Blanchet of Tarbe, who had founded a Swedenborgian society in the Pyrenees. Its columns even took note of general Aleksandr Muraviev's labors for spiritual and humanitarian reform in Russia.

Until his death, Edmond de Chazal was the driving force of Swedenborgianism on the island, a distant outpost two thousand *lieu* from Paris. The results were evident. A year after

the purchase of the meeting building bought in 1876 in Port Louis, we find Ordinance No. 4 Of 1877, signed by Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India. This was the official recognition of The New Church and its constitution on Mauritius. A Methodist pastor had joined The New Church. De Chazal had won the hearts of both Protestants and Anglicans, even of Hindus. When his own heart stopped after seventy years, in February 1879, he left behind a love and devotion that are clearly portrayed in his obituary in the periodical, *Le Cernéen*. It is particularly emphasized that even with the Indian hired hands on his sugar plantations, Edmond de Chazal lived in a unique moral and spiritual fellowship.

After Edmond de Chazal's death, the Lesage family was dominant in the Societé, and the jurist and political figure Auguste Châteauneuf, a member of the Legislative Assembly, succeeded him as its leader. On the initiative

of the Lesage family, a second church building was erected at Curepipe, where Leona Lesage had donated some land. Since the time of its first pastor, Father Ferkin, Swedenborgian ministers from various parts of the world have from time to time officiated there.<sup>6</sup> One example of the international character of this ministry was Cornelius Bécherel, a member of the island's Indian population, pastor of the church in Curepipe. Like his predecessors, he fastened his hopes on his son and baptized him in the name Espérance. But this Espérance Bécherel, a Frenchman on his mother's side, wound up devoting his life to a quest for earthly treasures in Baie de Tombeau—more precisely, a gold treasure, which, according to a map handed down from his grandmother, had been hidden by a Dutch sailor in the seventeenth century.

This was the era of pioneers. When the Portuguese had landed in the sixteenth century, the island was unpopulated but rich with exotic animal life. The delicious giant dodo birds (named *didus ineptus* by Linnaeus) were exterminated by the next colonists, the Dutch, who planted sugarcane, that baneful crop which is associated with slavery in the colonies and with the conditions that accompany it. This is how Africans came to Mauritius. The island had no indigenous population, so in that land a "genuine Mauritian" could have whatever appearance one chose. This was pointed out by one of Cornelius's later successors, Eric Allison, to whom I owe most of my knowledge about this congregation, in a lively, lovely, and memorable report on his pastorate in paradise, where the concept of a "standard of living" lost its American meaning. Eric experienced a sense of fellowship, freedom, and generosity in a multitude of differing peo-

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<sup>6</sup> "The Swedenborgian Church in Mauritius," *the Messenger* (Newton, Massachusetts), February 1993, p. 21.

## Mauritian Reflections

Continued from preceding page

ple and onlookers, on one place out in the ocean, where people observed each other's holidays and found delight in helping and pleasing others, whoever they might be.<sup>7</sup> (Sidebar, page 21)

### Surrealism and Swedenborgianism

The name of de Chazal has never been forgotten in Mauritius. Nor has it been forgotten outside Mauritius. In 1961, a descendant with the name Maurice de Chazal baptized twenty-one people at the New Church in Paris; he was an officially chosen pastor of the English General Conference of Swedenborgians, who eventually left Paris to continue his work in South Africa. Henry de Geymüller dedicated his noteworthy book, *Swedenborg et les Phénomènes Psychiques*, to the well-known French Swedenborgian, a book also renowned in German translation owing to the acclaimed historian of philosophy, Paul Sakmann.

By no means the least contribution to the international fame of the de Chazal name has been made by the Mauritian surrealist poet and Swedenborgian, Malcolm de Chazal (1902–1981), a descendant of Edmond, a man whom André Breton defended and honored as one of the greatest poets: “Nothing so powerful has been heard since Lautréaumont.” Malcolm de Chazal too sought for wisdom, the infinite, the meaning of birth and death. He experienced revelations, interpreted the scriptures, albeit in his own surrealistic way; he sought the light of the beginning, had visions of seeing face to face, groped for sensory truth in the supernatural world of nature and in the sensual as the great delight.<sup>8</sup> Malcolm de Chazal

<sup>7</sup> *the Messenger*, February 1993; and February 1994.

