

## Comparing Themes from Jung and Swedenborg The Importance of Their Dream Journals

BY COLIN AMATO

Dreams are the symbolic language of the unconscious, sending messages of instruction to the conscious part of our psyches. A common practice for some is recording dreams so they form a longitudinal narrative or series. It is uncommon for a series of dreams and fantasies to lead to the creation of a whole system of theology or psychology. This is exactly the case with both the scientist, mystic, and theologian Emanuel Swedenborg and Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung. Neither man published his journal. In both cases it was a private, unfettered place of exploring inner worlds and working dreams through to larger interpretations about their lives and the larger dimensions of being. Although Swedenborg's dream journal was available to Jung in English—a language which Jung knew reasonably well—it was not a well-known text at that time and was not widely available. No evidence exists indicating Jung knew of it when he was first reading Swedenborg, nor even later in life, after he had become a famous pioneering authority on the function of dreams.

Speculating about Jung's engagement with Swedenborg has been a topic of research amongst academics since the 1970s. Jung relates that he read several volumes of Swedenborg's works while attending medical school,

and he mentions Swedenborg in intriguing ways a number of times in his written works. The tricky quest of discerning Jung's actual opinion about Swedenborg, however, is not the focus of this article. I am fascinated that both of these men recorded their profoundly personal and numinous experiences in dream journals.

From these initial experiences, both Swedenborg and Jung developed elaborate systems, one theological, the other psychological. I will offer only three common themes that appear in both private dream journals.

### Feminine Wisdom

Both Swedenborg and Jung credit the positive feminine figures in their dreams as being the source of wisdom and instructors of souls. While feminine figures may have elements eliciting anxiety, as for example in Swedenborg's well-known *vagina dentata* (vagina with teeth) dream, the break-



*The inner hero slays the dragon representing the regressive tendencies of the psyche (The Red Book).*

through happens through the discovery of the helpful and positive aspect of the feminine. In *The Red Book*, Jung identifies his soul as feminine. He would later develop the psychological concept of the *anima* (feminine aspect of the male psyche) and *animus* (the masculine aspect of the female psyche). At this point, how-

ever, he not only sees his soul as female, but that it instructs him and guides him during this period of self-discovery. There are feminine figures that emerge from Jung's unconscious, but the one he struggles with most is Salome, daughter of King Herod. She upsets Jung at first, due to her reputation in the New Testament; over time she convinces him that she has truths to teach him. She is able to teach Jung that he needs to pay attention to his feeling function, and also to work on his understanding of the divine within himself.

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## The Editor's Desk



### Do the Right Thing

Would that our choices in personal behavior and action were as simple as we would like them to be. As children we learned the difference between good and bad, and then right and wrong. The lines were sharply drawn so that our dilemmas simply revolved around whether or not we were going to be right or wrong in our behavior. As we got older, the line between right and wrong gradually became less distinct, and now we had to figure out what was right and what was wrong in addition to whether we would behave rightly.

We confront this confusion directly when we subscribe to a religious faith and confront endless complexity in addressing what's wrong in our lives and in our communities—from the smallest to the largest.

This difficulty in seeing the right

way forward and the difficulty of filtering our responses through our personal and religious ethics are well illustrated in the issue of crime and punishment, an issue important enough to occupy the entire agenda of the May meeting of the National Council of Christian Churches USA (NCCC—articles on pages 89 and 90 by Revs. David Fekete and Ken Turley).

As with most social issues, the incarceration of young black men in numbers far exceeding their percentage of the population inspires widely divergent opinions as to its importance, causes, and remedies. The NCCC is firmly in the peace and justice camp, which defines the issue as one that goes to the core of injustice, inequality, and the causes of many of the dysfunctions in American society. Other equally devout believers discount the reality, importance, or injustice of the situation, insisting that the incarcerated population is merely the result of laws being enforced equally. Privatizing of prisons further complicates the issue and its responses as the ultimate consequences for positive or negative outcomes are debated.

How do we come to a sensible analysis and a plan of action to remedy the situation if we can't find consensus? This is the fundamental dilemma of democratic or individually-based decisions. In societies organized with truth and decision-making dictated from the top, as it is to varying degrees in the Catholic, Mormon, and most fundamentalist churches and in many authoritarian societies, the complexities

of determining the truth of an issue and subsequent actions are resolved by leadership—adherents are enjoined to accept dictates and not question them. We see this phenomenon in religious and political societies throughout the world, but not in congregational churches or democratic societies. Thus, in America, Canada, the Swedenborgian Church, and the NCCC, we engage in dialogue and inner searching while looking to our religious teachings for guidance. The hardest part of this process is balancing our political convictions and our striving for advantage in the struggle for survival from our efforts to discern the truth.

—Herb Ziegler

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## Church Calendar

- July 2–6: 2014 Annual Convention  
St. Louis, MO
- July 26–August 3: Almont Summer School • Allenton, MI
- August 2–17: FNCA Summer Camp Session • Fryeburg, ME

## the Messenger

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Editor, Design and production: Herbert Ziegler:

Copy editing and proofing: Robert Leith, Renée Hellenbrecht, and Beki Greenwood

Communications Support Unit: Kristina Madjerac, Ros Taylor, & Steve Sanchez

Reproduction: Gnomon Copy, Cambridge, MA

### Editorial Address:

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

Tel: 617.491.5181

Email: [messenger@swedenborg.org](mailto:messenger@swedenborg.org)

### Business and Subscription Address:

The Messenger, Central Office  
50 Quincy Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138

Tel: 617.969.4240

Email: [manager@swedenborg.org](mailto:manager@swedenborg.org)

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

## Letter from the President



*Providence: The Assurance of Purpose*  
*Gateway to Providence: Being Led By The Lord*

Dear Friends,

I woke up this morning in Seattle. It was a long but uneventful flight. What was remarkable was that from beginning to end the entire country was covered with a blanket of clouds. At one point, toward the end of the flight as it was getting dark, for about fifteen seconds I saw a few lights on the ground. The sole indicator that there was life “down there.” It was an interesting feeling. Certainly I knew the ground was down there and all of the rivers and mountains that I had so hoped to see. Certainly I knew that people were down there too, all of the cities and scattered towns and villages and the checkerboard layout of the farms that feed us all. Still, it was only memory that reminded me that beneath that fuzzy gray blanket, that looked solid enough to walk and climb on, there was indeed vibrant life behind what I could only see the surface of.

