

THE MESSENGER

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1986



BETWEEN THE LINES

In the September issue, I promised to devote October's editorial to a discussion of spiritual tools taught or suggested by Swedenborg through which we may combat the influences of the Dark Force. Yet, as I began working on the October issue, Stephen Russell-Lacy's essay on Swedenborgian perspectives for bio-ethical issues captured my imagination, so that I forgot my earlier intention and wrote in response to Russell-Lacy instead.

Being the Thanksgiving issue, perhaps this month is the appropriate occasion to write on that which may well comprise our most valuable gifts from God — life-saving spiritual skills.

Swedenborg's conception of the human condition is broad and comprehensive. He worked strenuously to convince people of the inadequacy of a "faith alone" posture, which he considered crippling. At the same time, he saved his strongest admonitions for those who had no place in their minds or lives for God. Eschewing both of these extremes, he taught that spiritual growth occurs through a dynamic holy alliance between ourselves and God. In short, the responsibility for health and forward progress is, for all practical purposes, neither more nor less in one court or the other.

The over-arching tool and the one that enables the development of all other spiritual tools is the discipline of regularity. It is well and good to have peak experiences and to pursue the intense spiritual experience, but nothing can replace the enduring value of planting a bed well and tending to it regularly, if a successful yield is the desired result. Over time, if the tools develop through steady use, we should be able to

effectively cope with those destructive thoughts and feelings that are visited upon us from realms beyond our jurisdiction.

Three specific tools are stressed in the writings: prayer, study and good works. Prayer's efficacy seems to derive from a confluence of factors. It deepens our humility, brings consolation, sets in motion the heartfelt desires of our souls, and strengthens our relational capabilities. Due to its action on so many fronts, Swedenborg comes back to it time and again as the single most potent activity to which we can give ourselves.

Regular study of all those works that present divine principles — the fount being the Word — builds the mind in the same way that regular prayer builds the soul. A mind established in a solid theological framework is much less assailable. Swedenborg believed in feeding the mind with truths through study nearly as often as the body is nourished with food.

Rounding out Swedenborg's wholism is a constant application of religion in good and useful works. If prayer corresponds to the soul and study to the mind, good works represent the outermost aspect of our spiritual being. As such, they reinforce our convictions and solidify our confidence. As long as we live in the physical world, we must endure the tests that are part of its design. Regular spiritual exercise, however, assures us that we are making good sense of this gymnasium called earth.

John Lause

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"What Are 'Rites and Sacraments' Anyway?"

William Ross Woofenden



From the earliest times some sorts of ceremonies or rituals have always been a part of humanity's religious customs. Sometimes in the dim, distant past (and not unknown even today) the line between religious ritual and magic ritual has been blurred.

In our Judeo-Christian tradition, we need only to look at the Bible to see the part that ritual has played in Jewish and Christian practices in the past. Typical of the religion of the Old Testament was the sacrifice of animals and the peculiar rite of circumcision. There were also a number of instances of ceremonial washings. As the New Testament era developed, western Christianity, dominated by the Roman Catholic Church, gradually adopted a set of seven sacraments. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the formulation of these sacraments is believed to have been done by Peter Lombard in the 12th century. From that time on the word "sacrament" was largely limited to references to these practices, although as late as the 14th century the word was applied to certain other rites. Finally — to bring our very brief general historical survey to a close — from the 16th century, Protestants generally have recognized only two sacraments, viz., baptism and the holy supper.

In Catholic tradition, the sacraments came to be called *opera operata* — tasks performed, works wrought — referring to what was believed to be the inherent efficacy of the sacraments. In the somewhat pompous wording of a modern Catholic *Theological Dictionary*, "A sacrament is called this because its validity and efficacy depend on God, not on the subjective disposition of man . . . as such. This does not mean that the grace of the sacrament will in fact have its wholesome effect in the recipient if he frustrates it by unbelief or obstinacy in sin. But this subjective disposition which is necessary to fruitful reception of the sacrament, the genuine readiness to accept God's forgiveness and sanctification, does not cause the efficacy of the sacrament . . . The

same is true of the attitude of the person administering the sacrament, be he saint or sinner . . . Besides which, because of the eschatological conclusiveness of the New Testament, its sacramental rites properly celebrated, unlike the rites of the Old Testament, or indeed of any other religion, can never fail to symbolize God's unconditional offer of salvation in Christ."

I think that is enough historical theology for our purposes, but I do want to suggest that the influence of this theology — both Catholic and Protestant — has been pervasive, and we make a mistake if, for instance, we try to maintain that because Swedenborg was a revelator he was entirely free from this influence.

"Swedenborg is consistently opposed to the 'magical' interpretation. Baptism has in itself no efficacy whatever for salvation — it is merely a symbol of a regeneration yet to come."

Let me give you some examples that may point to his influence: in *True Christian Religion* 716 we read, "In the holy supper the Lord is wholly present with the whole of his redemption." And in ¶718, "The Lord is present and opens heaven to those who approach the holy supper worthily; and he is also present with those who approach it unworthily, but does not open heaven to them." In *Arcana Coelestia* 3670, ". . . the priestly office itself is holy, whatever be the quality of him who ministers therein; and this is the reason why the Word taught by an evil man is equally holy, and also the sacrament of baptism and the holy supper."

