

THE MESSENGER

Official Organ of the Swedenborgian Church

DECEMBER 1969



CHRISTMAS CARD FROM THE EDITOR

The Word became flesh; he came to dwell among us, and we saw his glory. Jn. 1:14, New English Bible

“What God was, the Word was. . . and the Word became flesh.” Such a radical commitment of infinity to finitude, of eternity to past, of potentiality to history, of spirit to matter, is beyond human comprehension. We celebrate it, rather than try to fully understand it.

Let us celebrate the Incarnation of our Lord with tingling, soaring joy, joy that is the richer because the Incarnation—though beyond our understanding—is not beyond our experience. We all have seen spirit committed to matter, as when a longed-for dream home becomes a house of wood and stone. We all have seen potentiality committed to history, as when all the glorious things a poet *might* have said are reduced to one poor cluster of letters on a page. We all have seen spirit become flesh, when parents’ love becomes a child.

Rejoice in all of this and more. Live to the fullest limits of the blessed joy that is Christmas, in this year of our Lord who came to dwell among us.

Robert H. Kirven

On Cover, and Next Six Pages

A GIFT OF JOY

Shortly before Convention last summer, a group from Good Shepherd Center in Bellevue, Washington (Convention’s *Program Link*) got together to prepare a display to send to the convention. Deciding on a theme and form for the display, they made it less descriptive than representative—instead of describing their activities, they offered expressions of their feelings about the church and about life. On a four-sided kiosk topped by a dramatic mobile, they mounted oil paintings, poems, letters, a string of hand-made beads, a collage, all happy expressions of a vigorous joy in living.

Now, at Christmas time, *The Messenger* presents a sampling from that display on the cover, and the following pages, even though the presentation involves a regrettable loss in the translation from three dimensions to two, from hand-work to print, from color to black-and-white.

The cover painting, *Vortex*, by Etta Rowley, is a blaze of flame colors in the original; but even in monochrome, it seems appropriate for a Christmas cover because it suggests—among other things—the burst of joy in the world that is symbolized by the Christmas Story.

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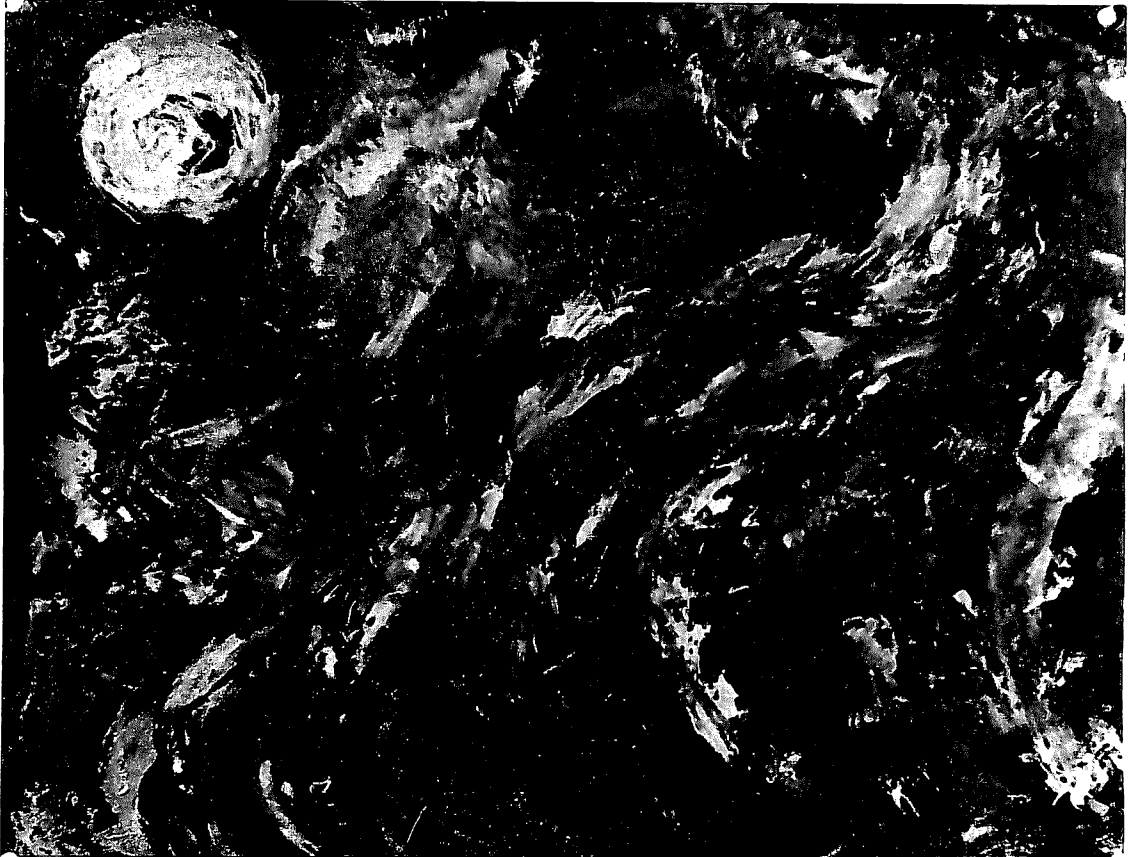
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ESCAPE, by Ruth Johnson, a collage of sea-weed and colored stones in a shadow-box.



