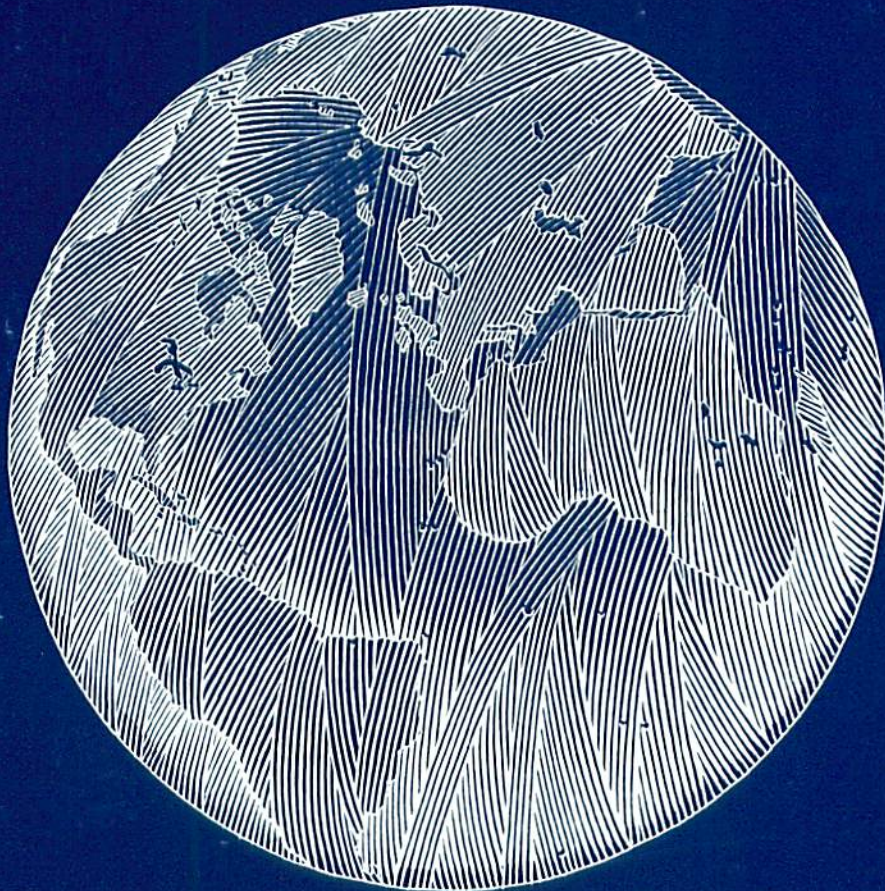


# THE MESSENGER

*Official Publication of the  
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**OCTOBER  
1986**



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*Going Forward With Confidence*



## FROM THE EDITOR

In the August issue of *Lifeline*, the monthly magazine for the General Conference of Swedenborgian Churches, based in England, a thoughtful essay examines some of the current bio-ethical issues in light of Swedenborg's writings. In his "Test-Tube Babies and Genetic Engineering from a New Church Perspective," layperson Stephen Russell-Lacy explores our increasing ability to direct the affairs of life and death in ways that were previously assumed to be in God's province. Claiming no omniscience in these matters, Mr. Russell-Lacy simply wishes to engage in a dialog concerning our growing powers. Does the Swedenborgian Church have clear guidance from the revelations that began our movement, long before these questions arose? He suggests it does, provided one has ears to hear and a willingness to read the writings sensitively.

As a main guidepost, Mr. Russell-Lacy seeks to determine when human life begins. This, indeed, has long proven to be a primary criterion for navigating bio-ethical issues, especially abortion. Does Swedenborg comment on the point-in-time beginning of the human life? He doesn't directly, though one can certainly draw inferences from other topics and arrive at probable conclusions as to what Swedenborg would say if he were asked.

Mr. Russell-Lacy makes a major distinction between potential and actual human life. This is crucial to his position, for even if the line becomes a bit blurry, the practical must eventually inform the ideal.

