

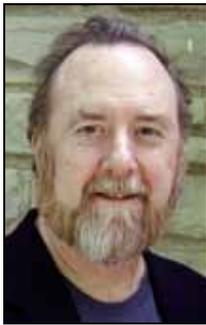


## “And Lo! Swedenborg is the Angel Sitting at the Tomb”

### William Blake’s Complex Relationship with the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg

BY DAVID J. FEKETE

*Emanuel Swedenborg’s influence is everywhere in Blake’s writings. At times, Blake loved Swedenborg’s theology and at times he hated it. But love or hate, Blake could not get away from Swedenborg. In this article, I sketch Swedenborg’s ideas in the writings of Blake, from early infatuation to later sarcastic appropriation, to a still later embrace of Swedenborg’s thought.*



There is no doubt that Blake was influenced by Swedenborg’s theology, profoundly influenced. But Swedenborg was by no means the only religious influence in Blake. Discovering religious influences in Blake is difficult, due to the obscurity of Blake’s poetry and his mythic technique of writing. Jennifer Jesse<sup>1</sup> comments on the difficulty of locating religious influences in Blake. “Interpreters have confronted us with a confounding multiplicity of Blakes, often with little resemblance between them.” Jesse finds that for one critic,

<sup>1</sup> Jennifer G. Jesse, *William Blake’s Religious Vision: There’s a Methodism in His Madness*, (New York: Lexington Books, 2013), pp. 3, 4.

“Blake is ‘the first Christian atheist,’ a forefather of the death of God tradition.” She states that four critics find Blake drawn to the neoplatonic and theosophical traditions. Eleven critics locate Blake within the radical, antinomian, Gnostic, or Manichean conglomeration of traditions. Two critics “treat him as a mystic.” Four critics

suggest he is closest to the Anglican tradition—Davies strenuously portrays Blake as a champion of Christian orthodoxy, notwithstanding some unfortunate heterodox blunders. Others . . . choose to describe Blake only as ‘an enthusiast’ in order to avoid further (presumably fruitless) theological analysis.

Two critics bring forth research

on the Moravian history of Blake’s mother, and on possible Moravian strains in Blake’s own works. Following those implications, Schuchard further characterizes Blake as advocating radical Swedenborgian, Sabbatian Kabbalist, Illuminist, Freemason, and Tantric beliefs.

Finally, one critic also “places him within Moravian and radical Swedenborgian circles.” Then Jennifer Jesse adds to the list by finding Methodist influences in Blake. That’s nine different Blakes among twenty-three critics.

I suggest that one reason for the disparity of Blakean influences is that Blake used his imagination primarily; he genuinely created rather than

appropriated texts as did T.S. Eliot to such great effect. So when we say that Blake is influenced by Swedenborg, we mean that Swedenborg is one of many influences.

**But despite Blake’s apparent satire of Swedenborg, even here, Blake states doctrines that accord with Swedenborg’s theology.**

In Blake’s “The Little Black Boy” and “The Divine Image,” from *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, we see Swedenborg clearly, and he is used in a positive way. In “The Marriage of Heaven and Hell,” we find a profound influence of Swedenborg—Swedenborg and Swedenborg’s books are mentioned by name—but Blake’s appropri-

*Continues on page 40*

**It’s Time to Register for the 2015 Annual Convention**

**Registration Form on Page 45**

**The 191st Annual Swedenborgian Convention**



*The Year of Regeneration  
The Way of Change*

**The Editor's Desk**



**Easter**

Easter, like Christmas, has become part of our secular culture in America, although to lesser degree. Across Canada, Good Friday is still a national holiday. When I was a child, Good Friday and the Monday following Easter were school holidays. Good Friday, but not Easter Monday, is an official holiday in only a few states, but many schools and some businesses (including US stock exchanges) take one or both days off.

As with Christmas, religious symbolism, ancient traditions, and commercial appropriation combine to create at Easter a special time of excitement for children and good feelings for all. The religious component disappears in the commercial realm, and the holiday becomes merely, like Halloween and Christmas, a time of (buying) and receiving material goods, enhanced by unique decorations and themes.

Many children grow up celebrating the secular themes of Easter without a clue as to their true meaning. Many Christians, whether church-going or

not, instruct their children in Easter's religious significance. Some churches—mostly fundamentalist—do not observe Easter, and some Americans and Canadians are not Christian, of course.

We know the connection between the Easter season observances and Passover, both celebrated according to the Jewish solarlunar calendar, but we may be less aware of the meaning of many Easter traditions, such as egg decorating and the Easter bunny.

This month, Rev. John Maine takes us on a jaunt through the history and religious significance of the Easter bunny in [“What's the Bunny Doing Here?” on page 38.](#)

Going beyond Easter to the glorification, on [page 39](#), Rev. Steve Sanchez opines on the allegorical connections between the glorification of Christ and hero themes in film in [“The Glorification and \*The Matrix Trilogy\*.”](#)

Just as Christmas, which occurs near the winter solstice when days begin to lengthen, signals annual renewal as well as the birth of Jesus, Easter occurs after the spring equinox (accord-

ing to a complex formula), it's date is based on the equinox, and Easter signifies a rebirth just as the earth is warming and life is stirring anew. Rev. Gabriella Cahaly shares a reflection on the joy of new life emerging with the arrival of spring in [“Winter Blues” on page 44.](#)

And, in this season of renewal, Rev. George Dole continues with the fourth installment in his series, [“Toward a Newer Church” \(page 36\)](#), exploring how Emanuel Swedenborg can help move toward the New Christian Church. Rev. Dole will be leading a series of discussions about the “Newer Church” at the Annual Convention.

—Herb Ziegler

**Contents**

“And Lo! Swedenborg is the Angel Sitting at the Tomb”..... 33  
 The Editor's Desk ..... 34  
 Letter from the President ..... 35  
 On the Other Hand—  
 Toward a Newer Church, part 4 ..... 36  
 What's the Bunny Doing Here?..... 38  
 The Glorification and  
 the Matrix Trilogy ..... 39  
 Bulger-Linked Con Man Gets 12 Years  
 for Swindling Boston Church..... 42  
 Winter Blues ..... 44  
 2015 Annual Convention  
 Registration Form ..... 45  
 Passages..... 46  
 It's Here..... 47

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**Church Calendar**

- April 18: General Council Spring Conference Call Meeting
- April 24–25: SHS Spring Board Meeting, Berkeley CA
- June 4–7: Gathering Leaves—a Swedenborgian Women's Retreat, Cincinnati OH
- June 13–14: Western Canada Conference Annual Meeting, Kelowna, BC
- June 27–July 1: Annual Convention 2015, Bridgewater MA

the Messenger

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## Letter from the President



2014–15  
*The Year of Regeneration:  
The Way of Change*

Dear Friends,

Here it is, the middle of March. It is a beautiful sunny day, but there is still two feet of snow on the ground, and the temperature is fifteen degrees—thankfully that's above zero. The bright light reflects off the trees and the snow lifts the spirit, but outside it's not quite how I would like it to be, and how I hope it will be soon. It's sort of how I see our church. There are some really beautiful, bright, light-filled things making themselves known, and it lifts the spirit to see people excited and engaged and working together to make the various efforts vibrant and growing. Yet there are other areas with which we continue to struggle, mired in a kind of stuck place. Our numbers remain far below where we would like to see them, and the issues of power and control all too often work at odds with vision and innovation. The present is slightly chilling, and yet hope for the future warms from the inside out.