LISA, by Erma Holmes, a red-haired girl against a glowing background of reds and yellows.



UNTITLED, by Libbey Frye, black figures in boiling dark blue, sparkling with reflections of fiery yellow orb.

NOW I CAN SEE

The quotation in the Bible by the man who said, "All I know is once I was blind but now I can see" runs through my mind as I think of my association with the Good Shepherd Center. Not that "sight" has come that quickly to me but it has been truly miraculous. Many of the bible quotations I repeated for years have taken on real personal meaning for me—"You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

I had wanted from the time I was a young girl to have what I termed a close relationship to God and I did try. I joined a church, attended regularly, participated in prayer groups and Bible classes, gave generously of my time and money, always trying to develop a close feeling to God which others seemed to have. But deep within me there was this "nothingness" feeling in relation to God. How could it be otherwise? I had a "nothing" relationship with myself.

After four years with our small group under the dynamic but gentle guidance of Dave and Elizabeth Johnson, I am realizing more all the time how I have lived my life "outside myself." God was "out there" somewhere. I hadn't learned to live within myself but had always attempted to be what I had thought others expected me to be. Because of the outside pressures I allowed to rule my life I truly didn't know who I was. Self-doubt, depression and anxiety were so much a part of me as I grew up in a family with six older brothers and sisters, married and raised a family, that I hardly recognized these feelings. My real feelings were kept carefully under cover; I was very clever at presenting to the world the person I thought the world wanted me to be. In the group I am learning to look at my feelings and myself honestly and to accept my true self as I discover what this true self is. What a marvelous feeling!

Our services and fellowship meetings in the larger group within the Center are tremendous. Dave and Cal and Owen Turley, each in his own way, have helped us all to find new insights. Many in our fellowship have found a creativeness they never knew they possessed, or could not share with others, and are able to add so much to our meetings. There is a love and acceptance of one another that is very precious to me; a kind of relationship I never dreamed possible. The truth has truly "set me free." To be more honest and loving in all my relationships.

I have quit seeking a close relationship to God because it was there all the time, I discovered, when I quit working so hard to be something I thought God, among others, wanted me to be. I can just live and be and know that He is "closer than hand and foot," He is the very essence of my being, He is the essence of all those I have learned to love so differently, so honestly. He is the essence of all that is real and honest. This is my concept of God today for which I am most grateful. And this is one of the wonderful things about our fellowship—we are free to each pursue God, or not pursue Him, in our own way. There is no one to say which is the "right way." Tomorrow my concept may change but right now I am content to know that God Is, and along with that to know that I am free To Be.

The bay is calm and full
With water gently rippling
Toward the shore.
There is an air of hushed serenity
A hazy sky adds to the
Tranquil scene.
But just outside my cabin
Window there
A gay and joyous dog
He dances by with
Gay abandon
Across the ferns and bracken
With such a lust for life that
Even birds light on his head
For such a happy flight.
Dare I, dare I to join him?
For here am I imprisoned
In a garb of false serenity.
Yet all the while
My truant heart
Longs wildly to be free.

Dawn comes slowly
Sometimes
Especially when it has
High mountains
To climb.
Sometimes it almost
Seems to disappear
Completely
Before it finally conquers
The vast darkness
But once it starts
There is no
Turning back.

PEOPLE CAN CHANGE

I just want to say that people can change. I'm one who has. I look, feel and act differently. I'm more in touch with what it means to be a beautiful child of God than I ever thought possible. I used to pretend that I heard the inner voice in meditation for example, but oh how my mind wandered. But everyone else made contact, they said, and had such beautiful experiences. Now this inner voice is an integral part of me. It's as natural as breathing—I can't get God out of me. He's not just a part of the high spiritual experience; he's with me when I get annoyed with my children or when I'm confused or depressed.

This whole realm of human experience is meaningful now, because I've found myself—I have an identity and I know God.

How did it happen? Four and one half years of getting to know myself with group therapy and personal counselling here at the Church of the Good Shepherd. It's been a long time, but worth every step of the way.

I think the growth and comfortableness with myself that I've experienced is in direct relation to the rediscovery of my feelings that were lost in early childhood, and the acceptance of these feelings, positive and negative, as being a part of being a human being. The more I am able to feel and accept all my feelings, the more I'm in tune with my central core, which I call God. My experiences are rich and meaningful—I can be close to people. I've discovered that this comfortableness with self is what God wants every human being to feel. It's so simple, but the process of relearning that these feelings are all right and acceptable is a long one—I have much more to learn in this area. And that's where the process of changing comes in. As a youngster I was taught that many of these feelings were wrong—it's wrong to speak up for your needs, you must be polite; it's wrong to have sexual feelings, but it's all right after marriage; it's wrong to be angry; it's wrong to be too exuberant and child-like; it's wrong to make mistakes, you must be perfect; it's wrong to say what you really think or feel, you must create a good impression or people won't like you, and so on. So I set about to change the situation.

As a result of these changes, I have a marriage that's real—my husband and I are getting to know each other. Before, we were strangers and didn't know it.

My children—and this I truly thank God for—are much freer and comfortable with themselves. They know they're all right the way they are. And I know, from what happened to me, that from this point of comfortableness with self, they can move and achieve in any direction they choose to go.