Swedenborg was well aware of the Catholic tradition of *seven* sacraments — for instance, in the introduction to *Apocalypse*

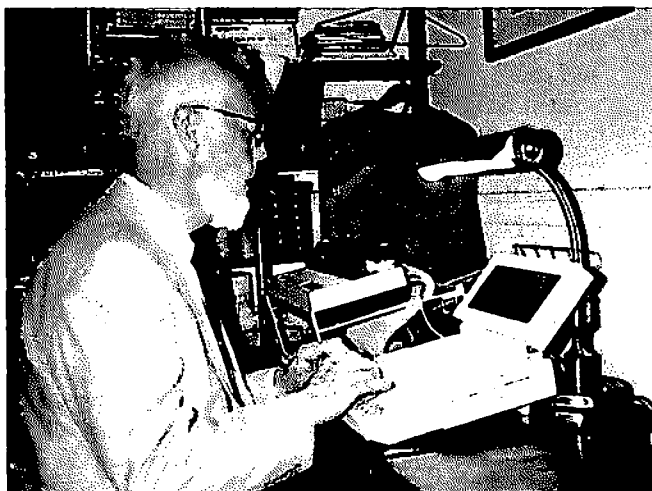
Revealed he quotes from the Council of Trent document (among other things) the section "On the Seven Sacraments." But that he did not seriously consider that there were actually seven ceremonies or rituals that deserved the title "sacrament" he frequently made clear. To give but one example, *TCR* 669 begins, "The two sacraments, baptism and the holy supper, are in the Christian church like two gems in the scepter of a king."

I find it difficult to pin down Swedenborg's attitudes as to what these two sacraments effect. Marguerite Block (*The New Church in the New World*, p. 48) says, "In his treatment of the sacraments Swedenborg is consistently opposed to the 'magical' interpretation. Baptism has in itself no efficacy whatever for salvation — it is merely a symbol of a regeneration yet to come. The two sacraments, Baptism and the Holy Supper, are 'like two gates to eternal life.'" And she footnotes *The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrines* 202-3 to verify this statement. I would agree that in general the "magical" properties of the sacraments are denied in writings, but I do have a lot of trouble with one statement in *TCR* 678. The paragraph begins by saying that "in the spiritual world, not only infants but all others are introduced among Christians by baptism." (In our baptism service we pick this up by saying that one result of baptism is "the establishment of a Christian spiritual environment from heaven.") Now — here's my problem — ¶678 concludes, "For without the Christian sign of baptism, some Mohammedan or idolatrous spirit might enter into relation with Christian infants and children and infuse into them an inclination to his religion. This would distract their minds and alienate them from Christianity, and thus distort and destroy spiritual order." Wow! What, for instance, does this mean for the child of nominal Christians to whom it never would occur to have their child baptized?

While I'm at it I might as well mention one other statement of Swedenborg's about baptism that puzzles me, to say the least. In a letter to Dr. Beyer dated February 1767 — in which he addresses a number of questions that had been posed to him — he writes, "John's baptism prepared the heavens so that the Jewish people could continue [or, might subsist], when God himself came among them." I'm sure he had in mind such passages as the closing words of the *Old Testament* in Malachi 4, the promise to send Elijah before the day of the Lord's coming "lest I come and smite the land with a curse." (*Revised Standard Version* footnotes, or "ban of utter destruction.") In the Gospel, Jesus identifies John Baptist as the "Elijah" who

was promised. All of which is fine, but does little to relieve my apprehension that we are dealing here with magic. (By the way, I put the assigning of two guardian angels to a child at baptism in the same category.)

But let us go on to other things. From what has been said, one might infer that for Catholics, Protestants, and Swedenborgians alike, the "proper ritual" is the thing. Just so long as the sacraments are administered in the right way, have no fear! — they will do their job. And I want to make it clear that I



Professor Woofenden in his seminary office working on his Apple IIC.

do not indict the clergy only in this matter: as any minister knows, any time he or she attempts to "tamper" with the familiar liturgy or ritual, heaven help that person! "You are destroying the sacredness of our worship!" I'll never forget the time a lady said to me after a morning service, "Well the choir sure ruined any chance for me to worship today!" It took a bit of probing to discover that her problem was that they had sung the words of a familiar hymn to a tune that was *unfamiliar* to her. I didn't have the courage to admit that *I* had chosen the tune!

Liturgical innovators may well have Swedenborg on their side. Let me read a short passage from the opening chapter of *TCR* and then talk about it a bit. The immediate topic is "order" in the universe. And after noting that "every empire, kingdom, dukedom, republic, state, or private family is founded on laws of order," he writes: "In every one of these, laws of justice hold the first place, political laws the second, and economic laws the third. If these legal systems are compared with a person, the laws of justice form the head, the political laws the body, and the economic laws the dress; and therefore these economic laws can be changed like garments." Then he carries the analogy over to the church and

observes, "The laws of this order are the truths contained in the Word. The laws relating to God form the head of the church, those relating to the neighbor form the body, and the ceremonial laws form the dress."