Swedenborg suggests that clouds correspond to the literal sense of the Word. Of course he is suggesting this while standing on earth and looking toward the sky—just the opposite of my perspective flying across the country. From Swedenborg’s perspective the clouds appear as a soft, fuzzy surface that provides the dew and rain, corresponding to the refreshing and nourishing truth in accessible form; they protect us from being scorched by the life-giving, yet paradoxically harsh and unforgiving, ultimate truth represented by the sun. Still,

as solid and even as imposing as clouds can sometimes appear, they are easily penetrated, often parted, and at times not even present, and we are able to experience directly the blazing, brilliant light of wisdom and the warming, life-giving heat of the sun. Together in life-giving action, this is what we call the “inner meaning.” This is one way, for those who care to look, that God invites us into mutual knowing. We can through the inner sense know more of God and more of who we are in this relationship. And of course, it is a way for us to invite God to know us.

This is not to say God does not already know us, but there is something life affirming when we intentionally seek to open ourselves to be known by God. It is a kind of affirmation of faith that engenders trust and devotion and deepens our end of the relationship. Like offering the gratitude and praise that God really doesn’t need, our opening in trust and willingness to God deepens our own faith and love for God, and if we are sincere, for our fellow beings here on earth, our fellow creations of the God we seek to know and be known by.

There is a kind of freeing of the spirit and a lifting of the heart when we accept God and offer ourselves to be known fully. The kind of relief that comes with baring the soul and unburdening oneself of some long held troublesome secret. We can indeed live as if we are “safe from God’s prying eyes,” believing we are hidden by the seemingly impenetrable barrier of clouds. There is indeed the appearance of distance and anonymity within which we can comfort ourselves—and within which, many, many people choose to live. But I would do otherwise. And I would call us as people of God to do otherwise. I would call us to openly own that we have given ourselves to the reverence and service of God. I would call us to open our arms to heaven and welcome God to know us through and through and to take the cracked and fragile vessels that we are and fill us with divine

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## Nominees for Elected Positions in the Church

The Nominating Committee recruits and puts forward nominees for election to offices and positions in the denomination at the annual convention. In addition to the candidates to be elected as representative-class trustees on the Swedenborgian House of Studies (SHS) Board of Trustees, three candidates are to be elected as at-large class trustees, nominated by the SHS Board.

The candidates listed in the table at right have been nominated for election at the 2014 Annual Convention.

Nominations to all offices and positions can be made from the floor of the annual convention.

### Candidate Statements

The following candidates have submitted statements for the June *Messenger*. The statements of candidates marked with an asterisk (\*) appeared in the April *Messenger*, and those marked with two (\*\*) appeared in the May *Messenger*.

#### COMSU: Kathryn Pruiett

I've been a Swedenborgian from birth—literally—as I was born at SSR (the Swedenborgian School of Religion) while my father was a student. My earliest memories are of roaming around the halls and being fascinated by the bust of Swedenborg. We moved to Fryeburg, Maine, when I was four, and the strong church community became my family. I became very active in the youth groups thanks to my mother, Carole Rienstra, and eventually served two terms as the national president of the New Church Youth League (now the Swedenborgian Church Youth League—SCYL).



Position to be Filled	Term (Yrs)	Candidate
Vice-President	1	Betsy Coffman (I)*
Secretary	1	Susannah Currie (I)*
Treasurer	1	Polly Baxter (I)*
General Council layperson (2 to be elected)	3	Barbara Cullen (I)* Lon Elmer (I)*
General Council Minister	3	Sky Paradise*
Communication Support Unit (COMSU)	3	Katie Rienstra Pruiett (I)
Education Support Unit (EDSU)	3	Paul Deming
Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit (FPRSU)	3	Jennifer Lindsay (I)**
Information Management Support Unit (IMSU)	3	Kevin Baxter
Support Unit for Ministries (MINSU) (3 to be elected)	3 3 1	Dick Tafel (I)** Marjory Leas Nadine Cotton
Committee on Admission to the Ministry (CAM)	3 2	Rebecca Esterson** Jane Siebert
Board of Trustees of SHS, representative class (4 to be elected)	2 3 2 3	Nancy Little** Alison Longstaff** Robert Morrill (I) Gard Perry**
Board of Trustees of SHS, at-large class (3 to be elected)***	3 3 1	Jenny Caughman Pina Warthan John Titus (I)
Nominating Committee (2 to be nominated, 1 to be elected)	5	Sue Ditmire* David Fekete*

(I) Incumbent

\*\*\* Nominated by the Swedenborgian House of Studies (SHS) Board of Trustees

It was here that I was confirmed into the Church by my father, Rev. David L. Rienstra—one of the most important choices I ever made. The Fryeburg New Church Assembly and Almont New Church Assembly (in Michigan) were also regular and very important fixtures of my upbringing. We moved to St. Louis while I was in high school. I eventually met and married my husband Eric Pruiett; we have been married for twenty years now and live just south of St. Louis in Perryville, Missouri. We have two children: Jonathon Allen, eighteen and Heather Carole, fourteen. I worked for AT&T for seventeen years as a communications specialist, but recently returned to school full-time to obtain my teaching certi-

fication in secondary education English. When my daughter became old enough to attend the Tween/SPLATz retreats, I started attending them as staff, which began filling that empty hole inside me. She is now a leaguer and thanks me. I am just thankful for our youth program and the social media that helped me discover the church again. I have a lot of experience to offer the Communication Support Unit, and I would be honored to give back to my church that I love.

#### EDSU: Paul Deming

- Bachelor of Education in Music from Webster University
- Music teacher at Rohan Woods

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School (since 2000)  
 • Board president and music director, Garden Chapel in St. Louis (Church of the Open Word)  
 • Lead guitarist,

Ralph Butler Band

- Member, AOSA (American Orff Schulwerk Association)
- Member, ASKA (American Shotokan Karate Association)

I've been serving at Garden Chapel since 1994. I started attending after my father's memorial service in 1993. I was taken with the openness and acceptance of the congregation. I enjoyed the theology that saw a universal human race and a place for worshipers of all kinds. My first annual convention was in Berkeley in 2005. There I met Ken Turley and found in him a friend in music. It has been an honor and a joy to participate musically in any way at convnetions since then.

I'm thankful for all the friends I've met along the way, and especially those who worship God in life and song.

**IMSU: Kevin Baxter**

Rev. Kevin Baxter is celebrating his tenth year as an ordained minister of the Swedenborgian Church. He has been active on regional and national committees, and is at present the chairperson of the Council of Ministers. He has served previously on IMSU and would like an opportunity to work on improving the denomination's ability to serve its churches though digital resources. He has been active in audio-visual technology since high school and has developed web pages for churches, political associations, and other non-profit groups.