This last year I have had a big breakthrough in the creativity area. Last August I began to write stream-of-consciousness poetry and I was so thrilled because I could never write freely before—I was rigid and controlled.

But my favorite thing is Art. In November I suddenly discovered I could draw. I'd never drawn before—I felt I couldn't because I couldn't make a perfect drawing. But the amazing thing is that in the world of fine arts—if a painting is perfect it's no good—the feeling isn't there. So the thing that I've felt badly about all my life, that I couldn't be perfect, turns out to be my greatest asset. I'm naturally free and easy, and I can be it more often. And when I can feel into what I'm drawing or painting, it's good because it's all I can be at that moment. Just as when I'm free and comfortable with myself in human relationships—they are meaningful because I'm all there and that's enough.

So I'm very grateful for the work that goes on at Bellevue. Without it, I would not have come so close to God. I was searching for God before at the Unity Church, in books, in other religions. I'm not searching now, just following His guidance. Right now He's guided me into Art lessons. And this has opened my world and my eyes to awareness even further. The trees and the natural world around me excite me. I used to worry about being bored as my children grew older. But just being aware of nature, I have no fears of boredom. There are not enough hours in the day to contemplate this fully.

You know this is truly the only way of being a missionary. Jesus said, "Let your light shine before men" and it's so simple. I don't have to tell others what to believe, all I have to do is be me. My children's lives are changed, their children's lives will be—people I meet, people they meet. It's a feeling of ever widening ripples. Who knows who is changed or inspired an inch by meeting someone who is real—who has a passion about his life.

MEANING

I SEARCHED AND SEARCHED FOR MEANING TO LIFE. I knew there was something missing. I would catch a glimpse of the missing part of me sometimes in nature or a book, in a speaker or in a worship service, or in a close personal relationship, but why or where this missing part disappeared was a mystery. I lived on the fringes of myself for so long, not really recognizing me. I didn't know—I wasn't aware of God's greatest gift to me—myself.

Then four years ago I discovered the Church of the Good Shepherd, and it has indeed become a Good Shepherd to me—leading me, guiding me, accepting me, and even at times carrying me as the little lamb in the symbol of the church is being carried tenderly on the shoulders of the Good Shepherd.

I have come to feel that I am loved because I am myself, and not because of what I can do for others. I am learning to express openly feelings long repressed—fear, anger, resentment, loneliness and frustration, and find I am not diminished or destroyed in the expression, and that I am still accepted and loved by my “Good Shepherd Family.”

For many, many years I had covered up these unacceptable feelings for no “Christian” should have them, so I had been taught and believed, and in my heart I really wanted to be Christ-like. Now I know that if I am a real person, a total person, these “darker” feelings are also a part of me—to be recognized and used in my growing process.

I am constantly discovering new dimensions within, and I am deeply grateful to Dave Johnson for personal counselling as well as group therapy, to Cal and Owen Turley and the fellowship, and to all the someones I have never met who make these blessed opportunities to experience life on this feeling level.

Lillie May

I am beautiful.

My name is beautiful.

But I have not always felt this is true.

I was born to sing—

To sing within my heart,
To sing aloud with freedom and happiness,
To sing with radiance and gladness,
To sing with pure delight of being.

But alas!

Somewhere, sometime, somehow,
I looked into a dark pool,
And saw a reflection,
And thought it was my real self.

I have carried this picture of myself
Not knowing it was false, distorted.
And it has stilled the song within my heart.

Now is my awakening, my awareness.

With increasing tempo
The music within is moving.
I must express.
I must be true to my own inner beauty.

I am even now unfolding
To sing within my heart,
To sing aloud with freedom and happiness,
To sing with radiance and gladness,
To sing with pure delight of being.

Lillie May

THE JOY BELL

During our coffee break, one of the girls accidentally crashed some saucers to the floor. Everyone gasped and looked. Susan was quite overcome and said, “I’ll never dare come in this place again.” I was able to say comfortably and with conviction, “Nonsense, Susan, who needs to be perfect? Come join the human race and be one of us.” She smiled and said, “You’ve made me feel better.” Another girl added, “Ruth says something nearly every day to make me feel better.”

The little joy bell deep inside me pealed—a tingle went down my spine. I was SO GLAD to know my inner growth after 4 years of therapy group work was being communicated. In fact, I intended to call this “Deaf and Dumb” for I had been so shut in behind inferior feelings which walled me off from others. Now I was discovering that as I accepted others, they in turn responded to me and instead of being a bystander, I too, in truth, had joined the human race.

Ruth Johnston

Gift of Joy cont'd.