Last night, Laurie went out after dark with our daughter, who is visiting, in the hopes of seeing the Northern Lights, which were reported to be a possibility. Here in Maine it is not unheard of but it is a rather rare occurrence. It was bitterly cold, but the trade-off was that it was perfectly clear—they often go together. So off Laurie and Emily went in the car into the night with high hopes. I went to bed.

The next morning, of course, I was eager to hear the results of their expedition. They did not find what they were looking for. No sign of Northern

Lights anywhere. But, and here's the thing, finding a good vantage point, they were greeted with a view of a perfectly clear sky and an amazing view of heavens powdered with stars. Now, we all know the stars are up there, but it just not that often that we get to see them in a clear sky, unobstructed by clouds and undimmed by the artificial light sources that we humans have come to depend on to maintain our life-style. In venturing out in search of one thing they found something else just as soul stirringly beautiful.

The lesson I take away from this is familiar: nothing ventured, nothing gained. As we look to the future of our church, it is something we would do well to keep in mind. There are always reasons not to try things, not to put ourselves out, not to venture out into the unknown. (Granted, I got a good night's sleep, but I also missed a sight that was worth seeing.) And perhaps more importantly, in risking the venture we may in fact not find what we set out to find, but chances are, if we are paying attention and open to what is actually going on around us, we are very likely to find something different that is just as good. Divine Providence has a way of insinuating itself into that which will bring about good things. The question is, are we so locked into our own wishes and expectations that we don't recognize what is being given, or are we able to venture our best efforts and thereby create the opportunity to let Divine Providence make something that most likely we never expected or could have predicted?

Knowing "nothing ventured, nothing gained," let's venture something! Let's get curious about what could happen if we really tried some stuff, and yet at the same time not be so tied to our own interests and expectations that we can't see something that is different trying to come into being. After all, we are, as a church, celebrating *The Year of Regeneration: the Way of Change*.

—Blessings, Rev. Ken

## Toward a Newer Church, part 4

# On the Other Hand

BY GEORGE DOLE

*Readers who find Emanuel Swedenborg's work The True Christian Religion (True Christianity) a difficult challenge will find great support and validation in this month's installment of George Dole's series "Toward a Newer Church." He assures us that the work was likely written to satisfy the needs of theological debate of Swedenborg's day. That it was chosen as the basis for the founders of the denomination is problematic to the extent that it promoted total separation from existing institutions. However, George doesn't stop there; for he points to the freedom we now have to see our past separation more clearly, and to thereby envision our newer church more creatively.*

—Gard Perry,  
Chair, 2015 Convention Program

If you were to read through the published theological works in the order in which they were published, the last of them, *The True Christian Religion/True Christianity (TCR/TC)*, would come as a shock. As Swedenborg launched forth on his exegesis of Genesis, the very first thing he said was “From this point on, the term *Lord* is used in only one way: to refer to the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ; and the name “Lord” is used without any additions” (*Secrets of Heaven/Arcana Coelestia [SH/AC]* §14). He seems to have kept this promise. In all the volumes of *Secrets of Heaven*, the word, “Trinity,” occurs only once (§7086). My computer tells me that he used the word *Dominus*, “Lord,” no fewer than 19,199 times.

This last published work, though, after a very brief summary of “the faith of the new heaven and the new

church” that does indeed focus on the Lord (§§1–3), proceeds immediately to present separate chapters on “God the Creator” (§§4–80), “The Lord the Redeemer” (§§81–137), and “The Holy Spirit” (§§ 138–188), this last concluding with a devastating critique of traditional trinitarianism entitled “The Divine Trinity” (§§163–188). All in all, the word *Trinitas*, “Trinity,” is found 251 times in the published works. Almost two thirds of these occurrences (163) are found in the last two works, *True Christianity*, and its prologue, *Brief Exposition/Summary*.

The reason for this is not far to seek. As Swedenborg's works began to attract attention, they naturally drew the attention of the Lutheran Church, and promptly came under attack as heretical. This was par for the course. I am grateful to Rev. Dr. Dave Fekete for having called to my attention a couple of volumes by Robert Preus entitled *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism: A Study of Theological Prolegomena* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1970). Preus draws a vivid picture of the temper of the times.

A characteristic of Lutheran orthodoxy . . . was a polemical tone that pervaded much of the systematic and exegetical theology of the day. . . . Polemics was the order of the day. . . . Particularly annoying to us today was the general practice among theologians of pressing the arguments of their adversaries to their logical but absurd conclusions . . . (p. 31).

That their zeal for the truth might have appeared at times to be inflexible and extreme, at least to our calm and cautious age of theologians, that their intense loyalty to Christ and His Word might result in

forgetfulness of even the closest human ties are hardly faults to be despised (p. 29).

In *True Christianity*, Swedenborg responded to his critics in their own language. Unpublished manuscripts show him reviewing the traditional creeds and combing the Epistles—significant authorities for Lutheranism, but largely ignored in Swedenborg's previous theological works. Up to this point, Swedenborg has held strictly to the definition of “the Word” given in *SH* §10325, *White Horse* §16, and *The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrines (NJHD)* §266; In §342 of *TC*, though, he sets out to “use the Word” to establish the fact that Jesus was the Son of God, and includes in “the Word” Acts, Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Hebrews, and 1 John. None of these is “a book of the Word” as previously defined.

If we regard *True Christianity* as a resource for theological debate with a dogmatic Lutheran, it is invaluable. It is not nearly as useful in presenting the theology to someone who feels useless, someone who is grieving a recent loss, or for that matter someone who does not know the Bible, which is surely something to bear in mind in these times of growing biblical illiteracy.

More seriously, to my mind, its tone appeals to a polemical mindset. It invites argument, and certainly argument has its place in our efforts to communicate with each other, to test and clarify our understanding. That place is in fact recognized in the theology that is to be restored to the church, but it is significantly qualified: no matter how much people might be at variance in the truths of faith, “In these one instructed another, and *this was among their works of charity* (emphasis mine); nor were they indignant if one

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did not accede to the opinion of another, knowing that every one accepts truth in proportion as he is in good" (AC §6628).

When the "separatists" gathered in London in 1789, it was not to decide whether or not to found a separate church institution, but to consider "the most effectual means of promoting the establishment of the New Church, distinct from the old"—not *whether* to do it, but *how* to do it. Of the forty-two propositions presented for discussion, thirty-seven were supported by citations from *True Christian Religion*. *Arcana Coelestia* is cited three times; *Heaven and Hell*, *The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrines*, *Marriage Love*, *Last Judgment*, and *Apocalypse Revealed* two times each; and *White Horse*, *Apocalypse Explained*, *Divine Providence*, and *Brief Exposition* once each. There are no citations from *Divine Love and Wisdom*, *Soul-Body Interaction*, *The Four Doctrines*, or *Earths in the Universe*.

The resolution that "a complete and total separation from the Old Church is warranted not only from the Theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg but also from the Holy Word" was unanimously adopted either in disregard or in ignorance of the call for a church that would accept "all who live in the good of charity and call them brethren, however greatly they might be at variance in the truths which at this day are called the truths of faith."

Doctrine matters, yes, but in our doctrines the word *bonum*, "good," occurs no fewer than 34,491 times, and if I believe my evil to be good (NJHD §19), I have absolutely no idea what that doctrine is talking about. "Faith" is surely good, but "faith alone," faith apart from love and life, is something else again.