**MINSU: Nadine Cotton**

I have been serving as the minister for the Swedenborg Chapel in Cleveland for over two years. Previously, I served as minister and after-school program director for the New Church of Southwest Florida. In the past, I have



served as a hospital and hospice chaplain. I served on the Committee on the Admission to Ministry for two different terms, on the Council of Min-

ister's Nominating Committee, and on the Swedenborgian House of Studies Board of Trustees; I serve as cochair for the Social Concerns Committee and as a denominational representative to the National Council of Churches.

I was ordained in 1997, and I believe that through these many years of serving at the local and national levels I have gained knowledge and ability that will be a beneficial contribution to the Ministries Support Unit. I would accept gratefully the opportunity to be of service on this committee.

**MINSU: Marjory Leas**

A fourth-generation Swedenborgian, I have spent my adult life living at a distance from a Swedenborgian Church. Being involved with the church in ways other than Sunday worship has always been important to me. My family and I continue a long tradition of participation at the Almont New Church Assembly, with several generations gathering there for camp each summer. I am secretary of the Michigan Association. At the national level, I have served on the Education Support Unit and was elected last year



as president of the National Alliance of New Church Women. It seems that my first year of retirement from teaching is allowing me time to pursue further a use within our church, and I am interested in doing that as a member of the Ministries Support Unit.

My home is in Fort Wayne, Indiana, home of the annual Johnny Applesed Festival, where area Swedenborgians and I have provided festival-goers with a Swedenborgian worship service commemorating the faith of John Chapman for sixteen years.

**CAM: Jane Siebert**

I hope to use my skills to support candidates for ministry by making the process clearly defined and easily accessible. With candidates spread out all over the US and Canada, frequent connection with the Committee on Admission to the Ministry (CAM) advisors and students is essential.



I am excited about the opportunity to run for election to CAM. I have served on the Swedenborgian House of Studies Board of Trustees for many years—my tenure ends in July. My experience from the educational aspect of ministerial preparation is good training for the CAM. I am completing my tenth year as an ordained Swedenborgian minister. I have worked as a hospital chaplain and now serve our churches in Pawnee Rock and Pretty Prairie (Kansas) as part-time minister. I volunteer with hospice, lead retreats, and write a newspaper spirituality and religion column. I would appreciate your support to serve on CAM.

**SHS Board: Jenny Caughman**

I am a sixth-generation Swedenborgian. It was not, however, until middle age that I received my calling to the

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## SPLATz “Find Their Way” — to the Spring Retreat at Almont

BY RACHAEL SBROCCO

It's springtime! And that means the SPLATz (Super Powered Lovable Almost Teens) were at Almont Retreat Center again. Over May 2–4, we welcomed nineteen SPLATz to the “Finding Your Way” retreat. Almont is the perfect location for our spring retreat. We always hope the weather will cooperate so there will be plenty of running around outside on the playground during free time. For the most part, the weather did cooperate. Even when it got a little wet and sprinkley, that didn't stop kids who were desperate for spring to arrive. The cool nights still allowed for building a cozy fire in the fireplace in Pfister Lounge—the perfect place for deep conversations and rounds of the game Catch Phrase.

Because this retreat is only a two-day event, we have to get busy fast. Welcoming and introductions happened as soon as everyone had arrived and gotten settled on Friday evening. Youth director Kurt Fekete gave the overview for the weekend and then dove into the first session about what it feels like to be lost, both physically and spiritually, and how that differs from wandering.

Following the first session on Friday night, in order for the paint to dry in time, we had to get right on with crafting. The SPLATz designed personal labyrinths, and were working on this craft almost up until bedtime.

A labyrinth is a tool that can be used when praying, meditating, or “finding your way.” As you move along the single path, the labyrinth can help quiet and calm your mind and allows you to

focus or work through your problems more easily. The SPLATz made personal, hand-held labyrinths in which they could run their finger between the raised lines of the path. First, they drew their designs onto pieces of tile using a permanent marker (if you want to try this at home, a Magic Eraser will remove your permanent marker mistakes). After drawing the labyrinths, they applied a line of glow-in-the-dark raised paint (Glow in the Dark Dimensional Writer worked great!) over their lines. After twenty-four hours of drying, the labyrinths were ready to



SPLATz-made labyrinths

be used for Saturday night's bedtime meditation. The labyrinths looked spectacular all glowing in the dark. Kurt led the meditation as the SPLATz “walked” their new labyrinths.

Rev. Jenn Tafel led Saturday morning's

session on “Questioning God in Order to Make Sense of the Divine.” She shared two Bible stories: “Jacob wrestles with an Angel,” Genesis 32: 22–32, and “Doubting Thomas,” John 20: 19–30. These two stories are good examples of how we oftentimes wrestle with ourselves and question God as we are try to “find our way” and make sense of things on our path through life. Rev. Jenn used puzzle pieces to il-

lustrate how we must all use the information we have been given to put the pieces together make sense of everything. Because each of us has different life experiences, we each have different puzzle pieces to assemble in our own unique way.

In the afternoon session, Kurt read the Jacob's Ladder story, Genesis 28:10–22, and discussed what the dream meant. Kurt explained how the angels going up and down the ladder represent spiritual messages that connect the earth with heaven. Information travels in both directions. Angels communicate to us, and our loftier thoughts also travel up to the angels. The more honest and true our intentions, the more easily the angels descend and ascend the ladder. Heaven becomes closer to earth as we make better and better decisions and choices. The choices we make determine our path. This led right into our next craft project, designing a giant Snakes and Ladders game board.

The SPLATz broke into pairs and drew pieces of paper out of a hat. Each paper had written on it two opposite character traits, such as responsible/irresponsible. Each SPLATz pair was instructed to make an example of the characteristics it received for the game board. They made their own playing pieces too, and then assembled the board. Altogether, eighteen special squares were created for the board. The



Scout



Leo and Ava

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SPLATz determined who had created the most egregious scenario for making bad choices and awarded that square



*Ava, Ronnie, Ivy and Scout play Snakes and Ladders on the giant game board they helped build*

the longest snake. Likewise, the best example showing a loving and kind act was awarded the tallest ladder. The game board is made of felt so it can be re-used again and again and can be played in the dorms at Almont Summer School in July.