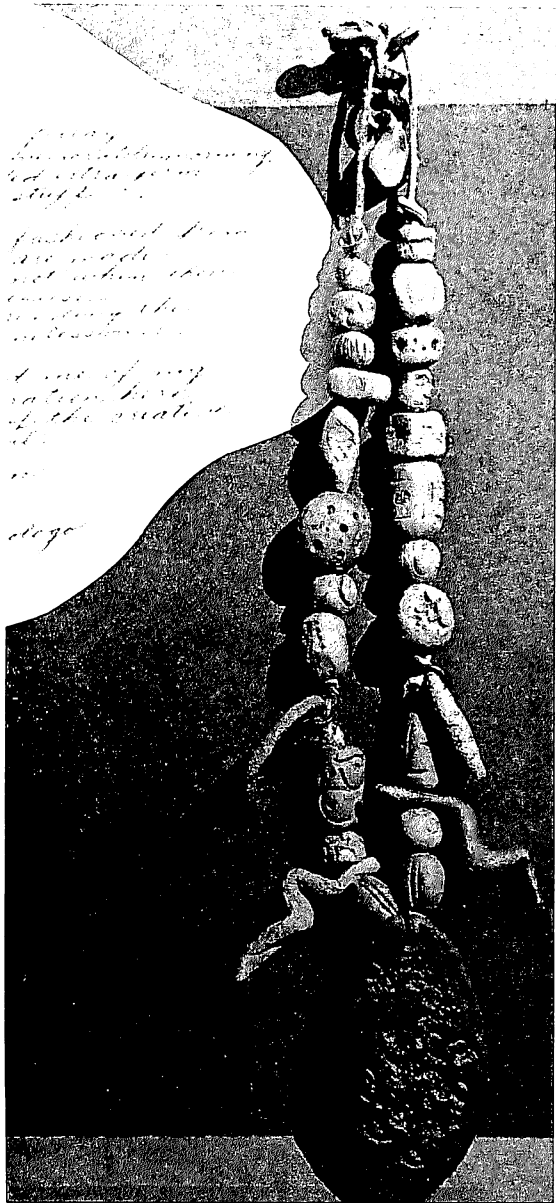
Here—a few bits of clay...
Fashioned one memorable morning
when my feet needed extra firm
planting in earthy stuff.

These inspired beads...fashioned from
the staple of which men are made...
and leave willingly or not when their
earth form passes into disuse—
a discarded container—sending the
contained back into timelessness.

Oh fragile beads you remind me of my
short, short learning preparation here,
and my glorious discovery of the creative
part of man's immortal soul.

On that morning I was born
a little more again.

Claudia Krisologo



NECKLACE, beads of clay fashioned by Claudia Krisologo.



UNTITLED, by Lorraine Sando, a gently beckoning garden of delicate yellows in a tender lavender field.



WONDER, by Jacquie Weaver, a dark-haired girl in a light dress, seated in a light-dappled

TENDERNESS

And if there is no other source
To show me
Tenderness,
Then I will set aside small funds for
 Red roses
 Gray kittens
 And mushrooms

Save time for looking at
 Rainbows
 Children
 And midnight Skies

Listen with my heart to
 My small needs
 Helplessness
 And dependency

And cultivate a great garden of
 Warm feelings
 Closeness
 And concern

With those who need,
Like me.
Tenderness in abundance.

Elizabeth Frye

HARVEST

With gentle, firmly loving hands
She moves across the tapestry
 Weaving in and out, in and out,
 The threads of color;
 Somber,
 Cool,
 Golden;
Bright shocks of light
 Dropped here and there
 Across the shadowed field
Promise that
 Beyond the plowing,
 Sowing,
 And waiting,
Lies the harvest.

Erma Holmes

CREATION

We come together searching
 Who am I? What am I? What hurts?
 I don't know what it is, but it hurts.
Sharing tears—laughter
 Anger—joy.
Touching hands
Loving—being loved
Together we begin to grow.
In some dark time
Small light shines
Away down the corridor of awareness,
A wavering spark that whispers,
A first fleet glimpse of self.
The flame grows brighter, stronger
And God is there,
Exactly where he ought to be.
Then! Then!
The surge of joy in being—
Waves of life enfolding and unfolding,
The certainty that there is more
And ever more;
That I am me
And I am mine
And my God is my God.
I am who I was always meant to be,
Created to be creative
Wherever I am, in all that I am
I am creation!

Unsigned

WONDER OF GOD

Oh wondrous creator
Oh living power
Loving, loving
Caring, caring
And sharing—
Sharing yourself with all of us
Just waiting to be discovered
 or uncovered.
My God, you've been there
 all the time
Too close to see
I had to climb over me.

Lorraine Sando

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir:

The "Letter to Adults" is extremely interesting to this adult. It is my understanding that a familiarity with the Bible and the application of the science of correspondences are basic aims in Swedenborgian education and are taught in Sunday School. The doctrines of Swedenborg are introduced according to the age of the students.

Surely our young people should be taught the distinctive doctrines of the New Church in confirmation classes and have an opportunity to study Swedenborg's books under the leadership of qualified, informed people at some time. I had supposed the various summer schools and particularly L. E. I. were especially designed to teach Swedenborgian doctrines and their application to everyday life.

It is not, however, *necessary* that these young people be taught about Swedenborg's doctrines. The books are available (so many of them! everything from *Better than Gold*, Bigelow's *The Bible That Was Lost and Is Found*, your *Big Questions*, Spalding's *Introduction* to the several editions of Swedenborg) and they can read.

* * * * *

Those paragraphs came out of my thoughts as I did my housework (it is a daily blessing that one doesn't have to think about these tasks while performing them!) and considered that "Letter to Adults" which you shared with us in *The Messenger*. Here am I—60 years old and separated from an active society for the past 34 years; what do I know of the problem? Not much.

In the era and home in which I grew up I seem to have learned the doctrines of our Church by osmosis—I don't remember being taught any of it.