<sup>8</sup> Malcolm de Chazal was eventually brought to the attention of people in Sweden by the surrealist press's *Mannen på Gatan*, *Surrealism*, 1994, with an introduction

and his kindred spirits saw in sensory nature the face of both life and death, the only possibility of freedom.

High above the volcanic island rises a mountain named Le Morne Brabant, wreathed with legends, where year after year escaped slaves hid themselves from their owners and hunters. When slavery was abolished in 1835, English soldiers climbed up to them to bring them the good news. But the slaves, who believed they would be taken prisoner and transported back to the sugarcane fields, threw themselves down from the cliffs in a collective suicide. Similar stories about fugitives recur in our own times: such is the value of freedom.

Malcolm de Chazal was allowed to witness the declaration of independence of the island in the revolutionary year of 1968. Since March 1992, the Mauritius has been a republic with over a million inhabitants who celebrate their independence far beyond any coast or horizon, an island of *tolerance*, according to Pastor Allison, where, in a community of Indians, Africans, Chinese, and Europeans, the motto of the United States once was realized to a greater degree than in America: *e pluribus unum*, a unity out of multitudes.

As the inheritance from father to son in the de Chazal family was of such immense spiritual and historical significance, as we have seen in the case of the first generation on the island, Edmond de Chazal gathered his most important writings under the title, *À Mes Enfants*, “To My Children.” As the father of twelve children, however, he included in his spiritual testament all his survivors, his whole succession. The pages are written in the spirit of “holy optimism”; Swedenborg is present on every page, but the introductory motto was composed by de Chazal himself:

Love one another: the family is  
the first degree of Christian love,

by Bruno Jacobs and Carl-Michael Edenborg.

for that is where the first modeling of the angelic heaven happens on earth. Fathers live in their children; children live in the father who loves them. Harmony makes a family a paradise; discord makes it a hell.” ☩

Anders Hallengren is a Swedish author, scholar, and composer, a fellow of the Linnean Society, and president of the Swedenborg Society of London. His most recent book is a collection of poetry published in English and German, illustrated by Paris artist Madlen Herrström, *Pentagrams-Pentagramme* (Éditions Sander, 2012).

“E pluribus unum” was translated from the original Swedish by George F. Dole and revised by Anders Hallengren (2011).

Reprinted from *Patterns: Make 'Em and Break 'Em*, *Chrysalis Reader*, volume 19, pp. 75–81, West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation Press, 2013.

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## Passages

### Deaths

**Louise Dole Woofenden** died January 18, 2013 at the age of 85 in Bowdoinham, Maine. She was born in Fryeburg, Maine, on November 27, 1927, daughter of Anita Sturges Dole and Rev. Louis A. Dole, who was minister of the Fryeburg, Bath, and Portland New Churches, and cofounder of the Fryeburg New Church Assembly. Her grandfather, Rev. Henry C. Dole, also had been minister of the Bath New Church, where her younger brother, Rev. Dr. George F. Dole, is the current pastor.

Louise grew up in Bath with a deep connection to the community. She graduated from Morse High School in 1945 as class valedictorian. She went on to graduate *cum laude* from Wellesley College in 1949, majoring in classical archeology. She married Rev. Dr. William Ross Woofen-



### SCYL Officers

*Continued from page 17*

and caring soul. I know that she will do a fantastic job in her role as spiritual leader and compassionate guide to our teens.

Please join me in congratulating all of our 2013 SCYL officers and our new league chaplain. We have a spirited and lively group of teens leading the League this year. Their creative ideas and love for their church community will keep SCYL happily and harmoniously humming along. I am blessed to be working with this group and I hope that you get a chance to get to know them all.

—Kurt Fekete, youth director

den on September 3, 1950, in Bath, Maine. Through more than sixty-one years of marriage, they raised eight children and lived in New York City; Ferndale, Michigan;

Des Plains, Illinois; Webster Groves, Missouri; and Sharon, Massachusetts, as Bill transferred to pastor different churches. Then late in life, Louise was delighted to return to her beloved Maine when they moved to Bowdoinham in 2004.