Even though the writings assert with the greatest possible clarity that we are bodies with souls, Mr. Russell-Lacy cannot accept, for two reasons, the contention that human life begins at conception. The first is theological: Swedenborg

teaches that our immortality derives from our freedom and rationality. Since it seems clear that these two aspects cannot be present in the womb, he appears to side with the prevailing Judaic notion that human life truly begins at birth. The second reason is biological: since two-thirds of the "conceived" eggs are miscarried about a week after fertilization, Mr. Russell-Lacy finds it difficult to fathom a God who would supervise a system whereby the large majority of created souls never receive the opportunity to live in the world — the necessary training ground for solid soul-development.

Just as intriguing as when the soul actually comes into existence the matter of what it was before then? In the larger New Age circles, the possibility of our soul's pre-existence is much-discussed and is felt to have definite ramifications for how we are to perceive our spiritual journey. To my knowledge, Swedenborg never comments directly on whether we have had an existence before we enter the world. Many spiritual philosophies contain elaborated theories concerning the gradual development of a person's soul. The teachings of our faith seem to take for granted that somehow a human consciousness is implanted in the body — whether at conception, during gestation or at birth is not discussed.

Yet, this fascinating question calls for exploration, as human knowledge presses into hitherto divine domains. How do the writings speak to your understanding of these modern issues? I'd love to hear from you and share them with the larger church.

*James F. Fox*

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# Going Forward With Confidence

*An interview with George Dole*

James Lawrence



Last May, at a meeting for Swedenborg Foundation editors and readers at the Blairhaven Retreat Center near Boston, the following interview was conducted. The Rev. Dr. George F. Dole is a leading scholar as well as a popularizer of Swedenborgian thought. In recent years a veritable outpouring of creative and scholarly projects have issued from this teacher, translator, author, film writer, workshop facilitator, singer, scholar, former track star and current horseshoe tossing sensation.

Taken together, his various efforts comprise much of the leading edge in Swedenborgian thought. As is amply evinced in the interview, Dr. Dole's vision of the spiritual quest is at once modern and historical, lofty and concrete. In his work as a translator of Swedenborg's writings, as a seminary teacher, and as a communicator to general audiences, he demonstrates a talent for identifying underlying dynamics, comprehensive principles and an inclusive approach. Among his many achievements, one of the lesser ones involved the theological clarification of the present interviewer, who studied under Dr. Dole's watchful eye for three years at the Swedenborg School of Religion in Newton, Massachusetts.

**I'm wondering what projects you're involved in; I think that might be a good place to start. I'm aware of (your) recent projects with the Swedenborg Foundation: *A View From Within* (a book), and *The Other Side of Life* (a film), *DLW (Divine Love and Wisdom)*, a translation) and *Images of Knowing* (a film), and I'm wondering, where is all this leading you now?**

Well, *The Other Side of Life*, (a film presenting Swedenborg's concepts on life after death) is by no means done. There are still ideas surfacing as to how the script may change. I think what's there is likely to stand, but they're talking, for example, about an introduction, a lead-in by Lillian Gish, and they're talking about various ways that it might be slightly restructured, keeping the same content. So, there's still work to do.

***Images of Knowing* is 15 minutes.  
Is *Other Side of Life* going to be . . .**

It is scheduled for a half hour. And that's part of the motivation or the impetus for restructuring. The kind of idiom that's used in *Images* Harvey Bellin and Tom Kieffer (the filmmakers) feel would be difficult to sustain beyond 15 minutes. It's very introspective and intense. This has to be a little more narrative, a little more relief, and yet you don't want to break out of the idiom so completely that you feel like you have two things going. So the film is set in a cemetery, and breaks away from that setting for the introspective images, and comes back to the interment ceremony in the cemetery. The cemetery is a framework to hang the commentary on.

**I'm wondering about the concept. What are your thoughts on the interest level in society for that topic. It's been almost exactly a decade since near-death research broke ground, and (Elizabeth) Kubler-Ross and (Raymond) Moody were publishing just about this time last decade. Have you any opinions whether that area is still an alive interest for people, or has it been saturated?**

My general reading is that the initial wave of sensationalism has subsided. There's a lot of integration, digestion, reflection going on. I'm pretty sure there is a considerable audience for contributions to ways of understanding it. Certainly there's still research going on, there's still material being published.