There is everywhere, and for a long time now, a great emphasis on communicating with others and on loving others. I think it should be the peculiar duty of the Swedenborgian Church to point out the necessity for Wisdom, without which there is little worth communicating and one's most loving efforts will go awry. So give us some wisdom,

truths from the Word. A memorable article I read in *The Messenger* was on the meaning of "daily bread"—we petition it daily, so once we really know what we are asking for, we don't forget it. And a memorable sermon is one Mr. Woofenden gave us years ago in Connecticut about the Amalekites—since they are always at our heels and making forays at every weak moment, we don't forget them either.

So, yes, let us help these young people to wisdom to match their goodwill.

* * * * *

About Convention's Sunday Service: I suppose there were not more than ten who, like me, rarely have the joy of attending a New Church service and so were dismayed to see the program. I can attend in this vicinity a different church service every Sunday for at least three months, but none of them would be the one I love.

Congratulations to you and your fine staff for the good work of getting out *The Messenger*. I hope you will receive many helpful and constructive articles to share with us.

Evelyn W. Woods

Evelyn Woods is a leading layman of the Connecticut Association.

Dear Sir:

Because I'm not actually a member of your religious organization, I have hesitated in writing to you. Let me say that while I'm not a member, I surely believe in the truths poured out on paper from the Lord through the pen of Emanuel Swedenborg. This chosen man has written down for posterity things that have benefitted all mankind, and will continue benefitting them for ages to come. To understand all that he has written from the Lord is difficult, but there surely is wisdom in that "difficulty," which has protected things heavenly from earthly abuse.

You say, Mr. Editor, that you welcome correspondence in regard to "A Letter to Adults," appearing in your September issue, and I must therefore speak in defense of your inquisitive, but seemingly

unknowing youth, about whom you are so concerned.

The question seems to me not to be so much whether these youths are “Swedenborgian” or not: as though the time has suddenly arrived when faith is to be placed above charity. Too quickly are men divided from each other by that kind of thinking, when you surely *know* even by the question asked the youths that “love” is the answer to the very condition that seems disturbing.

It would be most pleasurable to me to answer those young minds who actually pose a question to their instructor: “But there’s no way to know that that’s what is true. I mean, the Muslims believe in Allah, don’t they?”

My answer to them would be this:

You have just named several forms that love takes with man. They can be good or evilly disposed, according to how they are applied. Do you agree? Any Muslim that knows good from evil love has already found the secret knowledge that will without question bring him into the arms of God, no matter what name be applied to Him, for it is God, not Swedenborg or any other man that gave him that knowledge. As you know, there are deeper loves and shallower loves; the shallow ones are more closely connected to the coarser side of men, and are often mere passions. The deeper loves are from God, and these connect every man to Him. Now, young inquirer, you are deeply loved by God because you question and search for His ocean of Divine truth. Can you name for me the deeper loves? I promise you that he who knows them, knows God also, for no matter what truth you wish to embrace, Divine truth will never be depleted, for the taking of it is like the taking of a drop from the ocean, and is never missed; so anyone may reach therein and scoop up all he wishes. Divine truth comes from God, but it is seen everywhere, without limit, nor is it confined to one man or one group of men; and its impartations will never cease! When you want to know it, you will then receive it, and when you receive it, it will tell you all about *love*, because heavenly love never ceases to reveal its truths to everyone who really wants to know. And when these components of our Lord are arrived at in you, and are harmonious, then you too will know what Emanuel Swedenborg knew; and it is the treasure of all treasure which is called “the good of love,” the kind which is forever

pouring forth out of heaven, and which gives us all eternal existence within its warm embrace. God love you for asking me! Amen.

Reed D. Welchoff

Mr. Welchoff is a regular reader of The Messenger in Hayward, Cal.

Dear Sir:

It occurred to me that you might be interested in publishing the enclosed letter to me from the late Bishop James Pike in *The Messenger*, since it may be of some interest to many readers. It is just possible that this was the last letter Bishop Pike wrote before leaving on his tragic and fateful trip to Israel. Quite apart from the affirmative interest he expressed toward my recently published book, “*Existentialism and the New Christianity*” and toward the Swedenborgian concepts, this letter is of considerable significance, especially in that he “appreciates the point” of the rather harsh criticisms I make of his more extreme views in several pages of this work. My criticisms were directed specifically against his former expressions of serious doubt about the Virginal Conception and the Bodily Resurrection of the Lord. His reaction to these pages of my book would seem to indicate that he had not confirmed himself in a denial of these fundamental essentials.

You can imagine what a shock it was for me, so soon after receiving this very friendly letter, to hear of his tragic experience and death in the desert of Judea!

Harry W. Barnitz

The Rev. Mr. Barnitz is a minister of the Lord’s New Church which is Nova Hierosolyma in New York. The following is a letter to him from the late Bishop James Pike.

My dear Harry:

Just as I am about to leave for Israel, your impressive book has arrived. I am grateful for it—and, not the least, for your beautiful inscription. It is very heartening. It appears that I am going to be overweight as it is, since we are leaving for a six-week research tour—my sixth and Diane’s second trip. We are having to take along the basic material in connection with the doing of the first draft of the book on Christian Origins which we must complete en-route, so it is likely that I will not be getting to your book until I return. It appears upon quick inspection that I have a treat ahead.