*True Christianity* of course makes this quite clear. It spells out the process

of repentance, reformation, and regeneration, the absolute centrality of living "in the good of charity." I have in fact come to think of it as a doctrine of charity disguised as a doctrine of faith, designed to fill the vacuum created by the removal of "the faith of the present day" (*Apocalypse Revealed* §668). If this is the case, we surely should not fall for the disguise.

In fact, I am inclined to think that our church has seen through this disguise almost instinctively. A good many years of experience tell me that a majority of our members feel inadequate when it comes to explaining our doctrines to others. I suspect that some of our most treasured members, the heart and soul of the church, in fact, are not devoted readers. They are simply and quite beautifully "in truth as to life." Unfortunately, they may overestimate the importance of their "inadequacy" and feel guilty about it. I'm reminded of the parable about the school that tried to get animals to work on their weaknesses—to teach turtles to fly and eagles to swim, for example.

In the April and May *Messengers*, I'll be doing something that was evidently not done in London in 1789—looking at what our doctrines do say specifically about "the New Church." This is in the most obvious place imaginable, in Swedenborg's exegesis of the description of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21. It is understandable that we have paid very little attention to it because it tells us virtually nothing about institutional forms. It does not mention buildings, sermons, sacraments, or clergy.

It focuses instead on the spiritual side of the church, and we can be grateful that it does. That spiritual side remains constant through all the physical, technological, and cultural changes of the centuries that have passed since the theological works were written. It does not tell us about all the external ways in which we differ from

each other. It tells us about the fundamental principles of being and becoming human that we share.

Focusing on these principles requires a rigorous discipline on the one hand, but on the other hand it frees us to look at more external things from a fresh perspective—less "attached," to use a Buddhist expression. We are freer to critique, to adjust, to adapt, to redesign because we have an internal "map," if you will, that can help us stay on course through some very complex territory. ☩

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This is the fourth part of the series "Toward a Newer Church," parts 1–4 appeared in the December 2014, January 2015, and February 14 *Messengers*. An introduction to the series appeared in the November 2014 *Messenger*.

## Last Call for Free Books

The Massachusetts New Church Union is offering many Swedenborg book titles, old and new, saved from the former Swedenborg Library publishing arm for *just* the cost of shipping.

If you are planning to attend the Annual Convention in Bridgewater in June, bring along an empty suitcase and take away your pick for no charge.

For a copy of the inventory list, contact Rev. Susannah Currie: [pastor@bridgewaternewchurch.org](mailto:pastor@bridgewaternewchurch.org)

## What's the Bunny Doing Here?

BY JOHN MAINE

**H**oly Week begins at the end of this month, which, I guess, is a somewhat “churchy” way of saying that the Easter season will soon be upon us. Already the signs of its coming are everywhere, but of course most especially in the stores. Not only the pastel shades and the floral arrangements that adorn their displays but the omnipresence of that most ubiquitous and iconic of seasonal figures, the Easter Bunny. Yes I seem to see bunnies everywhere these days, bunnies in showy boxes and bunnies in bright tinfoil, bunnies with hats or carrots or baskets, bunnies of every colour and description. There are bunnies made of chocolate, hollow bunnies filled with candy, bunnies that come with toys, stuffed bunnies, plush bunnies, and cartoon bunnies. Bunnies, bunnies everywhere. Where on earth did they all come from? More to the point, wherever did we get the idea of associating the story of Easter with, of all things, a rabbit? Well, my friends, thereby hangs a tale (a cottontail?).

We begin with the fact that the celebration of the Christian story about rising up to new life is very much woven into far more ancient celebrations. These rejoiced in the earth coming to life after the long cold death of winter. We are earthbound creatures, and those signs of spring always touch our hearts at a deep level. Our spirits rise up as we behold the first buds, the first flowers, all the physical signs of what Jesus had promised he'd bring, “life, and life in abundance,” all around us and within us. And of course nothing says abundance like bunnies. Although rabbits and hares are not quite the same



thing, they're both prolific breeders. A female hare can conceive a second litter of offspring while still pregnant with the first—wow! No wonder we have the expression “to breed like rabbits.”

Since ancient times these little furry guys with

the tall ears have been seen, quite understandably, as symbols of fertility. But not only that—the ancients apparently believed the hare to be a hermaphrodite, that it could in effect reproduce without loss of virginity. Exactly why they thought this I don't know, but the belief was widespread, and it led to the association of the bunny with the Virgin Mary. That's why in some old illuminated manuscripts and religious paintings of Mary and the baby, you can see a rabbit peeking out from somewhere in the background.

However, there's another connection that rabbits have with the Christian story, and it's even more intriguing. In parts of England and northern Germany especially, there are many churches and cathedrals that have—often as a prominent decoration—an image of three hares in a circle, chasing each other. Each hare appears to have the requisite two ears, but when you look closely you can see that only three ears, not six, are depicted in total. Each hare “shares” its ears with the others. The three ears touch in the centre of the image to create a visual unity, and so the circle of three hares is said to represent the three aspects of the one God, i.e. the Trinity.

What makes this symbol particularly interesting, though, is the fact that it's found in so many places, and long before the Christian era, too. The three hares first appeared in cave temples in China in the sixth centu-

ry BC and later became a symbol associated with Buddhism. Apparently, the design then made its way along the great trade routes—the so-called “Silk Road”—leading from central Asia to Western Europe. Along the way all kinds of folks picked it up, because it appears on Muslim artefacts and in Jewish synagogues. It seems those three hares sharing three ears has been a big hit with a lot of people.

But the question remains: how did we get from all of that to mister you-know-who made of chocolate? Well, here the credit goes to our Lutheran brothers and sisters in Germany. The first ever mention of such a thing appears in a book published there in 1682, shortly before the birth of Emanuel Swedenborg. Reference is made to a German tradition of an “Easter Hare.” This was very much a Santa Claus type character who judged whether little children had been naughty or nice as the Easter season approached. The Easter Hare would reward the good children by bringing them candy and sometimes toys on the night before Easter morning. This custom then got transplanted with colonists coming to the New World. The famous Pennsylvania Dutch (the ancestors of our community and our church in Kitchener) told their children about the *Osterhase* (sometimes spelled *Oschter Haws*), who brought well-behaved children gifts of coloured eggs, which were put in the caps and bonnets left out for him. And from the *Osterhase*, or Easter Hare, we now have the Easter Bunny.

It's pretty amazing that, down through so many centuries and across so many thousands of miles, we have taken this humble creature as a symbol and a sign of great things. Perhaps nothing could better illustrate the truth

*Continues next page*

## The Glorification and the *Matrix* Trilogy

BY STEVE SANCHEZ

The theme of the glorification is suggested at the conclusion of many films when the last scene fades into pure light. In *Platoon*, the hero, in a helicopter, fades into the pure light of the sun; in *The Peaceful Warrior*, The Master passes away by turning into pure light.

But films in which the hero performs superhuman feats, particularly if they involve saving the world, suggest a fuller representation of the glorification by depicting the hero's willingness to sacrifice his or her life for others. But there is much more to the process of the Lord's glorification, and there are



only a few films that suggest other particulars of the glorification.

Often, the glorification process is represented by the hero having the power to enter the heart of the enemy's abode when it seems the most impossible thing to do, but by doing so he

or she destroys the evil forces from within.