Kurt wrapped up the retreat with the final session called “Following the Star.” He read the famous Epiphany story about the Magi’s travels to visit Jesus (Matthew 2:1–12) and how a star guided them to the place where Jesus lay. He went on to discuss the meaning of stars. He explained how stars are spiritual knowledge of good and truth. They gather together as constellations to keep us on track by forming patterns in our minds. Stars lead us and guide us. Knowing God’s truth leads us to heaven. When we “follow the star,” we are finding our way to a better spiritual place. Kurt finished the session by asking, “how do we know when we are following the

star?” He provided five practical signs we might look for to determine if we are going through a spiri-

tual awakening, following the star. Thanks to all who helped put on this great retreat. Joining me in the chaperone duties were Lori Gayheart and Rev. Jenn Tafel. It’s a joy to work with such a great team. Thanks most of all to our fearless leader and youth director Kurt Fekete, who spends countless hours preparing and organizing, travels great distances, and has an incredible way of teaching and understanding our children. We are so very appreciative. Thanks too, to all of the parents who drive long distances or let their children be transported long distances, for these incredible weekends of friendship, learning, and fun. ☪

Rachel Sbrocco is an SCYL parent and retreat staffer living in Erie, Pennsylvania.



*(L to r) SPLATz parent Heather Oelker with retreat staff Lori Gayheart, Rev. Jenn Tafel, and Rachael Sbrocco*

## Nominees

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ministry. I earned a Certificate in Swedenborgian Studies from SHS and an MDiv from the Earlham School of Religion (ESR) in May, 2012, and was ordained two months later. In 2012, I was asked to serve on the Board of Trustees of the National Church (the first church I attended as a child, as my father served there) and I happily accepted. I live in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, with my husband John and three children, thus am unable to serve a Swedenborgian congregation; instead



I am the visitation minister at the local United Methodist Church. I occasionally preach at the New Church of Montgomery in Cincinnati, and I am grateful for that chance to connect with other Swedenborgians. As a recent graduate, I believe I will have a useful perspective to offer on the SHS Board.

### SHS Board: John Titus

As a Swedenborgian, I believe strongly in being of “use” in our world. My career in higher education as an administrator for nearly twenty-five years, serving as the dean of students at Urbana University and as director of student advisement, counseling, and career planning and placement at Schoolcraft College in Livonia, Michigan, has better prepared me well to serve on the Swedenborg House of Studies (SHS) Board of Trustees. In addition, my nine years experience in the mental health system as a social work counselor helped me develop my interpersonal skills to a greater level. I served on the Swedenborg School of Religion Board during the transition from Newton to Berkeley and for several years after on the SHS Board. I also served on General Council several years ago. My formal education began at Urbana University, where I completed my

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## Nominees

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Bachelors Degree while working and raising a family. From there I went to Wright State University and earned a Masters in Mental Health Counseling. I have done some post graduate work at Eastern Michigan University as well. I am blessed to have been married for forty-two years to my wife Bev; together we raised four wonderful children, and we are blessed with seven beautiful grandchildren. I am now retired but continue to serve Urbana University, volunteer for the Dayton International Peace Museum, stay active with the group September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, and sing with the World House Choir for Social Change. I speak at many venues, including universities, churches, public forums, and conventions, on issues of grief and loss and peace and social justice. I have also traveled on a book tour to promote my book entitled, *Losing Alicia—A Father's Journey After 9/11*.

I believe strongly in our Church, the message of Emmanuel Swedenborg, in doing my part to make this world a better place for our generations to come, and the transformative power of love and wisdom. I would be deeply honored to continue to serve on the Swedenborg House of Studies Board if elected.

### SHS Board: Agripina Warthan

I was born and raised in the Philippines, in a small barrio about six hours north of Manila. Through much sacrifice by my parents I was able to attend college, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Commerce and a major in accounting at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. I migrated to the United



## Letter from the President

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love and wisdom to be poured out for the benefit one another and for others. I would call us to live our lives as individuals and as members of this church and as members of the greater church in the world, with a full and open trust in the God we say we worship; with a full and open trust in the belief that God is present, everywhere at all times, and that we are known and cared for. For this is the essence of what we call Divine Providence. This is the essence of our intended purpose as human beings living on this earth seeking to be led by the Lord to the gateway through which we enter fully into heavenly life. This is not something that can be done in secret.

We will see you soon at the annual convention, and together we will celebrate, sing, pray, learn, discuss, debate, elect, decide, talk, and in all of this, be known by God and by one another. Let us embrace the process and the results with open arms, open hearts, and open minds. Let us be known and led by the Lord, for that is the assurance of our purpose.

—Blessings, Rev. Ken

*Providence: The Assurance of Purpose*  
*Gateway to Providence:*  
*Being Led By The Lord*

States in 1975, worked at Cutter Laboratories in Berkeley for four years, and then relocated to Puerto Rico in 1979 to be the plant accountant for the new Cutter Labs. I went on to obtain an MBA at the Inter-American University of Puerto Rico. I moved back to California in 1981 and continued working in the finance field, spending thirty-one years as a cost accountant and then senior financial analyst/accounting supervisor at an aerospace sensor manufacturing company, where I met

## St. Louis

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is St. Louis' oldest historic district, including 375 Victorian homes. The thirty-acre park is the oldest park west of the Mississippi River.

Shuttles will take Conventioneers to the park for an Independence Day celebration. They will find there a street fair with displays, booths, and special events, ending with a performance by the Ralph Butler Band featuring Paul Deming (from the St. Louis Church of the Open Word—Garden Chapel) on lead guitar. Visitors will have a chance to view fireworks from a variety of locations on the July 4 weekend.

The Church of the Open Word—Garden Chapel will hold services at 10 AM, Sunday, July 6, with rides available to take guests to the church and then the airport.

Shuttles will be available during the week to take visitors to a variety of local attractions.

- The Gateway Arch offers a museum of history of westward expansion and a tram that takes visitors to the top of the arch for a spectacular view of Illinois and Missouri. The arch stands on the banks of the Mississippi River, just a few blocks from the historical Old Courthouse.
- Also a few blocks from the Arch stands Busch Stadium, which will host three baseball games during the convention: at 6:15 PM, Friday,

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my husband, Roland. We were married in 1985 in Berkeley. We have a daughter, Christina, who graduated this June from UCLA with a BA, majoring in Middle Eastern Studies. Roland and I have been Swedenborgians for a very long time and are happily members at the Hillside Community Church in El Cerrito, California, since 2004.

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## Church and Association Statistics for 2013

Article I, Section 3, of the Constitution of the Swedenborgian Church states that it is composed of “Constituent bodies . . . which . . . unite with the Swedenborgian Church in performing the distinctive uses of a church.” The constituent bodies are the associations and groups listed in the table below. The constitution continues, “The members of the Swedenborgian Church shall be those persons who are

adult, active members of a constituent body or who have been accepted as members at large through Rite of Confirmation and by vote of the Swedenborgian Church.”