**Beyond *The Other Side of Life*, what else do you have on the boards or in your mind?**

In various stages, there is a paraphrase or retranslation of Swedenborg's *Last Judgment* that the Foundation has basically approved for publication.

**Of all of Swedenborg's theological writings, that's one of the least read. Was this a diamond-in-the-rough, you thought?**

In a lot of ways, yes. I've written a little introduction for it, saying there were two reasons for choosing it. One is the resurgence of biblical literalism and the growth of the more fundamentalist churches. And *LJ* speaks very directly to that. The reasons for all these millennial expectations and what Swedenborg describes as the basically idiotic attitudes about what happens after you die, the basis of all that is biblical literalism. It won't wash; it leads into some very strange views about where we are in the meanwhile. And the other is the nuclear anxiety, the fact which really has no analog in my experience:

a whole generation growing up actually expecting the end of the world. So it seems fitting in that regard. There's a lot of good stuff, some very nice stuff.

**I confess that I haven't looked at it in a long time. Be good to see what that's about.**

One of my favorite passages is from paragraph 12, which I can't quote verbatim, but the basic image-idea is that there's not going to be an end to the world, because heaven is perfected by more and more people reaching it. Everyone who arrives becomes a kind of welcome intermediary between others and therefore strengthens the overall fabric. The idea of something becoming more united as more people arrive is a very nice one.



**I think we have made tremendous progress entirely.**

**There isn't any time I have looked as an historian at any past century, when I don't say, "Gee, I'm glad I'm not in that one."**



**I wonder if that's due to the sheer numerical quantity of souls that would need to be won over by the negative side?**

I don't think so, I think it's a much more qualitative idea. If you're lucky enough to be in a profession that suits you, part of what you do is really meaningful and central. And part of what you do is necessary, but you wish somebody else had to do that. And to have someone arrive whose center is somewhere in your periphery strengthens both of you, because you do gladly the things that other person realizes are necessary, but would rather not do, and the other does the same for you.

**The interesting thing about that, in terms of the nuclear concern, is that it isn't a mass of people that most of us are afraid would blow the world up; it needs to be just one person. One person could be out of balance or out of their mind and do the rest of us in.**

Yeah, though I suspect — I more than suspect — deep down inside I very strongly believe that that wouldn't scare anybody unless they realized in some subliminal fashion, at least, that they themselves could be the ones. That's what makes it believable.

Another project that I'm working on (I have no idea when it will come to fruition; I have a manuscript in second draft and would dearly like to get it commercially published) is a book under the tentative title of *The Beginner's Guide to Peace*, with a subtitle, "Ethical Implications of the Holographic Model." And one of the things that the manuscript does is say, "Let's face it, the mushroom cloud is the first image we've had of the ultimate quality of our own wish that inconvenient people shouldn't be there." We understand that awfully well, because we feel that way; that's what scares us.

**One of things that sustains me in this topic is what appears to be an ongoing ability for people of the earth to have the collective ingenuity to return from all kinds of mistakes. I'm wondering if that might play into what**



**you are talking about. Even though at the emotional level, gut level, it feels like things are getting more out of hand, it's only getting more complex. In evolutionary theory, the more complex the system is, generally the more resilient and capable it is of sustaining itself in that environment. Does that make sense?**

You're back to the *Last Judgment*, paragraph 12, incidentally — complexity being

actually more unified than the simplicity, potentially. Partly because of our doctrinal attitude, partly because I've done fairly intensive work in ancient history, I have basically an optimistic outlook. I think we have made tremendous progress entirely. There isn't any time I have looked as an historian at any past century, when I don't say, "Gee, I'm glad I'm not in that one." You look at the Victorian era and can "romance" it as an era of moral integrity and so on, and forget that it was the era of child labor, the era when they took little children and used them as brushes for their chimney sweeping.

**And these were civilized countries!**

Yeah, these were civilized countries. This was going on underneath the veneer, so to speak, and there's much less of a veneer today, which is scary, but surely we wouldn't want to turn the clock back.