Although Swedenborg does not press the analogy to its logical conclusion, contenting himself with calling attention to the *protective* role of clothing, I should like to press it further. He merely writes, "For if the former were not arrayed in an orderly ritual, it would be as if the body were stripped naked and exposed to the heat of summer and the cold of winter; or as if the walls and roof were removed from a temple, to expose in full daylight the shrine, the altar, the pulpit to all manner of sacrilege."

What he does *not* pursue, of course, is that if the analogy is fully valid, one might properly infer that rituals — rites, sacraments, liturgies — can, and I'm tempted to say, *should* be changed, with some regularity, like garments. (But, fellow ministers, if you act on this, you'd better be ready to quote TCR 55 when your parishioners call you on the carpet!")

Let us notice some historical factors in regard to liturgical practices. It is a matter of record that in the early days of the General Convention, the concepts of "closed communion" and "rebaptism" were generally accepted and practiced. In 1837, for instance, the Convention accepted a report on the Holy Supper which recommended its celebration in a "private room." And, by rules adopted in 1838, baptism into the New Church was made obligatory. Previously, all one had to do was sign the articles of faith to be recognized as a member of the church.

The former of these was resolved by 1849 when new rules of order were adopted, rules which among other things repudiated the principle of closed communion. But the rebaptism controversy raged on, most enthusiastically (and in strong opposition to the practice) under the direction of the Rev. Benjamin F. Barrett, a former Unitarian minister who came into the New Church in 1840. I'm not sure when the Convention gave up this practice of insisting that one have *New Church* baptism, but it was not too long ago. Some other Swedenborgian groups still insist on this practice today.

Next I'd like to call attention to some changes in Convention in the past in regard to the rites and sacraments. In the oldest Book of Worship for the General Convention that I have been able to put my hands on, one published in Boston in 1846, a single Order of Worship occupies the first 23 pages, followed by orders for Baptism, the Holy Supper, Marriage, and a Funeral serv-

ice. (Note: 2 sacraments, 2 rites.) Then there is a statement of Articles of Faith, identified as being copied from the Liturgy of the New Church General Conference, England. The rest of the book is occupied with selections from Scripture for chanting.

Eight years later a revised edition appeared with a considerably expanded Order of Worship section — 44 pages in all, with a number of optional sections. Next is the section on rites and sacraments, and we find a number of interesting changes. In addition to the two sacraments and two rites found in the earlier book, we now find a service of Confirmation (openly stated as serving the special need of those baptized as infants to acknowledge publicly their faith), an additional Funeral service for infants and children, a rite of Ordination, one of Installation [of a pastor], one of Consecration [into the second degree of the ministry, that of pastor], one of Dedication [of a house of worship], one of Institution of Societies one of the Admission of Members into Societies, and finally an order of service for Family Worship.

I don't think we've ever been more liturgical than that! In the 1870s, orders for the rites and sacraments were dropped from the slim volume for the use of the clergy. Even here the orders for the rites of Ordination, Dedication, and the Institution of Societies were omitted, explaining that "these rites are of rare occurrence, and are performed only by ordaining ministers." When the 1912 edition appeared, however, all these ritual forms were back in the single book. The 1950 book, most familiar to most of us, included the two sacraments and six rites: Confirmation of Faith, Marriage, Burial, Ordination, Installation, and Investiture; the last a rite for investing and consecrating a general pastor or ordaining minister. Finally, the 1982 looseleaf edition — at least, in its initial form, includes only the two sacraments and three rites: Confirmation, Marriage, and Resurrection.

What does all this mean? I really don't know! But I hope this brief review may shed some light on the significance of our historical and present-day use of rites and sacraments. □

This article was originally presented as a lecture at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly, a family camp in western Maine operated by the Swedenborgian Church. The Rev. Dr. William Woofenden is professor of philosophy, theology and homiletics at the Swedenborg School of Religion in Newton, Mass. He is currently on sabbatical from teaching and hard at work compiling a comprehensive international research index for Swedenborgian studies.

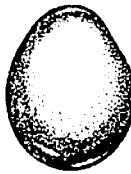
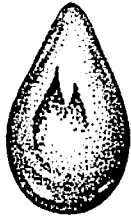
Trial by Fire

Eric Allison

Do you really believe in miracles? Do you believe that your own body can do extraordinary things if your spirit is in a certain condition, mind over matter and all that? Nearly everyone in the church would say yes. But there is a big difference between believing something in our heads and actually acting upon something we say that we believe.

I learned, firsthand, by a dramatic example of this on August 31, 1986. I spent the weekend with friends at Grand Bend, on Lake Huron. I attended, just for fun, a firewalking seminar. The leader was from — where else? — California. I was not inspired by the disclosure that this was his first time leading a firewalk and that he had allegedly done it three times himself. However, I went along with everything that the three-hour seminar offered. I danced around and held my fists clenched, shouting, "YES, I can do it!" I went through the meditation and listened to the post-hypnotic suggestions. But everytime I held my clenched fist in the air and said, "Yes!" inside I was saying, "There is no way I'm walking over that bed of hot coals, NO WAY." When he told us to take off our shoes and run down to the beach, I went along with the eight other people and stood by the fiery bed of glowing embers, so hot that they singed the hair on my arms. When he said, "Say yes," I shouted, "Yes." but until I saw him walk across the fiery pit I did not really believe.