Superman, in the eponymous film, does this when he enters the power beam emitted by the world engine that is transforming earth into Krypton. He flies up through the heart of the beam—withstanding its massive force—moving ever upward. He strains higher and higher into the light until he reaches the world engine and destroys it. When the deed is accomplished, the captain of the army says, “He did it,” just as Jesus said, “It is finished.” These words signify Jesus accomplishing his glorification. (Similarly, in *The Matrix*, when Neo has finally destroyed Smith, the leader of the Machine World, he says, “It is done.”) Superman is then shown in a peaceful, colorful scene, lying down with the rays of the sun on him as he reaches toward its pure light, (a trope in many hero films). Superman is known to get much of his power from the Sun. This phenomenon can be viewed as an allegory of Jesus as the Divine Human in the midst of the spiritual Sun in the spiritual world. From the Sun He provides life for all living things.

To a lesser extent, the remake of *The Day the Earth Stood Still* pursues this theme when “the one who can save the world,” an alien named Klaatu, becomes convinced of the goodness in humanity and fights his way against the swarm into the heart of the alien mother ship. At the end of the film, he

fades into pure light, and the swarm recedes and leaves.

*The Matrix* and its two sequels, *The Matrix Reloaded* and *The Matrix Revolution*, echo the theme of the glorification in great detail. In *The Matrix*, the theme of prophecy, an important factor in the glorification of Jesus, is essential and well developed. “The One” is the person who can and does fulfill the prophecies, just as Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies about him in the Old Testament. Simply put, prophecy is divine truth from God, and whoever fulfills prophecy is from God, drawing closer to oneness with God with each fulfillment. The Lord's process was not a forgone conclusion—a common misconception; it was an enormous battle and struggle in doubt from moment to moment. When he fulfills the last temptation on the cross, Jesus says, “It is finished,” meaning that he made his human body divine and returned to oneness with the Father.

In the first film of the trilogy, *The Matrix*, Neo's status as The One is constantly in doubt, but He gradually performs the deeds as no one but the Divine can. His status as The One is confirmed when he is resurrected from the dead and has exponentially greater powers — which he then demonstrates by defeating three enemy agents who have supernatural power.

In *The Matrix Revolution*, the last film of the trilogy, in spite of everyone telling him he is insane (except the few who believe in him), Neo travels into the heart of the evil realm of the machines. As he is walking closer to face the power center of the machines, the image switches between metal walkways, scrambling insect machines, and grey cables to Neo's inner vision, burning light that depicts perceiving and entering the internal of all things. He

*Continues on Page 43*

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that we have intuited since our beginnings on this earth, that everything of this life—no matter how small or ordinary—can speak to us of God. These signs are everywhere, but we tend not to see them—signs of sweetness that have nothing to do with chocolate.

Perhaps as we walk our Lenten journey this month we might allow ourselves to look for these small signs as we go. See where grace sparkles in a quiet time, all the small, foolish, innocent things that point us to more of life and life in abundance. A moment shared, a good deed done, a kind word said, a feeling of gratitude for whatever our eyes behold—all these things build the Easter miracle in us, the rising up in the Spirit. Now is the time, so “be quick like a bunny!” And may this Easter season be filled with peace and many blessings for you. ✚

Rev. John Maine is pastor of the Church of the Holy Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario.

## William Blake

*Continued from page 33*

ation is ironic, even satirical. But despite Blake's apparent satire of Swedenborg, even here, Blake states doctrines that accord with Swedenborg's theology. Then in later works, such as "Milton," and "A Descriptive Catalogue," Swedenborg's influence is present, and now Blake exhibits a positive relationship with Swedenborg.

We know that Blake read *Divine Love and Wisdom (DLW)*, *Divine Providence (DP)*, *Heaven and Hell (HH)*, and *True Christian Religion (TCR)* (called *Universal Theology* by Blake). We have his annotations to *Divine Love and Wisdom*, and *Divine Providence*. These annotations show Blake arguing with what he reads in Swedenborg, so it is clear that Blake appropriated Swedenborg critically [early on](#).<sup>2</sup> Some of this may be due to his experiences with the New Church Society in England. Despite Blake's ambiguous relationship to Swedenborg at times, Swedenborg's influence permeates Blake's work.

Consider the poems "The Little Black Boy" and "The Divine Image" (sidebars).

Both "The Little Black Boy" and "The Divine Image" (not to be confused with "A Divine Image") show a profound Swedenborgian influence.

To one versed in Swedenborg's theology, including the critic Kathleen Raine, "The Little Black

Boy" is replete with Swedenborgian imagery. In fact, one could say that the poem depends on Swedenborg for explanation. The poem is about an African boy, and Swedenborg states that Africans receive the doctrines of the

responses for love and wisdom—an idea prominent in *Divine Love and Wisdom*. The African boy's mother tells him that "we are put on earth a little space/That we may learn to bear the beams of love." Swedenborg teaches that heaven's heat is God's love and only those who have learned to accept God's love can bear the heat of heaven. God's tent is golden—gold being symbolic of the celestial degree of love. God as our heavenly father is now explicitly identified with the sun's heat, "Ill shade him from the heat till he can bear,/To lean in joy upon our fathers knee."

"The Divine Image" is based on Swedenborg's doctrine of the Divine Human. This is clear in Blake's two allusions to "the human form divine." The four virtues—Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love—are said to be qualities of God, or "the human form divine." The allusion to Swedenborg is clear. Swedenborg speaks of "the Lord's Divine Human, which all things of heaven and the Church look to as their one and only Source" (*Arcana Coelestia* §10359). The Divine Human is a central Swedenborgian teaching.

"The Little Black Boy" and "The Divine Image" depend profoundly on Swedenborg. It would appear that in these works Blake's relationship to Swedenborg is affirmative.

In "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," Swedenborg figures prominently again. But in this work, Blake's relationship to Swedenborg is complex, perhaps ironic or satiric. The very title suggests Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell*. And the poem begins by referencing the New Church proclaimed by Swedenborg in 1757.

### The Little Black Boy (1789)

My mother bore me in the southern wild,  
And I am black, but O! my soul is white;  
White as an angel is the English child:  
But I am black as if bereav'd of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree  
And sitting down before the heat of day,  
She took me on her lap and kissed me,  
And pointing to the east began to say.

Look on the rising sun: there God does live  
And gives his light, and gives his heat away.  
And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive  
Comfort in morning joy in the noonday.

And we are put on earth a little space,  
That we may learn to bear the beams of love,  
And these black bodies and this sun-burnt face  
Is but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

For when our souls have learn'd the heat to bear  
The cloud will vanish we shall hear his voice.  
Saying: come out from the grove my love & care,  
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.

Thus did my mother say and kissed me,  
And thus I say to little English boy,  
When I from black and he from white cloud free,  
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy:

I'll shade him from the heat till he can bear,  
To lean in joy upon our fathers knee.  
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,  
And be like him and he will then love me.

New Church readily. It is the African boy who teaches the English boy. In the poem, God is said to dwell in the east, another Swedenborgian idea (also Biblical). As in Swedenborg, Blake identifies God with the sun, and heat and light are singled out as the two primary qualities of the sun. It soon becomes apparent that heat and light are cor-

<sup>2</sup> Blake's annotations to Swedenborg are preserved in Geoffrey Keynes, *Blake Complete Writings*, (London: UP of Oxford, 1972). A discussion of Blake's annotations and Blake's relationship with the New Church Society can be found in Harvey F. Bellin, and Darrell Ruhl, *Blake and Swedenborg: Opposition Is True Friendship* (West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation, Inc., 1985).

*Continued from preceding page*

As a new heaven is begun, and it is now thirty-three years since its advent, the Eternal Hell revives. And lo! Swedenborg is the Angel sitting at the tomb; his writings are the linen clothes folded up.