Article IV, Section 2, states, “Every constituent body of the Swedenborgian Church shall be entitled to two delegates and an additional delegate for every ten members.” The table below displays statistics as of December 31, 2013.

Association (Conference)	Churches		Ordained Ministers		Lay Leaders	Members			Number of Delegates
	Active	Inactive	Active	Retired		Active	Inactive	Total	
Eastern Canada (ECC)	2	0	2	0	0	107	25	132	12
Illinois	6	0	4	0	0	87	25	112	10
Kansas	2	0	1	1	0	78	0	78	9
Maine	3	0	7	0	0	135	108	243	15
Massachusetts	4	0	9	0	0	75	75	150	9
Michigan	2	0	4	0	0	65	22	87	8
Middle Atlantic	3	0	5	0	0	78	38	116	9
New York	2	0	1	0	0	35	27	62	5
Ohio	2	0	4	1	0	47	20	67	6
Pacific Coast (PCA)	6	0	17	2	0	212	134	346	23
Southeast	2	0	3	0	0	33	3	36	5
Western Canada*	6	0	1	2	0	83	1	84	10
At Large	0	0	8	0	0	5	0	5	2
SCYL									2
Totals	40	0	66	6	0	1040	478	1518	125

\*Winnipeg, Manitoba did not report for 2013

## Heaven on Earth

BY BJ NEUENFELDT

The weekend of May 16–18 found a group of fifteen women gathered at Almont New Church Assembly and Retreat Center for our yearly retreat. Our theme this year was Heaven on Earth, and was led by Rev. Renée Machiniak.

Friday night commenced with a yummy dinner provided by Heidi Barnaby, and then Renée led us into thinking about what represents heaven in our lives. Saturday continued with a morning reflecting on those we look forward to being with in the spiritual world.

After lunch we became “doers.”



Sharon G. Therrian, the founder of Tote Bags of Love, introduced her project of making bags from donated and recycled materials for the less fortunate

(www.ToteBagsofLove.org). Then she set up eight sewing machines, and we got started.

One group sorted upholstery samples, one group cut lengths of rope, and a third did the sewing. When the afternoon was over, we had completed forty-one bags and given Sharon a large pile of school supplies for children. Another group will stock the bags. We rested from our work with a discussion of the Fannie Flagg book, *Can't Wait to Get to Heaven*, led by Beth Sowles. In the evening we wrapped it up with a viewing of *What Dreams May Come*, an old Robin Williams movie that offers another view of the afterlife, followed by conversations that lasted into the wee hours. ☪

## Multi-Media Spring Retreat in Edmonton

BY DAVID FEKETE

Youth from Western Canada made a personal “Faithbook Page” at a retreat held in Edmonton over the dates May 9–11. We also had large sheets of paper for the youth to add messages, photos, and comments from the religious programming at the retreat. Retreat participants enjoyed recreation between sessions that included swimming, basketball, sardines, and hide and seek. Each night featured hot chocolate and a candlelight “campfire” and singing on the altar before bed.

This retreat was held at the Edmonton Church of the Holy City. There



*Working on Faithbooks*

were twelve young people in attendance aged nine to seventeen, about equal boys and girls. The success of the retreat was due to great youth and equally great staff, mostly from Paulhaven: Dave Stolarchuck, Ardith and Leah Francis, Brittany Steeves, Chris Sawchuck, and Lynda and Barry Reed, who helped in the kitchen. Special thanks to Dave, Leah, Brittney, and Chris for sleeping overnight at the church with the retreaters.

This retreat was a multi-media event. Using different media seemed to engage the participants better than texts only or lecture format seminars. Participants wrote Faithbook messages after each session. The first religious session was faith-inspired music. There were selections from four genres: hip-hop, gospel, blues, and classical. There was unanimous enthusiasm for the Black-Eyed Peas song, “Where Is the

Love?” (hip-hop). In response to the lyric, “Father, Father, Father help us,” one youth asked, “Is Jesus the same person as God?” When we listened to the gospel song, “I’ll Fly Away,” several youth spread their arms and flew around the room. Participants listened respectfully to the Kyrie of Beethoven’s “Mass in C,” but thought it a little long. Nevertheless, I felt that Beethoven captivated and moved them at first.



*Watching video about Jesus in the Bible*

they picked, “Where Is the Love?” (of course), “Whoop and Holler” (Gospel), “I’ll Fly Away” (Gospel), and a blues harmonica instrumental called “Christo Redentor.” One teen played the recorder. Retreaters were given the opportunity to share Faithbook comments for the sermon part of the service. Some spoke of a breakdown in society, echoing the disparaging lyrics of “Where Is the Love?” Another teen commented on the hypocrisy he saw from some adults, especially those who tell him, “Do as I say, not as I do.”

The retreat was a success from everyone’s point of view. The youth learned



*Campfire on the altar*

about God from music, video, and art. A good time was had by all, youth and staff alike.

I am writing from a minister’s perspective. I don’t think I have adequately conveyed the joy, delight, and friendship that grew among participants in

[Continues next page](#)

## God, Kiev and *House of Cards*

BY W. HUNTER ROBERTS

**D**uring the Cold War, my boyfriend and I traveled through Eastern Europe in a Volkswagen van. We bounced along one-lane dirt roads through occupied Transylvania, where people were too frightened to talk to us. Camped along back roads bordering the Black Sea, locals who had never seen Americans brought us homemade cheese and jam. We shared chicken-head soup and hot, sugary *slivovitz* cooked on a corn-cob stove at a village wedding. A weekend jaunt to Budapest became two winter months. There was something about the soul of the people: their intense intellect and dark humor. Plaintive Gypsy violin and cimbalom in every restaurant, the common knowledge of literature and history, the long lines to buy coarse toilet paper and fatty sausage, statues of poets with names like Radnoty and Petofi, brooding paintings reminiscent of German expressionism and surrealism, and the contrast between the epic architecture and the gritty realities of daily life held me spellbound. I never forgot my first shocked look at bullet holes in buildings and wreaths splattered with red paint commemorating the deaths of 2,500 Hungarians when the Russian tanks rolled in. I returned home less naïve.