Oh sure, I thought it was possible and that some people somewhere must be able to do it, but tonight would just be a night when there would be a lot of people with burned

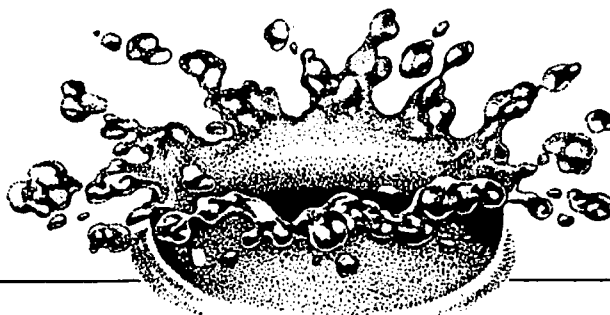


feet. The leader made it to the end of the coals and his feet were not burned. Three first-timers also made the journey safely. Suddenly I was standing there believing that I too could be a firewalker! Following the leader's instructions, I looked at a star ahead of me and repeated aloud, "Cool moss, cool moss, cool moss," and when instructed to go, I too walked out onto the coals and went the ten feet or so to the other end, where I joined my fellow firewalkers in celebration. It was truly an amazing experience that not only bonded everyone together, but also gave everyone a sense of personal power and confidence that is difficult to explain.

I'm not saying that such a thing as firewalking is really a miracle; I don't know what it is. But I know it is one thing to say that we believe something and quite another to believe strongly enough to put that belief into action. While part of me is very proud and wants to shout, "I did it!", there is another part that says, "It's no big deal, anyone can walk over hot coals without being burned." Probably both are true. The kernel of wisdom I gleaned from this experience is that no matter what our talents, we are all very ordinary people who can do extraordinary things if we believe in ourselves. Firewalking is just a glimmer of our spiritual potential and not even a dim reflection of what we could do for God if we really believe that He can work miracles through us.



Rev. Eric Allison also submits himself to trial by fire as an ordained Swedenborgian minister working in Kitchener, Ontario.



Volunteering: A New Lifestyle

Elizabeth Johnson

The end of our years of employment at the time of retirement offers many prospects and creates a variety of feelings in us. Good riddance to daily alarm clocks; the crush of traffic; the pressures and stresses of competition, bosses, time clocks, drudgery; but also the end of achievement, challenge, usefulness and status. So it is with hopes and misgivings that we enter the new life of leisure which retirement brings. Most of us have planned for a special occasion — a long postponed trip, time for our favorite activity, visits to friends and relatives, catching up on many things set aside until now. The new freedom provides opportunities for exciting and satisfying pursuits extending over some time period.

- Human concern
- Writing experience
- Growing things
- Caring for children
- Working with handicapped
- Teaching skills
- Photography skills
- Political interests
- Library skills
- Cooking skills
- Organizing abilities
- Playing a musical instrument
- Knowledge of legal matters
- Knowledge of athletics
- Bookkeeping skills
- Typing skills
- Selling ideas
- Language skills
- Caring for older people
- Speaking skills
- Artistic abilities
- Carpentry
- Nursing training
- Entertainment skills
- Craft talents
- Others

We want something in which we can be deeply involved, which challenges us and provides a satisfaction and reward beyond monetary gain.

Our spirits and bodies need the revitalization afforded by the significant event which retirement is; we need the opportunity to shift gears, to assimilate the changes and adjust to a new life style.

After a period of time, however, we may once more feel the need to become involved with the community. The need for achievement, to feel we can continue to be useful to society in some way, rouses us to action. It is now not employment we desire, but some area of need where our skills and talents can be used to make a difference. We want something in which we can be deeply involved, which challenges us and provides a satisfaction and reward beyond monetary gain.

But what is out there? Where can we get information? We are now on the threshold of the world of the volunteer. The need is great, the areas of service diversified, the number of possibilities bewildering.

First, some helpful steps we can take as a preliminary action. Make an inventory of your skills and interests. From the following list check the resources you have acquired which you do well and find particularly satisfying:

Next, look over the following list of possibilities for services. Do any of these strike a responsive chord?

- Helping children with reading problems
- Working with disadvantaged children
- Providing transportation to older people for shopping and doctor visits
- Sewing for hospital patients
- Conducting parties at shut-in centers
- Repairing library books
- Reading books to sightless or ill
- Assisting at local opera guild or museum
- Sponsoring Girl or Boy Scout troop
- Staffing local bloodmobile
- Working with Red Cross or United Way
- Assisting in building and repairing neighborhood playgrounds
- Helping in nursing homes
- Volunteering in public library

It will be easy to locate the organization where these activities could be needed. Look

in the telephone directory yellow pages — Social Services Organizations. A call of inquiry will probably bring a warm welcoming response. The federal government has several programs designed for volunteers. These are within ACTION, an agency consisting of:

(1) VISTA

(Volunteers in Service to America)

VISTA volunteers work and live among America's poor. They serve in urban ghettos, small towns, rural poverty areas, on Indian reservations, institutions for the mentally handicapped. They are skilled in health, education, law, business; also fine arts, humanities and various trades. They commit themselves to a year of full time service following a training program of preparation.