It is difficult to understand exactly how to take this passage. Is this satire? But one would think that the angel at the tomb carries positive connotations, as do the linen clothes folded up. Both are Biblical references to Jesus' resurrection and the empty tomb. In this poem are references to angels and devils, and of course heaven and hell. Blake ironically appears to prefer the devils. But the angels and devils are not Swedenborg's angels and devils. Heaven and hell, good and evil, are equated with reason and energy.

From these contraries spring what the religious call Good and Evil. Good is the passive that obeys Reason. Evil is the active springing from Energy.

### Good is Heaven, Evil is Hell.

There are five sections in this work that are called, "A Memorable Fancy." The title is a satire on Swedenborg's "Memorable Relations."<sup>3</sup> Yet while satirizing Swedenborg, Blake borrows the style of Swedenborg's Memorable Relations by composing visionary narrations quite like his. In one of Blake's Memorable Fancies, we find another possibly ironic reference to Swedenborg.

I flung myself with him directly into the body of the sun; here I clothed myself in white, & taking in my hand Swedenborg's volumes, sunk from the glorious clime (Plates 17–20).

The imagery of the sun and white clothing, and the characterization of

### The Divine Image (1798)

To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love  
All pray in their distress;  
And to these virtues of delight  
Return their thankfulness.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love  
Is God, our father dear,  
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love  
Is Man, his child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart,  
Pity a human face,  
And Love, the human form divine,  
And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man, of every clime,  
That prays in his distress,  
Prays to the human form divine,  
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form,  
In heathen, Turk, or Jew;  
Where Mercy, Love, and Pity dwell  
There God is dwelling too

that locale as a "glorious clime" suggest positive connotations. It is in this glorious clime that Blake takes in his hand Swedenborg's volumes

Despite Blake's irony, in some places his ideas are clearly in agreement with Swedenborg. Blake states the Swedenborgian doctrine that with Christ's resurrection, Jehovah and Jesus became one, "Know that after Christ's death, he became Jehovah" (Plates 5–6). As does Swedenborg, Blake identifies horses with understanding, "The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction" (Plate 9). This latter is clearly a Swedenborgian borrowing as it is unlikely that horses would be related with instruction intuitively.

"In The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," Blake draws on Swedenborg considerably. But his appropriation of Swedenborg is complex and ironic. Blake mentions Swedenborg explicitly, borrows the style Swedenborg's Memorable Relations, and cites some Swe-

denborgian doctrines.

It appears that Blake returned to his early acceptance of Swedenborg later in life. In later works, he appears to embrace Swedenborg without ironic qualification. In "Milton," he uses Swedenborgian concepts in the narrative of the poem.

This is a false Body, an Incrustation over my Immortal Spirit, a Selfhood which must be put off & annihilated away  
To cleanse the Face of my Spirit by Self-examination, ("Milton," II, 40.35–37)

An Ark & Curtains  
Which Jesus rent & now shall wholly purge away with Fire  
Till Generation is swallow'd up in Regeneration ("Milton," II, 41.26–28).

In these passages, one recognizes the Swedenborgian complex of terms "Selfhood," (*proprium*) the process by which the selfhood "must be put off" to cleanse the spirit by "self-examination." These ideas are all contained in Swedenborg's theology of salvation called regeneration, a term Blake incorporates in these passages. These terms are replete in Swedenborg's theology. Specific examples of them may be found in AC §2494, §3913, §8175, TCR §525, §539, §574. In "Milton," we also find enthusiastic endorsements of Swedenborg. Despairing over the natural religion espoused by Voltaire and Rousseau, Blake's mythic characters state, "They perverted Swedenborg's Visions." Then an exuberant exclamation follows, "O Swedenborg! strongest of men, the Samson shorn by the Churches" (I.22.42–46, 50). That Swedenborg is said to be shorn by the churches may refer to Blake's dissatisfaction with the New Church Society.

Later still in Blake's career, the poet asserts that painters and poets can learn from Swedenborg's works. This injunction is found in Blake's *A Descriptive Catalogue*. This work is a description of art by Blake to be displayed as a col-

*Continues on Page 43*

<sup>3</sup> Throughout his writings, Swedenborg occasionally described actual experiences he had in other-worldly realms, which he called Memorable Relations.

# Bulger-Linked Con Man Gets 12 Years for Swindling Boston Church

BY SEAN P. MURPHY

Edward J. MacKenzie, convicted of “preying on society’s most vulnerable members” for swindling the church he managed, was sentenced to twelve years in federal prison on Friday after a prosecutor told the judge “the public is not safe if Eddie MacKenzie is on the street.”

US District Court Judge F. Dennis Saylor IV apparently agreed. He rejected the argument offered by MacKenzie’s lawyer that MacKenzie’s criminal career “is over,” and that a four-year prison sentence would be sufficient punishment.

“I am struggling to find any redeeming qualities in Mr. MacKenzie,” Saylor said, moments before imposing a prison term even longer than the maximum ten years called for under federal sentencing guidelines.

“This was no momentary lapse,” Saylor said of the charges of racketeering, extortion, bribery, and money laundering. “This was a decade-long episode of criminal behavior driven entirely by greed. He made his choic-

es and he will have to live with the consequences.”

MacKenzie, fifty-seven, pleaded guilty last October to what prosecutors described as looting millions of dollars from the Swedenborgian Church on Beacon Hill after taking over management of the church from “an unengaged and elderly congregation” in 2003.

“He is a lifelong con man with an extensive history of violence,” Saylor said in preparing to sentence MacKenzie. “He lies and deceives people on a regular basis. He stole a massive amount of money from a charity. He has a long and sordid history.”

MacKenzie is the author of a 2003 autobiography in which he portrays himself as an enforcer for Whitey Bulger and “the Boston Irish Mob.”

Assistant US Attorney Zach Hafer told the court that MacKenzie used the threat of violence to maintain control of the church. He would hand an autographed copy of the book to anyone who got in his way with the warning: “Don’t make me come out of retirement,” Hafer told the court.

As a result, a church with a history of ministering to “the sick, the down-trodden, and the needy” was drained of millions of dollars to instead allow MacKenzie and his friends to spend lavishly at Foxwoods Resort Casino, on a \$90,000 Cadillac, and on luxury box seats at sporting events at TD Garden, among other extravagances, Hafer told the court.

MacKenzie systematically helped himself to the church’s assets through a combination of fraud, deceit, extortion, theft, bribery, and money laundering, according to Hafer.

No one from the church took the opportunity to speak during the thir-

ty-minute session, which was attended by numerous MacKenzie family members and supporters, including a woman who shouted “We love you Eddie” as MacKenzie was led away. MacKenzie has been incarcerated since his arrest in 2013.

After the sentencing, one church member, who asked that his name not be used, described MacKenzie as having “destroyed the church.” “

It barely exists,” he said of the church. “There’s nobody left. People were afraid. They stopped coming.”

The Boston Society of the New Jerusalem runs the Swedenborgian Church, a small Protestant sect that follows the teachings of the 18th-century Swedish scientist and philosopher Emanuel Swedenborg.

MacKenzie, his eyes intensely focused, pleaded for mercy before sentencing. A burly man with a shaven head, MacKenzie said, “I am very, very sorry to everyone,” before telling the court he was most concerned for the welfare of his two troubled daughters “who are hoping their father will come home.”