**That sort of plays into another area I wanted to touch on. Swedenborg wrote in another century and seemed to be concerned much of the time with addressing burning questions of his day. How do you perceive that the questions of his day have remained or receded or been resolved, and in what ways do you perceive essential ideas of his enduring across the historical periods since then?**

I think we're a long way from being able to answer that very effectively, because as a church, and particularly as at least two churches, Convention and the General Church, we are not squarely engaged in the effort to sort out what the cultural level, the time-bomb level of Swedenborg's theology, in fact, is. There is an understandable reluctance to do what can be construed as minimizing the Lord's role in the revelatory process. Or attributing too much to Swedenborg "The Man" — and that reads in quotes. And I think that's a mistaken fear. In every revelation, with one little exception in Judeo-Christian tradition, revelation involves an interception of divine and human, and has a very distinct human component . . . The one instance of unmediated revelation that (the Bible) records, as far as I'm aware, is the first set of ten commandments. God cut out the tablets, God wrote the words, and all Moses had to do was carry them down the mountain; he almost made it, not quite. The second time, God said, "Okay, this time you cut out the tablets." And that one made it! But there was a little human contribution. You go all the way from that to the introduction to the Gospel of Luke, where Luke starts off by saying there are an awful lot of stories circulating around about Jesus' life and since I understand everything perfectly, from the

very beginning, I thought it was a good idea if I wrote things down and set the record straight. And at least, in terms of conscious process, the difference between the ten commandments and the Gospel of Luke is just vast, and we accept both as part of sacred scripture, of revelation. Once I realized that the fact of revelation *doesn't depend on the amount of human contribution*, it struck me that we are much better off simply to try to discover where that line in fact is, than to draw it in a particular place because of our preconceptions of where it ought to be. But our preconceptions have gotten in the way.

### **How do we identify our preconceptions?**

Rebirth! By looking as candidly as we can at the facts over and over again, by engaging in dialog. It's process. Most of what I was saying, incidentally, about biblical revelation I've published, it's in the article "Nature and Use of Revelation" that was in *Studia Swedenborgiana* a while back (Vol. 2, No. 4, June 1977).

**In terms of discovering those areas of Swedenborg's writings that are highly attractive to people of today, particularly new audiences, you've had some recent experiences in engaging new audiences that are somewhat uninitiated in Swedenborg, but have keen interest in spirituality. I'm thinking of the Transpersonal Psychological Association, and Interface, that type of setting. What areas are coming together out of your concept of Swedenborgian thought that are making connection with modern thinking?**

I wrote this one little paragraph in the introduction to *A View From Within* that says where I am on that at the present. You can look at the theological corpus as bringing together two strains that are very difficult to reconcile: a very universalistic view and a quite particular, explicitly and insistently Christian view. I was struck by looking at the indexes of scripture references in some of the Standard edition volumes (of Swedenborg). In the *Doctrine of the Lord* there is page after page of scripture references. If you look at *DLW* (Divine Love and Wisdom), which is about four times as long as *Doctrine of the Lord*, the index of scripture reference is, I think, less than a page. *DLW* is almost a non-Christian book. There are about two references to specifically Christian themes and very few references to scripture. And as I have experienced the "New Age" movement and transpersonal psychology movement, that universal dimension appeals very strongly. There are a lot of reservations

about the passages that have been favorites of the Church because they support the idea of a very distinct institution. So there is a problem there in terms of (these movements) as a "missionary field." But it's a problem partly with the nature of the church as an institution, because there's a lot of selectivity involved when you deliberately or unconsciously pick out as highly significant a strand of Swedenborg that supports the centrality of institution. If you look at the passages that were chosen by Hindmarsh and others in the call to the first meeting at the Great East Cheap, you'll find a tremendous number from *True Christian Religion*, some from *Brief Exposition*, which I will return to, but nothing in *Divine Love and Wisdom*, not a word. There is so little in that book that you could use to say, "Look, we really need a separate institution." I was just