DR. IRA PROGOFF SPEAKS AT BOSTON CHURCH

Dr. Ira Progoff, New York psychiatrist, author of several books on depth psychology, and developer of the "Intensive Journal Workshop" technique for depth experience and self-realization, spoke at the Boston Church of the New Jerusalem on Friday night, October 24. His lecture, entitled "Waking Dream and Living Myth," traced the contacts with the works of Emanuel Swedenborg that had influenced the development of his own psychological theory and practice, and described the enrichment of spiritual life (and its physical manifestations) that is possible through the cultivation of depth experience.

The audience of about sixty five, about half of whom were visiting a Swedenborgian church for the first time, responded enthusiastically to Dr. Progoff's description of the fuller, more vital life that is accessible to all who are willing to reach down into the well-springs of their deeper aware-



ness for power and insight. Dr. Progoff described at length the techniques he has developed for tapping these inner resources, utilizing a combination of group experience and form of psychological workbook that he calls an Intensive Journal. On the day after the talk, a small group—about a third of them members of the church—participated in an Intensive Journal Workshop under Dr. Progoff's direction.



NEWS FROM ST. PAUL

LETTERS TO EDITOR cont'd from p. 202

Dear Sir:

At an editor's conference in Atlanta, I heard glowing reports of the New England Book Fair, with special reference repeatedly made to the exhibit, and the personnel, of some "obscure church group." It turned out to be none other than the Massachusetts New Church Union and the Swedenborg Foundation, teamed up to display our church publications. Apparently our booth was sandwiched in between those of major publishers, but it seems someone set up the booth with flair and manned it with enthusiasm, knowledge of content, and willingness to discuss at length. It must have been really outstanding to have evoked such response, and the description of the people manning the booth fit Ray Guiu and Harvey Johnson of Massachusetts, and Virginia Branstom from the Swedenborg Foundation. If they were indeed the persons responsible for projecting this vibrant image of our church, we owe them a real debt of gratitude.

Maybe we should look to other regional book fairs as one form of our outreach and not wait for people to drop in on us. Let's follow the Union's example.

Mrs. Jan Seibert

Beginning this year the Virginia Street Church—Swedenborgian in the Twin Cities is sending one of its young people to a New Church Summer Camp. A fund has been established through the Women's Alliance and the New Church Men's Club. This past summer Diane Olsen went to Split Mountain Camp in California. There she found fresh inspiration and many new friendships.

A month ago Diane Olsen and another girl of our Church, Wendy Bristow, found they wanted to put their inspiration and interest in the Church to work. They started a Saturday morning Bible Class Group for children four to eight years old. The Group meets in our Parish House from 10:00 A.M. till noon. They do painting, singing and story telling, and have refreshments. It is a promising and lively group activity initiated by these two girls.

The Virginia Street Church will have a joint Thanksgiving Eve service of worship with the Shiloh Baptist Church in St. Paul. Rev. Andre Diaconoff is to speak at the service. Rev. John F. Williams, pastor of the Shiloh Church, is president of the Ministerial Alliance of St. Paul, the city wide Negro ministerial organization.

The Model City Council for St. Paul has been meeting in our Parish House through the month of November.

NEWS FROM MIAMI

Dear Friends:

We must be blessed by God. So much has happened lately we hardly know how to tell you. You will recall it was June 28 the disaster struck your church. It was a major catastrophe, we didn't know where to turn—was it the end or was it guidance? During the weeks of work parties, painting, cleaning, working with insurance and claim adjusters, we still had time to meditate and to ask God—Just WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? Should we go along the same as before—or was this an indication that it was time for a change. During our contemplation a new light appeared.

The owner of an established Cuban elementary school, desperately in need of larger quarters, chose our location as being ideally suited. For some time we had been aware of the rapid change in our neighborhood and now seemed to be the right time to relocate. We considered their offer and at a board meeting shortly thereafter, the unanimous opinion was to act, to accept their offer.

We are now free to follow new horizons. Soon, your new church home will be at 5877 Devonshire Blvd., Miami, Fla. 33155. As things have worked out well in the past, we know that under our Lord's guidance, we will continue to grow and to be of further service in a NEW WAY.

Sincerely yours,
Herbert Young, President
Miami Church

PEOPLE CAN CHANGE cont'd from p. 197

This is the greatness of the Swedenborgian project at Bellevue. A rare service to mankind. I can almost visualize Emanuel Swedenborg, Jesus Christ and all of the other enlightened men, sitting back and nodding their heads—saying, "That's it, that's it! You've got it. Keep up the good work!"

Lorraine Sando

NEW RECOGNITION FOR SSR

The Swedenborg School of Religion, which frequently in recent years has had more foreign than American students on its rolls, has had to renew its authorization to certify foreign students for the Immigration Service.

The Immigration Service itself does not investigate schools to see which ones are qualified to give the certification they require, so they expect schools to be recognized by an accrediting agency before accepting their students under the provisions of a Student Visa. For SSR, this meant recognition by the American Association of Theological Schools, (which only accredits much larger schools), or by the Veterans' Administration, which accredits schools to receive payments for Veterans' Benefits. The Veterans' Administration, in turn, depends on state departments of education to do its investigating.