Hafer, however, told the court that, even while locked up pending trial, MacKenzie had engaged in insurance fraud and witness intimidation and “used his own daughter to facilitate crimes.” In conversations from jail monitored by authorities, Hafer said MacKenzie was heard encouraging one daughter to have a sexual relationship in exchange for money with a “nasty” inmate whom MacKenzie met in jail.<sup>1</sup>

*Continues next page*

<sup>1</sup> The *Boston Herald* reported that MacKenzie, in a monitored conversation, encouraged his daughter to have sexual relations with his girlfriend to discourage the girlfriend from having sexual relations with other men. (Ed.) (<http://tinyurl.com/nslv3wc>)

## Annual Reports Due

Annual reports from support units and committees are due at Central Office no later than April 1, 2015, for review at the Spring General Council Meeting and inclusion in the Advance Reports distributed at the annual convention. Any report submitted for General Council and Advance Reports does not need to be resubmitted for the Annual Journal. Please limit reports to two single-spaced (12 pt font) pages. Longer reports may be edited for length.

## The Matrix

Continued from page 39

both submits to and transcends the power of the machines, allowing him to battle the multiplying agents alone, for the machines know he is the only one who can defeat them. He gives himself up, trusting in the truth, and persuades the machines to allow him to do battle with the evil agents by himself. He has a royal battle with the evil agents, and defeats them by the power of his light and truth. This sequence resembles Jesus' descent into hell, where he defeats all evil forces and releases the captives. These events are an allegory of the glorification of Christ.

In a battle between Neo and his nemesis Agent Smith in *Matrix Revolution*, Smith presses his hand into Neo, and a suffocating blackness consumes Neo inside and out. This blackness can be likened to the accumulation of hereditary evil that is overtaking the world. As Swedenborg said in reference to the accumulation of evil on earth before Christ came, if Jesus had not stopped it, humanity would have been lost eternally in darkness. Smith's attack is the moment Neo has been waiting for; when the evil consumes him,

it gives him access to all evil, and with divine power he enters the innermost and defeats their forces from within. Neo is then shown in the machine city, lying in a pose of the cross, bathed in pure, burning light. The machine voice says, "It is finished."

Neo's victory can be viewed as a metaphor for Jesus purifying his body of all hereditary evil, subjugating all the forces of evil, and especially expanding his presence infinitely by entering the natural level of reality, that is, the innermost of all things in the universe. In this way, Jesus renewed all things of heaven and earth. By His supreme act of love and skill, He made his human body divine, merging it with the divine of God, which is the glorification. He also released all the captives in the false heavens of the spiritual world, which is redemption, and He restored spiritual freedom to the whole world.

Similarly, Neo embodies divine power: he redeemed all of Zion (the land of non-subjugated humans outside of the Machine), released the captives who were held so long in the pods from restraint, and restored freedom to everyone. The Oracle asks the Architect what will become of any humans

Continues on Page 47

Continued from preceding page

"Is there anything worse?" Hafer asked.

Hafer also cited an excerpt from MacKenzie's book in which MacKenzie describes how he bit one man's ear off, swallowed the finger of another, and scalded someone else with hot coffee.

Besides the prison sentence, MacKenzie was ordered to pay restitution of more than \$700,000 to the church. When MacKenzie asked through his lawyer that the restitution order be stayed until MacKenzie completes his sentence, Saylor said no. ☩

This article is reprinted from the March 6, 2015, *Boston Globe*.

(<http://tinyurl.com/p5rfqz2>)

For more information on the subject, see this *Globe* article:

<http://tinyurl.com/qe9pxtf>

The Swedenborgian Church and the Massachusetts New Church Union jointly sued for control of the assets of the Boston Swedenborgian Church under MacKenzie's leadership from 2003–2006, asserting that he was leading a criminal enterprise and engaging in criminal activities using the assets of the church. Eventually, the plaintiffs lost on appeal to the State Supreme Court.

Read the October 2014 and April, 2013 *Messengers* for background articles on the subject.

## William Blake

Continued from page 41

lection. The display happened, but was not a success. In this catalogue we find an unqualified endorsement of Swedenborg's works,

Number VIII: The Spiritual Preceptor, an experimental Picture:

This subject is taken from the Visions of Emanuel Swedenborg, Universal Theology [TCR], No. 623. . . . The works of this visionary are well worthy the attention of Painters and Poets; they are foundations for grand things; the reason they have not been more attended to is because corporeal demons have gained a predominance; . . . they possess themselves of the bodies of mortal men, and shut the doors of the mind and of thought by placing Learning above Inspiration. O Artist! You may disbelieve all this, but it shall be at your own peril.

From *The Songs of Innocence and Experience*, through "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," and into "Milton," and *A Descriptive Catalogue*, we see that Blake's relationship with Swedenborg was complex. At times, we see an enthusiastic acceptance; at times we see ironic and critical appropriation; and at other times we again see endorsement and acceptance. Whether in agreement or in ironic parody, Blake could not ignore Swedenborg's theology. There were many other influences that went into Blake's visionary poetry, and Blake's own imaginative powers created idiosyncratic characters and complex dramas. But of one matter we can be sure: Swedenborg exercised a profound influence over Blake's works. A more thorough study would reveal, no doubt, just how profoundly Blake appropriated Swedenborg throughout his massive poetic corpus. ☩

Rev. Dr. Dave Fekete is pastor of the Church of the Open Word in Edmonton, Alberta. He lectured recently on Blake and Swedenborg at Urbana University.

## Winter Blues

BY GABRIELLA CAHALEY

I never thought much about winter blues before, except that I knew many people have it. Seasonal affective disorder (SAD), also known as winter depression, winter blues (not surprisingly), is much more prevalent in the northern climates. Having lived



Emerging Snowdrops

most of my adult life in sunny climates, particularly in Tucson where cloudy days are rare, I never experienced winter blues. But lately, I am wondering if I have a mild case this winter. Kansas has not experienced the dreadful snow and below zero temperatures reported by many of our friends living in the northeast, and I think I am going through an adjustment phase, not winter blues.

I am learning about the farming and livestock seasons in Kansas. I wonder how farmers feel about the winter. Our roller-coaster weather with little rain has to be a concern for every farmer. An inch or slightly less from a recent snowfall gave croplands another boost during a relatively dry winter with wide temperature swings.

Since January, the extremes have gone from single digits to downright balmy, which can be confusing for not just us but for the wheat crop that's normally in winter's sleep. One farmer told me of the danger when wheat breaks its dormancy, starts to green and tries to grow. Moisture has been very low, another worry for farmers, but I learned that a cold snap will put wheat to sleep again. Even scant moisture in any form will help sustain the crops. Farmers keenly aware of the weather

are encouraged by dabs of moisture from snow, they say it will sustain the crop whenever it tries to emerge. I am happy to see the snow fall in the past few days. It is good news for them and for us. Which brings me to the way the winter blues might relate to our spiritual blues and the ways we may be rescued from them.

Memories of hunting for snowdrops in the woods around my childhood home in Hungary lifts me out of the doldrums. Bright white snowdrops are the first flowering bulbs to poke through the soil's icy, snowy crust as winter slowly gives way to spring. I would gather a small bouquet and take them home. Just thinking of them delights me.

Recently, I discovered a more potent way to find joy in spite of the cold blustery days. Seeing cows grazing in the fields on my drives to and from Pawnee Rock and Hutchinson gives me pleasure. But taking pictures of the cows, as I often do, pales in comparison to the experience of feeding a calf. Not just an ordinary calf, but a miracle calf named "Baby" by Debbie and Larry Siebert. Baby was in the birth canal too long—he was born too weak to survive.