(2) Peace Corps

This is a similar program, but volunteers go to a foreign country for a two-year service at the request of that government.

The following are offered to persons over 60 years of age:

(3) Foster Grandparent Program

The goal here is to involve older people in a service to children with exceptional needs. Grandparents work four hours a day, five days a week on a very personal level with children who are retarded, emotionally or physically handicapped, culturally deprived — the unwanted and forgotten young who desperately need human relationships.

(4) RSVP

(Retired Senior Volunteer Program)

These volunteers work in the community. They serve in schools, libraries, correctional institutions, hospitals, nursing homes, non-profit community organizations. Their services are diversified — tutoring, typing, driving, visiting, telephone assistance, mechanical repairs, the possibilities are broad.

(5) Senior Companions

This group provides older companions to elderly shut-ins or invalids, someone who visits, reads aloud, writes letters, takes the person for a walk or drive. Companions can be a life sustaining human contact to lonely old people.

(6) Score

(Service Corps of Retired Executives)

These people help small businesses with operating problems, assist the owner to plan new ventures, provide guidance and counseling in some phase of management, marketing, sales finance, production, employee relations.

For more information about any of these

programs write

Action

Washington, D.C.

20525

Your local newspaper may have a weekly column devoted to Volunteering. The Bellevue, Wash. paper recently listed fifteen organizations requesting the services of volunteers.

Political action is an area where retired people can get involved on many different levels. AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) has local chapters in most cities, and offers a variety of possibilities.

Your own local church and Convention would be very responsive to an inquiry into service openings.

Perhaps this has triggered a response in those people wondering about all the "empty" hours in retirement. Swedenborgians know that putting our talents to use for the enrichment of others is a part of the life-long process of regeneration and brings rewards to us beyond our expectations. Retirement with its new vistas of released time offers us exciting opportunities and new fields of use.



Elizabeth Johnson, living in retirement in Bellevue, Washington, is a specialist in staying involved in local and larger community activities, and speaks from experience.

Encouragement

*The rosy pink glow of morn-rise
Welcomes us to a new day,
When hopes, ambitions and heart's desire
Are called forth again, in full sway
To triumphantly lead us to glory
In the joy of accomplishment true, —
For the happiness of all those about us
Is the spur to success, for me, and for you.*

*In making others happy,
We become happy too;
The happiness derived from service
Is the only kind that's true, —
So let us serve — and let us plod,
For service is Love, and Love is God*

*Bessie Althin Toombs
Cambridge Society
(March 1932)*

Tithes in the Storehouse

Leon C. Le Van

Can the storehouse of the soul be filled with painful and hurting experiences and still serve as basis of a blessed and happy future?

During this Thanksgiving season, as we read the story of Joseph in Egypt, we are impressed with the abundance of grain that he gathered into the storehouses of the ancient Nile cities during the "seven plentiful years." There was so much that finally all attempts to keep a record of the amount were abandoned. The quantities seemed endless. When we see that this filling of the storehouses is a scriptural way of showing that our minds should be filled with the truths of the Word, we may be discouraged by what seems like the small amounts of spiritual storage in our own lives. What we may not see, however is that even very small quantities of the truths of the Word will have very great effects in our spiritual future. If we cannot store much, we can store at least a little; and the Lord will make that little exceedingly great in his own time and in his own way.

Since there is so much pain and suffering in the world, let us ask at once: Can the storehouses of the soul be filled with painful and hurting experiences and still serve as bases of a blessed and happy future? Indeed they can. For it is not the experience itself, but the quality of spiritual labor going into the experience that is gathered into the "storehouse" and becomes part of our lasting heritage. Painful experiences are in no wise indication of evils in our hearts.

We need the shadows of life as well as the sunlight. We need suffering as well as joy. Joseph himself (who represents the Lord) had a life of singular trials and sufferings. He was hated by his ten older brothers. He was thrown into a pit to die. He was sold into slavery in the land of Egypt. He was falsely accused and falsely thrown into prison in the dungeon of Pharaoh. Joseph needed every one of those painful experiences for the fulfillment of his life. Had he not been hated by his brothers, he would not have been sold into slavery. Had he not been sold into slavery, he would not have gone down into Egypt to fill the storehouses for the neighbor nations. No, a life of grief and misfortune does not in the least fail to fill the spiritual storehouse with exceedingly good grain.

Joseph suffered unjustly as Jesus suffered unjustly. But Joseph filled the store-

houses that gave the ancient world life. If you have (or have had) experiences of trial and suffering, you needed them all. Sorrow or suffering may be the most fruitful ground in which spiritual harvests grow. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse" — tithes of sorrow; tithes of sickness; tithes of disappointment; tithes of failure; tithes of suffering; tithes of self-sacrifice, self-surrender, self-immolation. Bring all the tithes, not only tithes of victory, prosperity, and gladness.