I live in Budapest now. When I

[Continued from preceding page](#)

this retreat. Some returned from our fall retreat. Others were new. We think we'll see them at Paulhaven this summer—and at our coming fall retreat, 2014. ☩

The Rev. David Fekete is the minister of the Church of the Holy City in Edmonton, Alberta.



moved here in 2010, Hungary was just losing the blush from her marriage with the EU. The Ukraine looked like the next European frontier for entre-

preneurs. No one then would have expected Russian troops to show up next door less than four years later. Once again, we see armored vehicles encroaching on democracy, sovereignty, and self-determination. Once again, we see the West too economically and geopolitically enmeshed in money and energy interests to do much about it. It looks a lot like what we saw in Budapest in 1956, and in Prague in 1968. *Déjà vu.*

I don't pretend to understand the many political forces at play in the Ukraine, from the oil economy to the ethnic makeup of Crimea, Ukrainians torn between Eastern and Western alliances to Putin's megalomania and the US's influence (or lack thereof). There are many commentators more qualified to comment politically on the situ-

ation. But I would like to comment on the gnarly questions it raises about oppression, liberation, power, and God.

When oppression is on the march, good people ask, "Where is God? If there is a God, how can God allow such things?" The question was most poignant in the wake of the Holocaust: "Why didn't God intervene?" We imagine a God more powerful than armies vindicating the good and vanquishing the oppressors, as in the story of David and Goliath. Instead we see a God sitting by and doing nothing. To do nothing when people are suffering is itself evil. Is God evil, then, or is God powerless? Is there no God, or is there some other explanation? "Where is God?!" we rail. "Why does God not crush the forces of oppression?"

The usual unsatisfactory explanations are offered:

- "God is good and is teaching someone a lesson or punishing someone." This explanation has been trotted out as recently as Hurricane Sandy. It makes God out to be a petty tyrant. It justifies the idea that anyone who is doing well (like Donald Trump) must be doing good, while

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### St. Louis

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- July 4; at 1:15 PM Saturday, July 5; and at 1:15 PM, Sunday, July 6.
- For children or the young at heart, St. Louis offers the City Museum in St. Louis, the Magic House in Kirkwood, and Grant's Farm in south St. Louis County.
- Nature lovers can visit the Missouri Botanical Garden, with exhibits of vegetable gardens, butterfly gardens, and a children's garden. They can visit the Powder Valley Nature Center at Interstates 270 and 44 or the Butterfly House in Faust Park in west St. Louis County. Bikers will

find a network of trails in St. Louis, as well as the nearby KATY trail in St. Charles.

- Museum lovers can visit the St. Louis Art Museum in Forest Park, the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts and the Contemporary Art Museum in St. Louis, or the outdoor Laumeier Sculpture Park just west of Webster Groves.
- History buffs can visit a number of museums and homes, including the Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site in south St. Louis County, the Thomas Sappington House Museum in Crestwood, or the Hawken House Museum in Webster Groves. Meet us in St. Louis! ☩

# First Meeting of Restructured NCCUSA

BY DAVID FEKETE

For the first time since its radical restructuring, over the dates May 19–20, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA (NCCC) met. Due to financial constraints, it had been decided that the NCCC could no longer function as it had in the past, so the organization was restructured and streamlined, resulting in a whole new way of doing business.



Four Convening Tables comprise the NCCC: 1) Christian Education, Ecumenical Faith Formation, and Leadership Development; 2) Interreligious Relations; 3) Joint Action and Advocacy for Justice and Peace; and 4) Theological Dialogue on Matters of Faith and Order. The convening tables are committees that tackle issues within the purview of their organizing titles. I am on the Theological Dialogue on Matters of Faith and Order convening table, which addresses concerns from a theological perspective that involves dialogue between the faiths that comprise the NCCC.

What kinds of concerns and issues do the convening tables work on? In the past, the sub-committees of the NCCC defined their own issues. Under the new organizational structure, each convening table was given the same two issues to work on. This year all four convening tables were given the issues of mass incarceration and peace in interfaith dialogue. My convening table worked on these issues from the perspective of the different faiths of the NCCC. The other tables worked on them in the light of Christian Education, Interreligious Relations, and Advocacy for Justice and Peace.

We were supposed to be working

## Related Article on page 89

on both of these themes. However, the May meeting devoted all its programming to the issue of mass incarceration—the injustices of the American prison system. After opening worship, we heard a two-hour presentation about American prisons. Some of the issues presented were these: The US has five percent of the world’s population living in it and twenty-five percent of the world’s imprisoned population. The population of minority inmates is disproportionately larger than in the general population. There is a process called “The Cradle to Jail Pipeline,” whereby certain persons appear to be fated to be incarcerated due to the circumstances of their birth. Sixty percent of inmates are convicted of non-violent crimes.

After the presentation, we broke into our convening tables. My convening table was charged with theological support for criticism of the social system that generates these inequities. We broke into three sub-groups after struggling over how to organize our efforts: 1) theology informing justice, 2) justice informing theology, and 3) the Bible as it relates to mass incarceration. All three groups were to have the Bible running through their processes. I joined the justice informing theology group. This group will begin with the problem of social justice, and use that as a lens through which to read theology and the Bible. I thought of passages from the prophet Amos in which he denounces Israel for denying justice to the weaker members of Israelite society.

The next morning, we had another presentation that was more oriented to solutions to the problems of mass incarceration. Of all visitors to inmates,

clergy have the most profound results. When some Christians read Matthew 25:34–36, visiting inmates can be conveniently ignored.

Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.

“Free schools,” in which students failing in conventional systems can be tutored and brought up to their grade level in computer and academic skills were praised. These free schools are in churches in communities where students are most at risk. One presenter told a grim story—inmates in Sing-Sing, in upstate New York, informed him that nearly all the inmates were from three boroughs of New York.

There are more than a few problems with the new structure of the NCCC. While it is important for the NCCC to have a unified voice, especially when the voice of the church is waning in this society, I’m not sure this is the way to do it. Furthermore, little consideration was given to our second issue, peace in interfaith dialogue. The real concern is that we will expend considerable time and energy on mass incarceration and then abandon all our work a year later as we turn to other issues. It’s probably too soon to make fair judgments about the newly restructured NCCC. I still feel this denomination should continue to maintain its presence in the NCCC. Time will tell how this newly restructured NCCC will work. ☩

The Rev. David Fekete is the Swedenborgian Church representative to the NCCC and pastor of the Edmonton, Alberta, Church.