In addition to raising her large family, Louise engaged in a variety of pursuits, engaging her artistic and intellectual talents as well as her managerial skills and caring nature. Many of these were connected to her love of the church. Over the years, she regularly taught Sunday School at the churches where Bill was pastor. She was the primary author and artist for a full set of activity books to enhance the *Dole Sunday School Notes* (a program of Bible lessons written decades earlier by her mother, Anita Dole). She was the longtime editor of and writer for the Sunday School Association's national monthly magazine, *5 Smooth Stones*. She was an archivist at the Swedenborg School of Religion library in Newton, Massachusetts, for many years. (One of her articles for *the Messenger* from a series called "Archival Gold" appears on page 18.) Louise was a very active participant in the Fryeburg New Church Assembly (FNCA), attending almost every year of her life and serving the Assembly nearly all that time in various capacities, including camp regis-



Louise reading to Rev. Bray at FNCA

trar, children's religion class teacher, and camp historian. She often said it was her favorite place on earth. She and Bill loved FNCA so much that they built the Woofenden Cabin there in 1955.

Louise was an accomplished watercolorist, an avid naturalist, and an organic gardener decades before it became popular. She excelled at everything she put her hand to, including knitting, sewing, tatting, stenciling, line drawing, writing, editing, and archiving and organizing historic materials. She was a long-time volunteer at Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary during her thirty years in Sharon. She sewed dresses and shirts for her family as well as knitting colorful sweaters, scarves, hats, mittens, and socks. She meticulously designed an extensive knit collection of very detailed finger puppet sets on a wide variety of themes. She became so proficient at tatting that she could do it without looking while reading the Bible in Greek. Louise had a quiet but razor-sharp sense of humor. When her children asked her to do something which they should and could do themselves, she was known to respond, "Who was your servant last year?"

She is survived by sons Ross, Trevor, Ian, Lee, and Todd Woofenden; daughters Jane Foster, Laura Grams, and Ellen Woofenden; twenty-four grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; and her brother George F. Dole. She was predeceased by her husband in May 2012, and by her older sister Gertrude Dole Tremblay in 1997.

A memorial service will be held at 2:00 PM on Saturday, February 16, at the Bath New Church. Donations in her name can be made to the Fryeburg New Church Assembly. ☩

### 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 fifteen 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.

### Book Review

## Patterns: Make 'Em and Break' Em

REVIEWED BY HERB ZIEGLER

This final *Chrysalis Reader, Pattern: Make 'Em and Break 'Ems* continues the Chrysalis tradition of thoughtful, engaging, well-crafted pieces centered on a theme relating to spiritual growth and Swedenborg's ideas. It is divided into parts—"Breaking Patterns," "Perpetuating a Pattern," "Stuck in a Pattern," "Patterns in Process," and "Making a New Pattern"—which explore many facets of humanity and spirit from diverse angles and perspectives.

Only a few pieces explore or reference anything about Swedenborg or Swedenborgianism directly. One piece that does is Anders Hallengren's *E pluribus unum: Mauritian Reflections*, reprinted on page 13 of this issue of *the Messenger*.

Many pieces are personal reflections or memoirs, or stories that read as such. They draw in the reader with a heartfelt intimacy that melds the reader with the author or the protagonist. These are for the most part gentle pieces, but many contain hard truths of life—hard truths that illuminate and move us as well as

the gentleness.

Centered on "patterns" from various perspectives, the pieces take us to many places in many different times and into very different kinds of lives at different stages of growth.

This is a literary book, and the writing is overall of high quality; works are from poet laureates, acclaimed authors, and up-and-coming voices alike. Michael Barber paints a poignant picture of a soldier's return from Baghdad.

Richard Lines steps back into the past to explore a debate among early followers of Swedenborg about whether or not to split from existing Christian churches to establish one of their own. Rounding out the volume are two Bailey Prize winners, Katherine Noble, a young poet and Kristin Troyer, whose essay moves between descriptions of being an actress in Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* and life as a university student dealing with her father's illness.

Treat yourself to a wonderful final *Chrysalis Reader* that you can pick up for brief reads and savor over time. ☩

Available from [swedenborg.com](http://swedenborg.com) along with back issues.