The years of childhood are particularly suited for filling the storehouses of the soul with heavenly "grain." In childhood the doors of the mind are not locked, and the abundant "grain" of Divine truth from the Word of God is readily received and stored. In later years many adults shut and lock the doors of the soul against all religious ideas, and unless the "storehouse" has been at least partially filled in childhood it cannot be filled at all.

Thanksgiving Day is a day of giving thanks for blessings received during the preceding year. In the main, we give thanks for material blessing, and this is not wrong. But we should give thanks for our spiritual blessings, also. We thank God for the gift of himself — for his Word, for his church, for the hymns of our faith. We thank him for life, for health, for the joys of service to one another. We thank him for our homes, our marriages, our families, our employments. We thank him for the institutions of a free land, — free press, free radio and television, freedom to think and believe according to our consciences.

Finally, we thank God for our good country, for faith in its purposes and ideals. We thank God for churches, for schools, for hospitals, for community and public services of many kinds. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse." The Lord is the giver of every good and perfect gift. He gives the storehouse and he gives the store. But he also gives to each of us to think and feel and act "as of ourselves." And thus he gives to people the final say whether their spiritual storehouses shall be empty or full.

As we turn to the Lord again with thanksgiving this year, let us pray that we may so use the blessings of his bounty that goodness and truth may increase among us, and that the "storehouses of our spirits" may be filled with heavenly "grain." □

The Rev. Leon C. LeVan writes this column from his "retirement" in St. Petersburg, Florida.

If You Think Things Are Tight Today

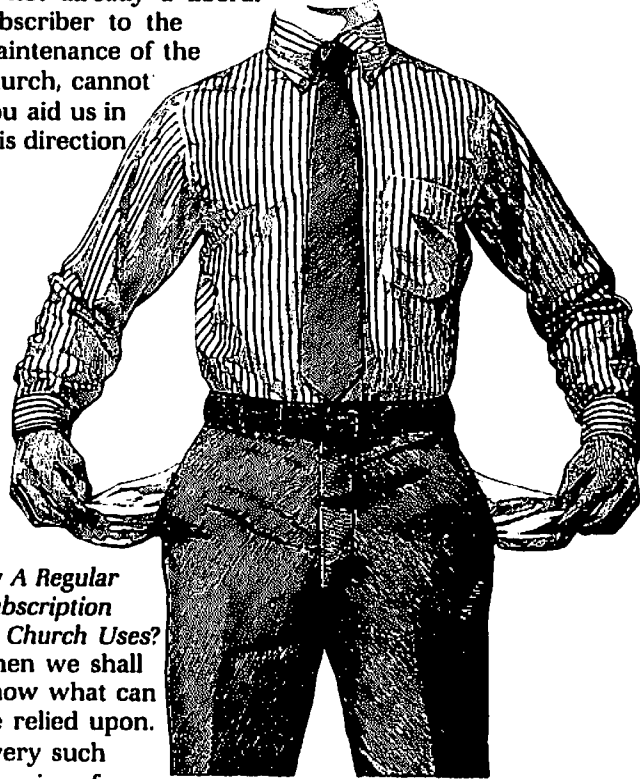
Mary Ebel of the Washington Society came across this document from yesteryear in the archives at the National Church. (Nothing like a history lesson to provide perspective.)

With the opening of church services for the winter, the Finance Committee of the Washington Society of the New Church feel obliged to call the attention of members of the church and congregation to the sore need of funds to carry on the work of the church. The income of the church does not meet its necessities. We worship in a house which requires a certain amount of expenditure, however careful we may be in our outlays; but, be as painstaking as they will, those having in charge the financial affairs of our society cannot contrive to keep outgo within the limits of income. The church is economically managed, as economically, we firmly believe, if not more so, than other religious structures of like size in the city. Our people have given quite liberally of their means to the support of New Church worship, but it is very essential that they give more, or live to see the cause they have at heart suffer among us. To our pastor we are constantly growing more and more in debt. He has not yet received his pay for the month of March, 1899, and we are 20 months in debt to him, eight months at \$125, and twelve at \$100, making a total indebtedness of \$2,200, with a prospect of its becoming greater, if our income does not increase. Besides this, we are paying interest on \$500 borrowed to pay the pastor on one occasion, making \$2,700 altogether owing on account of pastor's salary.

This condition of things is all wrong, and very derogatory to the New Church here. To solemnly agree to pay our pastor a fixed sum per month, and then let him get it as best he can, to lag behind in our plighted payments to him until we are \$2,200 in debt to him, is not doing unto one among us as we would be done by. Did our Government act thus, its credit would be shattered, its reputation gone. Is it less reprehensible for a church society to fail to meet its just obligation than it is for a corporation or an individual? In acting thus, are we living the New Church before men?

We should undertake no more than we

can accomplish; preach no more than we can practice. We have got to devise some means of paying up this indebtedness or stand face to face with the hateful word *repudiation*. What we need to get out of the slough we are in, is regular, systematic contributing — something that we can reckon on with certainty from year's commencement to year's end, and not spasmodic largess, which may fill our coffers one moment and the next leave them empty. It rests upon each one of us individually to take this matter to heart and see what we can do to help the church in its difficulty. We want this winter to reduce the debt to our pastor. If not already a liberal subscriber to the maintenance of the church, cannot you aid us in this direction



by A Regular
Subscription
to Church Uses?
Then we shall
know what can
be relied upon.
Every such
promise of

help will be most welcome, and should be made to our Treasurer, Mr. J. Henry Smith, 1619 17th Street N.W., and for the purpose of a card, for your convenience, is herewith enclosed.