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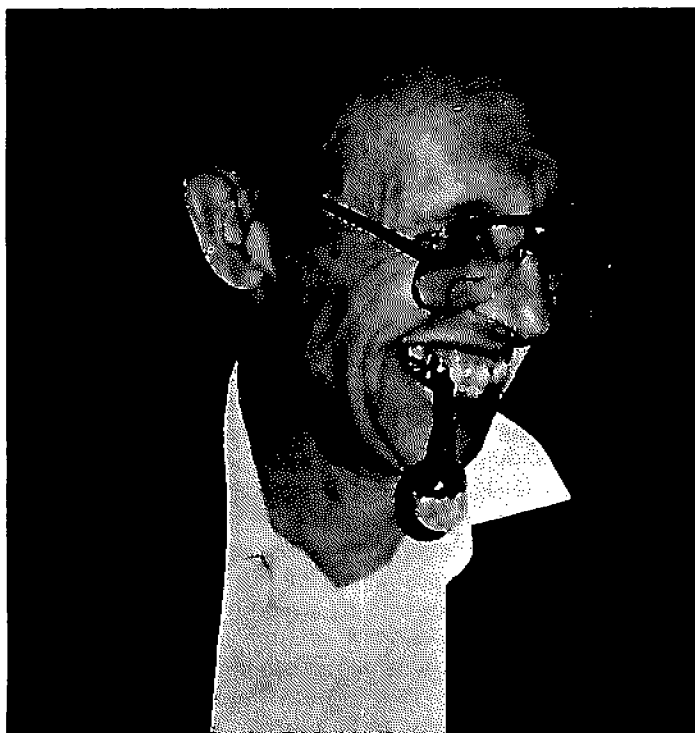
looking at *Brief Exposition* the other day. I haven't for years. Fascinating thing. Think for a moment how many times people have said, "I wish there was a place where Swedenborg himself really put it all together in brief compass, simply." And here's this thing called a *Brief Exposition of the Doctrine of the New Church*! Why doesn't anybody use that? Well, there's a reason. *Brief Exposition* starts off about the creeds of the other churches, and then it says, "So, here's what I'm going to do and it's going to be in three sections." Two sections explain the doctrines and a third section deals with how they disagree with the doctrines currently held by Protestantism and Catholicism. Then he gives an outline of section one, an outline of section two, and then section three on the disagreements. And that paragraph ends, and here are the disagreements. And then he goes on; the rest of the book is polemic. It is an outline of a bunch of theological topics and *Brief Exposition* itself never deals with

them, period. There is no "brief exposition" of the doctrines of the church in the book!

**Altogether too brief.**

Yeah.

**I want to come back to a topic we've been coming at from another angle and which seems to be very germane to many of us in the church: what to pursue in Swedenborgian thought as the "new age" continues to unfold, as I assume that we're both assuming that it is. One would think that as the time span extends, the original literature heralding that very new age would be increasingly superseded. I guess I'm coming again at the winnowing of the wheat from the chaff, in a way. I know it's almost daring to suggest there's any chaff at all,**



**but I'm wondering if you're experiencing any pressure from within yourself to incorporate other explicit elements of the new age culture that is around us? Or is that too challenging, because we would all identify different aspects of that culture to include it all as the new age?**

I guess the first thing I would say is that the suggested alternative to the wheat-and-chaff is to go back to the universal-particular

image. Let's say right now, for an example, I hear in your question things like a love for the church, a love for the church's teachings, a desire that the organization prosper, anxiety about where the boundaries will be and so on. In order to do anything about those anxieties, you narrowed those big concerns down to some very particular words; it's very time-bound, very much involved in this particular circumstance. There's no other way. I would see Swedenborg as doing that in his time, and, in a sense, in doing it in his time, saying, "Yes, and you have to do it in your time." It's the doctrine, if you will, of ultimatum: it's got to come down to the here and the now. Into some specific form. And you don't pretend that you've found the way of asking this question that everybody should use from now on to eternity.