Debbie and Larry helped the struggling calf with splints to stand up. They kept him warm in the barn for a few days and began feeding him with a bottle. Now he is thriving. I got to feed Baby on a sunny but cold morning. This was a real life affirming experience for me. It brought home the fact sometimes we need serious intervention, just like Baby, to thrive. What does that look like in our spiritual life, I wondered?

All useful animals correspond to

some affection. Calves or bullocks correspond to the good of our natural, and the good of innocence and charity (*Apocalypse Explained* §279). To intervene and save the life of calf is holy work. To nourish innocence in our children, our inward is cooperating with the Divine plan for our regeneration, and it is sacred work. We must always remember that the Lord performs these miraculous interventions in our lives. The delight we feel cooperating with this work is a gift from our heavenly Father.

In the dark, silent earth, seeds germinate and grow. We know a great deal about how they grow, but much of it occurs in secret, out of our eyesight. It is like that with our spiritual growth. We may be in a dormant state, sluggish and maybe even gloomy. Like the seeds planted in late fall, we are silent, waiting, anticipating, longing for moisture, truth, to seep into our minds to revive us and sustain our growth.

Our very souls long for truths because truths are the only way affections for good come to life. I think this is akin to greening for the seeds. Unlike seeds though, we have an active role in this process. We must seek out truth that we can apply to our lives. We need a "dab" of truth on a regular basis to bring about the miracle of growth, spiritual growth. This inward process is not visible; it occurs in our innermost parts where the Lord creates new life in us. ☞

So winter blues and spiritual doldrums begin to disappear when the light and the warmth of the sun become stronger—and it is coming soon.

Rev. Gabriella Cahaley is pastor of the Pretty Prairie and Pawnee Rock Swedenborgian Churches in Kansas.



Rev. Gabriella Cahaley feeding "Baby"

# 191st Session of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem, Saturday, June 27 - Wednesday, July 1

**Council of Ministers: Wednesday, June 24 - Friday, June 26**

Convention 2015 will be held in Bridgewater, MA on the campus of Bridgewater State University (BSU). To learn more about BSU, visit [www.bridgew.edu](http://www.bridgew.edu). To learn more about the 2015 Convention and view a list of Frequently Asked Questions, please visit [www.swedenborg.org](http://www.swedenborg.org), email [manager@swedenborg.org](mailto:manager@swedenborg.org) or call the Central Office at (617) 969-4240.

**Lodging:** See next page for more details. Rooms will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, and may fill up before the end of the registration period. Rooms include one standard linen and towel pack. If you find that you often need extra towels or blankets, you are advised to bring some with you.

**Roommates:** If you have a specific roommate in mind, please fill in their name in the appropriate space. If not, please fill in the roommate matching section; we will try to pair you with someone with similar habits and needs. You will be paired with someone of the same gender.

**Childcare:** Please contact the Central Office for details. **If you will be bringing children, please contact the Central Office to obtain the necessary forms.**

**Youth League Program:** The Youth League program runs from Saturday, June 27 through Wednesday, July 1, and is supervised by Kurt Fekete. If you want your teen (age 13-17) to attend without a parent, please contact the Central Office.

**Internet:** Free guest wireless access is available.

**Parking:** Free. Please check the box below so we know how many cars will be parking on campus. See the FAQ for more parking information.

**Room & Board Reservations and Payment Deadline:** No new room, meal plan, or Women's Alliance luncheon reservations will be available after May 26 at 5PM EST. Any room and board reservations not fully paid by this deadline will be subject to a \$50 late fee. Event registrations will be accepted for as long as space permits.

**Cancellations:** Fully refundable prior to May 26 at 5PM EST. Cancellations must be done by calling the Central Office between 9AM-5PM EST, M-F.

**Arrivals and Departures:** Check-in on arrival day is between 2-5PM at Weygand Hall. Check-out on July 1 is between 11AM-1PM. **Any arrivals or departures outside of this time must be coordinated with the Central Office in advance.**

**Mobility:** We cannot guarantee the availability of mobility aids such as wheelchairs. Please contact the Central Office for more information and advice on local arrangements.

**Communications:** Please provide a valid email address below if you have one. In order to facilitate faster communications, and to save money on printing and postage, we provide as much information as possible via email. Please add [manager@swedenborg.org](mailto:manager@swedenborg.org) to your contact list to ensure that you receive all of our email updates.

**Ground Transportation:** Please see the FAQ for more details on ground transportation options from Logan Airport.

Name		
Name		
<input type="checkbox"/> Please check this box if you will be parking on campus		
Street		Apt. #
City	State/Province	Zip
Home Church	Preferred Email	Day Phone
Names, ages, and genders of any minors accompanying you		
Special Dietary Needs and/or Mobility Issues (Not everything can be accommodated)		
Specific Roommate Request		

### Roommate Matching

We will do our best to match you with an appropriate roommate if you have not indicated one above.

**Please indicate your gender:**  Male  Female

**I am (check all that apply):**

<input type="checkbox"/> An early riser	<input type="checkbox"/> A night owl
<input type="checkbox"/> A heavy sleeper	<input type="checkbox"/> A light sleeper
<input type="checkbox"/> Fragrance sensitive	<input type="checkbox"/> Fragrance-free
<input type="checkbox"/> A CPAP machine user	<input type="checkbox"/> A snorer

Anything else we should know when matching you?

### Travel Information

Please check this box if you will have a car at Convention and would be willing to do a pickup at Logan Airport on your arrival day.

Please check this box if you will have a car at Convention and would be willing to do a drop-off at Logan Airport on July 1.

Please check this box if you will be flying into Logan Airport and would like to be added to an email list for you to coordinate sharing a ride on your arrival or departure day.

**Room and Board Packages:**

- » **Package A (Wed. June 24- Wed. July 1, seven nights):**  
(choose this for Council of Ministers members)  
\$431 per person for a double, \$536 for a single  
Includes 7 nights of lodging, 7 dinners, 6 lunches, and 7 breakfasts.
- » **Package B (Wed. June 24 - Sat. June 27, three nights):**  
(available **only** to Council of Ministers attendees working outside of the denomination who are only able to attend COM meetings)  
\$189 per person for a double, \$234 for a single  
Includes 3 nights of lodging, 3 dinners, 2 lunches, and 3 breakfasts.
- » **Package C (Fri. June 26 - Wed. July 1, five nights):**  
(choose this for current lay General Council members or pre-Convention arrival)  
\$313 per person for a double, \$388 for a single  
Includes 5 nights of lodging, 5 dinners, 4 lunches, and 5 breakfasts.
- » **Package D (Sat. June 27 - Wed. July 1, four nights):**  
\$254 per person for a double, \$314 for a single  
Includes 4 nights of lodging, 4 dinners, 3 lunches, and 4 breakfasts.

**Meal Only Packages:** For those **staying off-campus** who want to buy meals. If you are staying off-campus and do not select a pre-paid meal plan, **you will not be able to eat in the dining hall.**

- » **Package W (Wed. June 24 - Wed. July 1, meals only):**  
\$180 per person  
7 dinners, 6 lunches, and 7 breakfasts
- » **Package X (Wed. June 24 - Sat. June 27, meals only):**  
\$70 per person  
3 dinners, 2 lunches, and 3 breakfasts
- » **Package Y (Fri. June 26 - Wed. July 1, meals only):**  
\$128 per person  
5 dinners, 4 lunches, and 5 breakfasts
- » **Package Z (Sat. June 27 - Wed. July 1, meals only):**  
\$101 per person  
4 dinners, 3 lunches, and 4 breakfasts

Registration	Cost	# People	Total
Adult	\$110		
Youth League (12-19)	\$100		
Child (3-11)	\$50		
Under 3 years old	Free		
*Family maximum	\$320		
One Day Registration	\$40		
Local Volunteer	\$50		
Women's Alliance Luncheon (must be reserved and paid by May 26 at 5PM EST)	\$5 for those paying for a Room and Board or Meal Only Package; \$14 for everyone else		

\*Family maximum price applies to immediate family members (i.e., parents/guardians and minor children) only.