Because of this pattern of governmental responsibilities, and after enlisting the aid of an attorney who specializes in such things, and completing a surprising pile of paperwork, SSR President Edwin G. Capon is at last able to announce that the Swedenborg School of Religion is recognized by the State of Massachusetts and the Veterans' Administration as offering an education program which qualifies for Veterans' Benefits, in case you know of any veterans who want to come to the school. More importantly, SSR is also recognized again (and more or less permanently) by the U.S. Immigration Service as offering an educational program for which students may be admitted to this country on a Student Visa.

In the White Queen's country of Lewis Carroll's imagination, it was necessary to run as fast as you could to stay where you were.

CORRECTION

The Messenger for November erroneously attributed the Fryeburg Assembly report to Marion Greene of Cambridge. The fact is, Mrs. Marion Greene of Cambridge has not been to Fryeburg, and the report was submitted by Miss F. Marion Greene of the New Church Society in Orange, New Jersey, who is Secretary of the Fryeburg Assembly Ladies' Auxiliary. Editorial apologies are extended both to Mrs. and to Miss Greene.

1970 WORLD ASSEMBLY: ITS IMPORTANCE TO CONVENTION

I thank you cordially for the invitation to write a bit for *The Messenger* in form of a forecast of what might be the impact of the *World Assembly* on our churches in the United States and Canada.

I shall let my imagination roam and predict the following:

1. Through participation in the meetings scheduled in London from July 1-5th, 1970, local representatives of our churches will receive a world-wide outlook on the New Church. Their church will no longer be a small, seemingly insignificant group of people struggling to keep things going. In meeting New Church people from Great Britain, Japan, Korea, South Africa, India, France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, they will experience a great widening of their horizon.

2. I can see friendships developing, nurtured by letter writing (pen pals) which will enrich the lives of those who dedicate themselves to the art of personal correspondence, which once flourished in our Western culture.

3. Hearing different points of view, from different church bodies, will enlarge the understanding of what the New Church represents. Different ways of worship will be presented. In our Wednesday *Sharing Groups* all kinds of methods, policies, practices will be presented which will mutually fertilize our thinking and planning.

4. Participants will bring back to their churches a new and firmer faith that on June 19, 1970, there did occur a spiritual event, similar to the Pentecost experience of the apostles. Again a thrust was initiated by the Lord to "evangelize" multitudes of people in the spiritual world, imbuing them with the conviction that *The Lord God Jesus Christ Reigns*. The celebration and the joys associated with it, can bring new enthusiasm to our churches on this side of the Atlantic.

5. I can see a new interest in studying the Writings, continuing the present world wide *United Search For A True Christian Religion*, initiated by the

Rev. Christopher Hasler in Derby, England, and nurtured by his monthly notes. Perhaps new study groups will be started by the returning representatives.

6. There can be new willingness to co-operate more deeply with the other New Church bodies on a local level, as personal contacts were made in London and new appreciation of each others point of view was gained. Loving respect for each other is so much needed.

And this was my dream when I started to create interest in such an *Assembly*: Let us realize that we are brothers in the Lord, and sisters too, bound together like the Apostolic Christians by love for one another and by faith in the one and only God, Jesus Christ Glorified, reigning.

Othmar Tobisch

From the New-Church Herald

JUST A SUGGESTION

The Rev. Wynford G. Whittaker, editor of the British Conferences, official organization, published a challenging editorial last September, from which the following excerpts are taken.

For the 1970 World Assembly it would be of great importance to publish to the world through the printed page just what is meant by the Lord's Second Advent, how we ought to present this to people who do not know the phraseology of the Writings, and who do not in fact seem to take much notice that the Lord has even made His first coming (these two thoughts are important), and in what manner—and with what purpose and intention—we should offer the teaching that the Lord did, in fact, send His disciples who were with Him in the world throughout the length and breadth of the Spiritual World to preach the Gospel that the Lord Jesus Christ reigns and that His Kingdom shall endure forever.

The publication of merely the relevant passages in the Writings of Swedenborg is not, in my opinion, what is needed in this situation. I recall being told by the editor of a religious magazine who had accepted many articles from me, that I should try to write for a public who not only did not read the Bible but who did not know the Lord their Saviour. So I had to start from almost nothing.

We, too, should have this attitude when we are approaching an unknown public. We want their sympathetic attention, and unless we obtain it we are wasting our time in writing and publishing at all. We need to present the teaching so that they will be attracted to it. It is bad policy, psychologically bad, even to hint that the beliefs of others might be wrong. They feel hurt and almost offended, insulted. I would ask, therefore, as a matter of general interest, how would you write—not at great length—what is involved in my first paragraph?

* * * * *

I wonder how many of our readers will feel able to try the exercise in conveying to others what they have learned. There is really no other way of passing on the truth. People speak to people, live with them, engage in joint activities with them. Relationships are personal. Casual conversations often, nearly always, (if we will let them) turn to things of the spirit. Wherever we are opportunities abound so that opinions can be exchanged. Some of us may feel a degree of confidence to drop a hint or two in a conversation, and surprise ourselves and our acquaintances by the aptness of our comments—and by their acceptability.