Visit <http://www.nationalcouncilofchurches.us>

## Reflections on the NCCC May Meeting

In addition to Rev. David Fekete, Rev. Nadine Cotton, Rev. Rich Tafel and I attended the May meeting of the NCCC. It was great to have fellow Swedenborgians



attending; we all felt welcomed and involved, and each made contributions in our respective areas. Serving as head of communion, I have been a member of the NCCC's Convening Table before, during, and now after the restructuring of NCCC that David describes so well ([page 88](#)). Along with responding to financial difficulties—as are many other religious organizations, including our own—the NCCC is also resolved to become more responsive to the changing culture. I would add that besides the economic pressures driving the transformation, there is a philosophical shift to becoming more actively involved in promoting and generating awareness, resources, and support and helping to facilitate direct action in the adapted as priorities. While David's concerns are indeed valid, and there is the reality of not being able to fully address all of the needs and issues that remain of dire concern for us and concerned Christians, the NCCC believes that this new structure will allow the members to respond directly and effectively to the chosen issues of focus and to engender a deeper awareness and commitment to action amongst the members of their respective church populations.

I was deeply moved and inspired by the education I received from the presentations and the discussions that followed. The most disturbing fact brought to my attention is how America's prison system is rapidly moving into privatization, corporations that are run for profit. That means it is in

the self-interest of prison corporations to maintain a large population of prisoners of long-term status and repeating offenders. It is in the self-interest of the prison system

to promote laws that lead to sentences of incarceration for non-violent crimes rather than treatment and rehabilitation. And it is in the system's self-interest to focus on enforcement, arrest, and sentencing efforts on poor and uneducated populations, because they are least able to secure adequate legal defense or inspire public outcry over harsh and what is often unjust and unwarranted prison sentences for non-violent crimes. There is a reason that a disturbing majority of prisoners at Sing-Sing are from a few select boroughs from New York's inner city.

What is moving and inspiring is the growing momentum of churches beginning to respond to this situation and the success that even a small amount of attention and involvement can engender in changing the lives of those caught up in this system. We tend to stereotype and generalize when we label people, and this is perhaps most true when we speak of "prisoners in jail." But like all human populations, there is a wide spectrum of kinds of people, personalities, reasons for being there, and responses to their experience. The caring presence of concerned family, friends, and volunteers, both inside the walls and in the often extremely difficult transition back to life outside the walls, is the number one factor in helping the incarcerated regain their personhood and find a place and purpose as constructive useful citizens of our society, but what we would more accurately call "the Lord's New Church."

As David has said, the new system is not perfect, and there are indeed potential pitfalls, but I have high hopes that it will be more effective than ever in generating awareness, resources, and involvement from the member churches in the crucial issues of our culture and our lives as people of God.

I want to thank Rev. Dr. David Fekete (Theological Dialogue on Matters of Faith and Order), Rev. Nadine Cotton (Joint Action and Advocacy for Justice and Peace), Rev. Rich Tafel (Interreligious Relations), and Rev. Kevin Baxter (Christian Education, Ecumenical Faith Formation, and Leadership Development), for their ongoing involvement in NCCC and express my gratitude and admiration to General Convention for its continued support of this most important work.

—Rev. Ken Turley, President

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### Nominees

[Continued from page 84](#)

#### SHS Board: Robert Morrill

Robert Byrne Morrill was born in 1937 and grew up in Reno, Nevada. He trained as a mining engineer at the University of Nevada and received a law degree from Harvard Law School. Bob has four children and four grandchildren. He and his wife Mia have attended the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church since 1994 and also attend the Hillside Church in El Cerrito. Bob retired from his intellectual property law practice in 2012, but continues to serve as an arbitrator and mediator. He is a member of the board of the Great Basin National Park Foundation. ☩



## Jung and Swedenborg

*Continued from page 77*

### Wrestling with the Beast

The theme of confronting a beast and wrestling with it is common to both texts. For Swedenborg, it is confrontation with the serpent-dog beast that inhabits his dream world; for Jung, as seen in the painting on page 77, the slaying of the beast by the hero is a necessary archetypal experience.

### Traveling the Sea

Both men relate images and visions of traveling by boat across the deep depths of the sea, which for Jung symbolizes psychological and spiritual growth and an integration of unconscious content into conscious awareness. According to Wilson Van Dusen, a number of Swedenborg's dreams indicate a growth and recognition of the other functions of consciousness that Jung would later develop in his book *Psychological Types* (1921). Both Swedenborg and Jung had a number of dreams wherein symbols attempted to teach them to be aware that their primary functions of consciousness (e.g. thinking and intuition) were not the only mental tools—rather there also exists feeling and sensation. Those familiar with the Jungian-derived Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, which determines a person's personality type based on thinking, intuition, feeling, and sensation, will find this content to be of the utmost importance.

These are just a few tantalizing peeks into some of the common themes that populate the two journals that are separated by about 160 years. In the past, academics have concluded that Swedenborg's *Journal of Dreams* and Carl Jung's *The Red Book* are important documents for understanding the Swedenborgian and Jungian communities, and both journals are important in the history of dream interpretation. Though many still have interest

## What Would Love Do? A New Church Journey Program

The General Church of the New Jerusalem (New Church) Outreach announces the release of the New Church Journey Program, *What Would Love Do?* This seven-week series is designed to help individuals and groups explore the call to serve.

Authors Sasha Silverman and John Odhner offer an in-depth study of the parable in Matthew 25, wherein Jesus describes the different classes of the neighbor and how we are invited to respond with care. The result is inspiring, practical, and motivating. It is a thoughtful and compassionate exploration of New Church teachings on loving the neighbor.

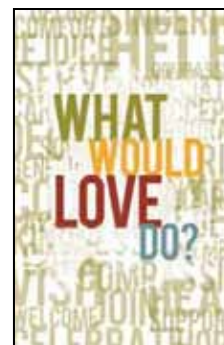
New Church Journey programs (spiritual growth programs) are relevant, step-by-step, Bible-based programs designed to assist individuals in growing spiritually and applying God's

teachings to everyday life. Each program provides opportunities for reading, discussing, and celebrating

spiritual transformation. Churches and individuals participating in a coordinated launch enjoy the benefits of worshiping together with an international congregation while focusing on the same theme. They can experience growth and healing in the authentic community created by small groups.

The coordinated launch dates for *What Would Love Do?* are Sunday, October 5, 2014, and Sunday, February 1, 2015.

Visit <http://bit.ly/WWLDProgram> to learn more about *What Would Love Do?*. ☩



in discovering the influence Swedenborg had on the thoughts of Jung, it is my opinion that a more interesting and potentially fruitful scholarship angle arises from a comparative study of the similarities and differences between them, not only for what it might offer in Swedenborgian or Jungian studies, but also to inform a student of dreams about the importance of our dream life and of doing dream work.