Room & Board	Package	#People	Total
Room & Board or Meal Only Package (see package descriptions for rates)			
<b>\$50 Late Fee (assessed on R&amp;B packages paid for after May 26 at 5PM EST)</b>			

General Convention Subsidies	#People	Total Discount
Council of Ministers (for ordained Swedenborgian ministers with membership on the Council of Ministers only) - cost of Package A (double), Package B (double), or Packages W or X		
General Council (current members of the General Council only) - cost of Package C (double), or Package Y		
Swedenborgian Church Youth League Officers - cost of Package D (double) or Package Z		

<b>Grand Total</b> (from both Registration and Room & Board, less Subsidies)	
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**Payment Information**

All prices are in US currency. **If you pay with a Canadian check, please add US\$5 for handling. Please be advised that all prices are listed in US funds and must be converted for payment in other currencies. All room and board reservations not paid in full by 5PM EST on May 26 will be subject to a \$50 late fee.** See "Cancellations" section for refund policy.

**Payment Method**

**1. Credit card by mail (DO NOT email credit card information) - Fill out the following:**

Visa                       MasterCard                       Amex                       Discover

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cardholder's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CCV/Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Billing Zip Code (if different from mailing address): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

- 2. Credit card by phone - call (617) 969-4240, Monday through Friday, 9AM-5PM EST**
- 3. Credit card or bank payment via PayPal - enter an email address to receive a PayPal invoice to pay your balance below:**

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- 4. Check: Send checks payable to The Swedenborgian Church to: 50 Quincy St., Cambridge, MA 02138**

## Passages

### Milestones

Elizabeth Johnson celebrates 100 years of living on March 14, 2015. Her husband, Rev. David Johnson, departed the natural world in 2010. She would be pleased to receive greetings through the mail. Email or write [manager@swedenborg.org](mailto:manager@swedenborg.org) to obtain her address.

### Deaths

**Florence Virginia Swartz Kearns** passed away at the age of 104 on February 14, 2015. A member of the



Virginia (left) and her daughter, Florence Kearns

San Francisco Swedenborgian Church for many years, she was born in Maryland in 1911 and came to rest in Santa Clara, California. She met her husband in the USO in the 1940s; they moved to California, where they had three children. Florence is survived by her daughter Virginia Alice Kearns.

Throughout her life, Florence was an active church member, playing the piano and later the organ during services and other events. She loved crocheting and donated most of her crocheted blankets to those in need. She was an excellent cook and her homemade bread never quite made it to the bake sale tables. She is survived by her three children, four grandchildren, and many, many people who called Florence Mother, Grandmother, or Aunt Flo. A memorial service was held for her at the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church on March 8, 2015.

**Charles “Chuck” Winter** of Lakewood, Ohio, passed calmly and peacefully into the spiritual world on February 22, 2015. Chuck was a member

of the Swedenborg Chapel, Cleveland, where he served as worship leader, officiated at over 1,000 weddings, and was president of the church Council for fourteen years. He served on the General Council of the Swedenborgian Church, as president of the Ohio Association for many years, and had been a member of the Urbana University Board of Trustees.



Those of us who were blessed to know Chuck and his wife Verda can easily picture them being reunited in heaven. They loved each other dearly. They also loved their three daughters, Donna Tresko Frier, Diane Kvasnicka, and Rev. Deborah Winter and their many grandchildren.

It should also be said that Chuck loved his Yankees and playing tennis.

A Memorial Service for Chuck was held on February 27, conducted by Reverends Ronald Brugler and Betsy Coffman.



**Sharon D. Swan**, of East Bridgewater, Massachusetts, lifelong member of the Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church, passed into the spiritual world on February

19, 2015. Sharon took on many duties in the church, carrying on the legacy of her parents, Ruth and Bert Lemee. She was secretary of the Church Committee and helped with many fundraisers, including the church’s annual fair, for many years. Sharon’s greatest joy was seeing her grandchildren grow in the Sunday school.

Sharon and her husband Dick were married in the Bridgewater Church in 1980. In that same year, Sharon, Dick, and Dick’s mother, Mildred Swan,

founded a family business, Atlantic Research Marketing System (ARMS). Sharon was very dedicated and proud of her company.

Sharon hosted many professional trade shows and company parties and the annual 4th of July celebrations in East Bridgewater. She had many hobbies—sewing, quilting, baking, church events, cowboy movies, antique cars, raising flowers, dancing to 50s music, and traveling with her husband and daughters. Most of all, Sharon loved taking care of her family and friends and made many donations to charities and causes in East Bridgewater. She loved people, and loved helping others. Always with a smile, and never one to complain, even with the complications of Multiple Sclerosis.

Sharon is survived by her husband Richard “Dick” Swan, children Kelly J. Milne and Jaclyn E. Fraser-Swan, brothers David A. Lemee, Brian D. Lemee, and Susan J. Lemee, thirteen grandchildren (and two more on the way). A service of resurrection was held on February 25, 2015, the Rev. Susannah Currie officiating. Donations in her honor can be made to the Bridgewater New Jerusalem Church. ☩

### The Matrix

*Continued from page 43*

who want to be unplugged from the Matrix, and the Architect replies that they will be freed.

In the last scene, there is a salvation scene in which the Oracle and the little girl, who represents innocence, take great pleasure in a suddenly beautiful and colorful land. There is a new dawn in the world of the Matrix. ☩

Rev. Steve Sanchez is a lead hospice chaplain and bereavement coordinator, and he is involved in music ministry and leads Bible study at a church in Albany, California. He blogs about integrating Swedenborg’s ideas with film analysis and several other disciplines at [swedenborgstories.blogspot.com](http://swedenborgstories.blogspot.com).

### 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.

In his theological writings, Swedenborg shared 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.

### It's Here

Louder than a trumpet you announce your presence in giant clouds stretching into the horizon.

I thought only of how many miles I had yet to drive.

Yet, I saw you in the smile of stranger who passed me on a dirty city sidewalk.

A month of hiking left me wanting only food and a bed when I heard your voice in the echo of distant thunder that moved through the canyon bouncing from wall to wall with power and fury until it met me and went by and then faded in the distance.

You were there in the touch of a gentle soul who loved me and cried when I left. But I didn't see you until your sunbeam washed a Douglas Fir in light so pure I declared it must have been planted by angels.

You are always looking for a way, a way into my heart and head. You are always blessing me.

Wherever you go, it's there. Wherever you left, it's there. It's inside and outside you, above you and beneath you. Remarkable and sublime.

Simple and complex.

Deep and shallow.

In laughter and reflection.

IT'S HERE and there and ACTUALLY EVERYWHERE.

THERE ISN'T ANYWHERE IT ISN'T.

What is it? The force? The spirit, the ether, God?

There is no name and there are too many and there are not enough,

Like a pathway to heaven but I saw only how many miles I had yet to drive.

— Eric Allison

Eric Allison is a Swedenborgian minister living in the Seattle area. He suffered a stroke in 2008 and has been working on restoring his health ever since. For many years before his stroke, in addition to being a minister, he traveled, explored, and wrote poems essays and stories. The *Messenger* will publish some of these from time to time.