But writing it down is a different matter. Yet it will have to be done. How many will show the way for others? I hope many will: and I hope this particular period will be one in which we can all develop an awareness of the absolute distinctiveness of the New-Church teaching about the Second Advent. So many people in other spheres either press it too hard and too literally, or they ignore it because they are afraid. Let us not be classed with either group. Let us not be afraid of what this involves. An effort sincerely devoted to the extension of the Lord's Kingdom will attract immense support in the heavens: and we may find ourselves surprised at the manner in which we are impelled to speak in the Lord's Name. For, rest

assured, a presentation of doctrine cannot effectively be the same on more than one occasion. Have we taken full cognisance of this? To quote a teaching verbatim from the Writings seems hardly good enough as an answer to a sincere question from a sincere searcher for the truth. People normally ask "What do you think?," "How do you react?," "In what way do you see?." One cannot satisfactorily or sincerely answer this type of question by quoting from the Writings, or even from the Word. The answer expected is our own personal expression of our personal appreciation of the teaching as we understand it—and as we believe *at that moment* our questioner is likely to receive it.

Quotations are fine when the questioner asks "What is the teaching of the Divine Word?," "What is the teaching of the Writings?." One quotes. That is the right time for quotation. The questioner is not asking then for our opinion or comprehension. But it is more often the case that conversations develop by the expression of one's personal assessment of a situation, a doctrine, a tenet, a principle of life.

Editor's Note: Mr. Whittaker has offered to publish efforts at expressing the meaning of the Second Coming for today's world in the Herald, and I make the same offer for The Messenger. Both the format of The Messenger and the goal of writing personally and pointedly, will best be served by short pieces, but no specific limitations are laid down. Leaguers are especially urged to make an effort at this, being most aware of the realities and needs of the "today" that is becoming tomorrow. Write what you feel, and what seems most important to you.

LETTERS TO EDITOR cont'd. from p. 202

I have already seen the reference to my work (pp. 119 ff.) and I appreciate the point you are making. In fact, I have been increasingly aware of the need you describe—even though you and I might meet it in different ways. In this regard I am enclosing the last issue of *New Focus*, which I edit for our Foundation, and I also will arrange to have the next issue which is now in its final throes sent to you. If you have read our book, *The Other Side*, you will know that we have one important thing in common with Swedenborg, but this is not all.

Dr. James A. Pike

PEACE ON EARTH

Peace on earth among men with whom he is pleased. (Lu.i:iv RV)

Perhaps it is not too often noticed in the stories of Joseph and his sons Ephraim and Manasseh that when he brought them to their grandfather Jacob for his blessing, the patriarch changed the direction of Joseph's hands, reaching for the younger son instead of Manasseh.

Joseph expectantly guides the older son towards Jacob's right hand for the ritual blessing, directing Ephraim to the left, but although the patriarch's sight was "dim" he unerringly crossed over his arms, laying his right hand on his youngest grandson.

This strange event for those times did not escape Swedenborg's discerning eye. The explanation he gives for it is right up to the minute. Ephraim, it is revealed to us, stands always for the intellectual or "truth" side of religion, mere doctrine, if you wish. This seems to have been blessed within the Church rather than the Manasseh, or works of love among men.

Of course, this is a generalization, and we shall bear in mind the principle that "we are led to good by means of truth," yet truth is but the means to the end—good, goodwill among men.

Perhaps recognition of what really is the meaning of the Joseph-and-his-sons story would have meant a great deal in the striving for peace the past two thousand years. There had to be formulation of creeds, statements of faith, but too often they have degenerated into dogmas, the leaders of the Churches sitting in their ivory towers rather than inculcating love among the poor in spirit.

Before the multitude of the heavenly host sang their wondrous song at the Lord's birth, they praised God and hymned "Glory to God in the highest." Whatever the religious belief of any peoples there is a common recognition among them of a "Highest," some One, somewhere, somehow, who is above us all. Among the names given Him in Scripture is "Prince of Peace." At the same time he is called "Wonderful Counselor." *There* is the

expression of the highest, for it is only by his counsel that there ever can come peace among men of goodwill or any will.

His counsel surely is to "love thy neighbor as thyself." How trite that may sound; how easier said than done, but the Church as an institution must in these days of re-valuation see the neighbor in all things—nearness to the other, as the word literally means, drawing the other nearer as the word may also be construed.

How plain then that whereas the *appearance* is, as our teaching has it, that Ephraim, the least important of the sons, being the younger, has the blessing, the rightful heir and chief is Manasseh the symbol for love.

L. Marshall

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION

The Connecticut Association of the New Jerusalem held its fall meeting at Center Church House in New Haven on Tuesday, October 14. Our two meetings each year are special occasions because they are the only times when Convention members can come together within the State for New Church services. This fall meeting was "extra-special" because the President of Convention and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest O. Martin, came from Massachusetts to be with us. The morning worship and communion services were conducted by the Rev. Martin.

During the luncheon hour we shared the nourishment brought from the members' homes and also our thoughts and concerns on matters pertaining to Convention and on the nationwide "moratorium" scheduled for the next day.

Our theme for the day was "Divine Providence and Free Will." The afternoon session had been advertised in the New Haven *Register* as a free, public lecture by the Rev. Clayton Priestnal on the topic "Why Did It Happen to Me?" Only one couple attended in response to this advertisement. Their need for an answer to this question was so deep and real that the operation of the Lord's Divine Providence was clear.

THE MESSENGER

DECEMBER 1969

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