Both Swedenborg's and Jung's journals are products of profound and moving personal experiences. Their interaction with these respective experiences and their decisions to record their dreams led to a breakthrough for two potent spiritual and psychological systems of thought. More shall be revealed, and we will all benefit from future study. ☩

Colin Amato, a new member of the Swedenborgian Community Church at Hillside

in El Cerrito, California, is a master's degree student in counseling at San Francisco State University. He has been specializing in interpreting the now-legendary *Red Book*, Carl Jung's illustrated dream diary, which the Jung family kept from the public eye until 2009. Amato's PowerPoint presentation on the themes of the *Red Book* has become a popular lecture at San Francisco State University, where he has been asked to present it four semesters running. More recently, he became a student of Swedenborg's *Journal of Dreams* (favoring the 1986 edition with introduction and commentary by Wilson van Dusen), and he has developed an interest in looking at the two dream journals in a comparative context. By request, he gave a shortened version of his lecture on the *Red Book*, complemented by several comparison points with Swedenborg's *Dream Journal*, at Hillside in April. This article presents just a few kernels from that presentation.



## Passages

### Births

On June 13, 2014, , **Theodore James Cole** (7 lbs, 14 oz, 20 inches)



was born to Revs.

Sage and Ted Cole in Anchorage, Alaska, their first child. Rev. Susannah and Deane Currie ecstatically welcome their first grandchild.

### Confirmations

On March 16, 2014, **Jenny Son** and **Thomas Davis**, and on April 13, 2014, **David Field** and **George Fencl**, were confirmed into the faith and fellowship of the Swedenborgian Church by the Reverend Junchol Lee, at the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church.

### Transitions

After eight years, Rev. Kevin Baxter is stepping down as pastor of the Cambridge Society of the New Jerusalem

(Swedenborg Chapel) on July 31, 2014, to move with his wife Leah Goodwin and their children, Ephraim (six) and Magdalen (two), to Queensbury, New York. Rev. Leah Goodwin, an ordained minister in the American Baptist Church, has accepted a call to the Harrisena Community Church in Queensbury. Rev. Baxter will continue as the chairperson of the Council of Ministers, and Rev. Goodwin and Rev. Baxter will continue to be the editors of *Our Daily Bread*. ☩

## God, Kiev, House of Cards

*Continued from page 87*

anyone suffering (like an AIDS patient) must be doing wrong. What, then, are we to make of Jesus?

- “God has some reason for planning suffering.” It’s a slippery slope to say that God causes evil and suffering in order to bring good from it like a rabbit from a hat. Can you say “diabolical?”
- “God is unconcerned with our welfare and does not share our concerns.” This explanation posits an amoral or disinterested God on whose radar screen we are less than a dot. We are all alone, and God is not good but merely powerful.

All three options are sufficiently distasteful as to make it preferable to dispense with God altogether. Is there some other view that could leave us empowered by God’s embrace?

Recently I’ve gotten hooked on the Netflix series *House of Cards*. I watch with the kind of fascinated, helpless horror that one might feel while watching a car crash or the nefariously plotted events of a Shakespearean tragedy unfold as they must. The drama is all about power; no one has any other motivation. If they do, they end up dead. More than money or sex even, power is the interest of the human ego. Humans are socially and genetically pro-

grammed to want it, wield it, and vie for it. Power assures survival and re-productive success. It works both ways: Money and sex buy power, and power gives access to money and sex. It’s a mechanism endlessly chasing its tail. Driven by greed and fear, power offers false hope of control. If we have enough control, the ego argues, we can make things go our way. There is no end to it. As in any addiction, no matter how much power you have, it is never enough. In the end you die, like everyone else. Even Jesus.

But Jesus was really different from you and me. He refused to play for power, even though everyone from the zealots to the Pharisees to Pontius Pilate tried to push him into it. He was not about control. It’s our human projection to think that if we had God’s power, then we would make things go our way. God has no truck with power, no interest in it and no dealings in it, as far as I can tell. God will not forcibly stop Frank Underwood (the protagonist of *House of Cards*), Vladimir Putin, or even Adolf Eichmann. God does not exercise force against powers and principalities. God didn’t stop the crucifixion. Doesn’t that tell us something? Armies and political posturing are about force, and God is about something else. God does not use the power of force but the power of love. Not the power to make things happen

but the power to call things forth from our hands to whisper courage and liberation into our hearts. We have the freedom to choose to listen or to shut our hearts and minds. We can follow God or power.

Where is God when oppression happens? I am reminded of a story attributed to William Sloane Coffin. A man dies and goes to heaven, where he gets an audience with God. He has waited his entire life to ask, “God, why didn’t you stop the Holocaust?” God answers, “Funny, I was going to ask you the same thing.”

People are facing fear and oppression all over the world, but they are not alone. Wherever people struggle for liberation, God is standing with them. In the words of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.,

When our days become dreary with low-hanging clouds of despair, and when our nights become darker than a thousand midnights, let us remember that there is a creative force in this universe working to pull down the gigantic mountains of evil, a power that is able to make a way out of no way and transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows. Let us realize that the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice. ☩

The Rev. Hunter Roberts is a spiritual pundit, counselor, and coach, helping people to take back their lives and reclaim their souls

### 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 questioning 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.

## Get Ready for St. Louis

From the Gateway Arch to the St. Louis Botanical Garden to musical performances, much awaits the Swedenborgians attending the 190th Annual Convention of the Swedenborgian Church in St. Louis, Missouri.

The Convention will begin for ministers and early arrivals on Sunday, June 29, and continue through Sunday, July 6, at Webster University in Webster Groves, on the southwestern edge of St. Louis.

This year's theme is Gateway to Providence: Being Led By The Lord. The convention will offer mediation movement, singing, and chapel services, as well as speeches, meetings, courses, and the ordination service.

The 190th Annual Convention coincides with the year in which St. Louis turns 250 years old. You will find sculptured birthday cakes throughout the St. Louis area in honor of this anniversary.

A lot has happened in St. Louis since 1764, when Pierre Laclède and his stepson, August Chouteau, organized a settlement named St. Louis in honor of King Louis IX of France. In 1804, Lewis and Clark set out from St. Louis to explore areas west and northwest. The fur trade began, and in 1853, Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) came to St. Louis to pilot steamboats on the Mississippi River. In 1847,



Dred and Harriett Scott, who were slaves, sued for their freedom at the Old Courthouse. In 1900, composer Scott Joplin moved to St. Louis, becoming the king of ragtime. In 1904, the World's Fair and the first Olympics in the United States took place in St. Louis. In 2006 the St. Louis Cardinals won their tenth World Series.

The convention outing this year will take place Saturday, July 5, at Lafayette Park in Lafayette Square in south St. Louis. The square

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