Confident that this appeal, which has become very necessary, will meet with a liberal response,

J. Henry Smith
Ralph P. Barnard
Elizabeth B. Edson
C.F. Keefer
H.M. Schooley

Finance Committee
November, 1900





ECLECTICA

The Stone House Expands Program

The Stone House Book Room, sponsored by the Swedenborgian Church in the greater Seattle area, is rapidly becoming a prominent spiritual growth center for that city's region. Offering a full line of Swedenborg's books and Swedenborgian literature, the well-known Stone House in the suburb of Redmond has all manner of activities throughout the week. A popular ongoing film series, known simply as "Friday Night Video," features spiritually oriented films exploring various spiritual traditions. A random sample of titles will convey the general flavor: "Life After Death," "In Search of Historical Jesus," "Three Paths: Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism."

In addition, the Stone House features ongoing classes and discussion groups ranging from the Swedenborg Forum to Yoga

and The Course in Miracles. A wide variety of spiritual growth and health literature complements the offerings of the Swedenborgian Church. If you are in the area, drop in for a visit: 16244 Cleveland Street, Redmond, Washington.

Wayfarers Chapel: Catch the Vision

A number of projects are spurring great expectations at the Wayfarers Chapel — the Swedenborgian glass church perched on a cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean in Palos Verdes, California. Later next summer, the Chapel will be the site of two days of filming of a Steven Spielberg production called "Inner Space." It is no wonder that the striking church is increasingly famous and in demand: besides the stunning chapel itself, the staff at Wayfarers continues to beautify the surrounding grounds, so that there is now much, much more to enjoy than Lloyd Wright's original chapel.

The Delight Memorial Garden is now completed, featuring an exquisite bonsai tree. Located in front of the Chapel on a promontory overlooking Portuguese Point, this garden was given in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Delight by their children.

Another beautification project well under way is the installation of 130 light fixtures, specially designed by Eric Wright (grandson of Frank Lloyd Wright), to line Chapel paths. Each fixture is to be sponsored by a couple who has been married at the Chapel. To date, 90 light fixtures have been donated.

Ugandan Artist's "Nativity" On Christmas Card

Ugandan artist Lwanyaga Musoke's modern depiction of the Nativity, painted on the traditional medium of barkcloth, is featured on the 1986 Christmas card being sold by the National Council of Churches. A specially designed Christmas card is an annual offering by the Council. Proceeds from the sale of the cards help to support the



Council's program in literature, adult basic education and communication resources for people in the Third World.

"Nativity" portrays a setting suggesting not only the shepherds who welcomed Jesus, but also youthful African cattle herders typical for much of that continent. Lwanyaga Musoke developed his artistic style based on the use of indigenous materials, using, for instance, barkcloth and banana fiber.

The 1986 Christmas Card is boxed in sets of 20 cards and 21 envelopes. Card size is 4-3/4" X 6-1/4". A box costs \$8.00 plus postage and handling. Add \$1.30 for one box, \$2.60 for two boxes, \$3.10 for three, and ten percent for four or more boxes.

Eugene Taylor at the Cambridge Church

William James scholar, Harvard Medical School adjunct faculty and sometimes Swedenborgian lecturer Eugene Taylor has been speaking often at the Cambridge Chapel this fall. Celebrating the 350th birthday of Harvard University, the Cambridge Swedenborgian Church sponsored a sermon by Eugene Taylor on September 7, entitled, "Education and Spiritual Growth." During the month of October Mr. Taylor gave a series of lectures in the church on Swedenborg's religious psychology and Swedenborgian influences in our culture.

"Passing from Death to Life" Pamphlet

San Francisco's Church of the New Jerusalem (Swedenborgian) has just brought out a new pamphlet presenting the Swedenborgian perspective regarding the transition at death into the spiritual world. Written by the late Rev. Othmar Tobisch with an introduction by Rev. Edwin G. Capon, the pamphlet liberally presents quotes from the writings of Swedenborg and breaks the subject into five sections: "Physical Death," "The First State One of Reception," "The Second State After Death," "The Third State One of Instruction," and "Introduction into Heavenly Society."

They sell for 25 cents apiece, and the church is offering copies to other Swedenborgian churches at a 10 percent discount. For a sample copy, write to: The Swedenborgian Church, 2107 Lyon Street, San Francisco, CA 94115.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee will be operating under the new constitution passed by the members of Convention last June. The following offices are open for nomination: Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer of Convention. In order to reduce the number of members, there will be no nominations for General Council this June.

The following Support Units will need 3 nominations each:

Financial and Physical Resources

Education

Communication

Growth and Outreach

Pastoral Ministry

Information Management

(See April '86 *Messenger* for further details)

The Committee on Admission to the Ministry:

2 nominations

1 Minister

1 Lay Person

The Swedenborg School of Religion

3 nominations

The Nominating Committee

2 nominations

(though only 1 may be elected)

If anyone wishes to serve on any of the above please send your name and a short description of education and experience in the category selected to:

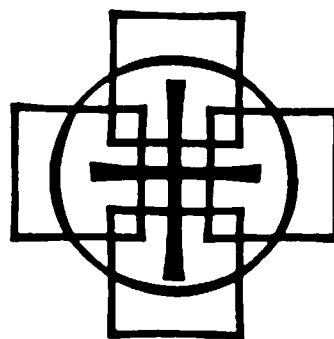
Mrs. Corinne Tafel

Chairperson of the Nominating Committee

200 Chestnut Ave.

Narberth, PA 19072

The Nominating Committee will give careful consideration to all persons suggested.





SUPERVISORY TRAINING WORKSHOP

**March 27-29, 1987
Location To Be Determined**

A Supervisory training workshop will be held the last weekend of March in 1987. The purpose will be to train a network of people to help Convention members bring their new ideas for the church into reality in Convention's new structure. These people will be trained to lead others from the excitement of the dream state to the presentation of a proposal to the appropriate support unit. The workshop will be led by the Rev. Donna Keane, the Rev. Gardiner Perry, and Dr. Perry Martin.

A small number of applicants will be selected from each region of the United States and Canada. For this segment of the training, transportation and room and board expenses will be paid. A second segment is expected to be held during Convention at Seattle, July 1-5, 1987, probably during mini-course times.

Please return your application before **December 15, 1986**, so that final selection of applicants can be made promptly. Mail your application to:

Dr. Perry S. Martin, 1326 Sherwood Drive, West Chester, PA 19380.

.....

I wish to apply for the Supervisory Training Workshop to be held March 27 - 29, 1987. I understand that final selection of applicants from each region will be made after the application deadline of December 15, 1986.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Day _____ Evening _____

What professional experience could you bring to the process of helping another move their dream into a workable plan?

What personal qualifications could you offer to this process?

What are your goals for the church?

If selected, do you expect to attend Convention in Seattle, July 1-5, 1987? Yes _____ No _____

OPINION

Charity in Action

Dear Editor,

After reading the last paragraph in your editorial in the July/August issue, I feel moved to write. The Christian churches, including our denomination, must assume the task of helping those who cannot read and write English. It would be a service to God and country. Can there be a unity among neighbors who speak different languages? Think of India and Ceylon today, not to mention countless other examples.

There is something more important to the mastery of language, though, than merely getting along on the natural level. Unless I could read and write, I could not have reached the level of spiritual understanding that I have. If you and I couldn't read the Word and Swedenborg's writings — just think about it! Doesn't love of the neighbor demand that we help them acquire the tools by which they may understand the Lord and leave the results in his hands?

George Kessler
Maywood, N.J.

Swedenborg A Founding Father

Dear Editor,

The inquiry by George Kessler of Maywood, N.J. in the July/August *Messenger* relative to Swedenborg and the Founding Fathers interested me. I do believe the founding fathers of our nation lived by the same principles as Swedenborg, insofar as they

sought the Lord's will for their lives.

Some time ago I came across a passage in an article by Willis Harmon, of SRI International concerning George Washington, one of the founding fathers. He says, in part: "It's clear that the Founding Fathers practiced this kind of individual and collective decision-guidance by listening to the intuitive mind. They believed — and knew from experience — that if a group of minds joins in the common purpose of asking a 'higher' mind for guidance and assistance, by their very affirmation they tend to bring that guidance and help into existence. According to this country's founders, that superior guidance makes for the highest form of leadership."

The founding fathers were trying to put together a plan whereby the new country could exist and flourish, but they had great difficulty in getting together on how to go about it. Everyone had a different idea. Finally, one of them stood up and proposed prayer for guidance in their dilemma. It was through this asking for guidance that the founding fathers were given the plan of the division of powers that has been so important in our system of government ever since.

I don't know whether or not Swedenborg taught this way of seeking inner guidance from the Lord. I do know that he taught much about the nature of the afterlife, which has always been comforting to me and my original family to know about.

Ruth Seekamp Ference
Burlingame, Calif.

COMMENCEMENTS

Baptisms

Connors — Ashley Michelle Connors, daughter of John and Elaine Connors, was baptized into the Christian faith on September 7, 1986 at the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, Alberta, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

Reid — Korey John Reid, son of Scott and Terry Reid, was baptized into the Christian faith on February 9, 1986 at the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, Alberta, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

Schellenberg — Jesse Alexander Schellenberg, son of Ron and Zina Schellenberg, was baptized into the Christian faith on February 2, 1986 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the

Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

Deaths

La Foy — Mary Victoria (Klassen) La Foy, 76, lifelong member of the Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world on August 2, 1986 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Memorial services were held on September 2, 1986, the Rev. David L. Sonmor officiating.

Richard — Edward James Richard, 77, of the Riverside, California, Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world on September 3, 1986. Memorial services were held in the Riverside Church on September 7, 1986, the Rev. Ivan Franklin officiating.

The Church of the New Jerusalem
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