You recognize that, in a sense, part of the power of Swedenborg's work itself is that he didn't just stay up on cloud nine talking eternal verities. He came down to the specifics in his own day. There are two ways of regarding that, one good way and one bad way. The good way is in saying, "For heaven's sake, get hold of these fundamental ideas and apply them in your own circumstances, as I've been doing here." The bad way being, "Apply them, particularize them the same way I did." To me, the human level of Swedenborg is by no means chaff and by no means binding. If you will, an example of the kind of application that is needed. To pursue that just a little longer: you're an editor. Imagine someone 200 years hence picking up something you have written and criticizing it by its relevance to issues that you don't even know exist. Now, if that person can look back and see you in context, they can say, "By God, he really contributed something very significant. If I'd been back then, I would have done the same thing." Then he understands what it is you're doing.

**That does a good job of showing the inappropriateness of chaff as the metaphor for that which no longer necessarily addresses current issues.**

Which doesn't address them externally. But illustrates a very valid way to address them.

**Right. I have genuine issues in my work in that in St. Louis we have a lot of inquirers who come around, frequently people from the holistic or the new age way of looking at things. I would say, nearly without exception, the overwhelming impression they get when they read Swedenborg, is that they are struck with what I was formerly putting in the chaff category. Things that do not have the**



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universal ring at all.

One book is *Divine Providence*. We just had a twelve week adult class in which some newcomers came, and everybody was reading *Divine Providence*. The newcomers all found *Divine Providence* as a rather polemical and condemnatory book. The tone felt like it was out of their post-reformation era. I think one woman put it at 80/20 — sure 20% of it addressed current questions in spirituality, but 80% really turned her off.

That's an intriguing question. What I was saying earlier about *DLW* being almost non-Christian, *Divine Providence* really starts (with those universals) but I can't think of a better example of Swedenborg taking universals and then trying to say it isn't just all theory, it comes right down here. But "the here" it came down to is explaining things in the Bible and the history of the Christian church. This approach is relevant primarily to people who are already involved in the Bible or the Christian church. To me, *Divine Providence* is probably as good a book as any to give to a fundamentalist.

In a public lecture a young woman asked me what sort of people are currently interested in Swedenborg — outside the church. The one group that popped to mind out of my own experience was (the group represented by) myself. I was an orthodox Christian, studying for the ministry in a mainline church. (Swedenborg took) all the orthodox notions and put them in a framework that was far more universal and commonsensible. It was great for me, and I do see that he can play that role with others. You need to be very in touch with the traditional Christian church and its history to be able to relate to most of Swedenborg. If you're into near-death studies, *Heaven and Hell* itself will be an interesting book, but not really too much of the rest of it, except maybe in the memorable relations; or if you're really interested in doing a study on relationships and you want a theological angle, *Conjugal Love* is a wonderful single volume to address (this particular) concern.

There's a 20% in (*Conjugal Love*) that will worry the modern reader, in terms of the radical distinction between male and female, which could be read in sexist terms. . . Swedenborg's fascination with detail has always been a stumbling block in one way or another. Emerson loved the theory of cor-

respondences, but felt that the (assignment) of specific meanings to specific things was pedantry.

I just read a wonderful thing by Margaret Fuller, contemporary of Emerson, reviewing Swedenborg, in which she says, "I kept wanting to find the mysteries of correspondences, but it kept coming back to the good and the true. Couldn't get away from good and truth!"

I'm still exploring in my own mind the significance of Swedenborg's preoccupation with detail, especially in biblical matters. He rests a good deal of weight on the statement that the Word is the Word because it has a continuous spiritual sense from beginning to end, that it is all one story and all connected. And he, at least, never gives an overview. The closest thing is the opening chapter in the *Arcana*, which is a marvelously simple, straightforward thing. But it doesn't relate these seven days of creation to the overall biblical story. And yet he himself will say we must start with generals and then move from generals to particulars and then under the particulars come to the singulars. So he doesn't follow his own advice in treating scripture! He gets very much involved in detail. One of the projects I am working on (*The Pilgrimage*) is a manuscript on the whole story, beginning to end. There is a draft that I'm using as a textbook at the school. Partly out of dialog with students and partly out of continued reflection and work on the topic, I'm hoping to revise that eventually.

We used it (in the St. Louis Swedenborgian Church) for several weeks and there are a lot of good things about it. There are a lot of challenging things in terms of using it well in a group like that, because it's rather condensed.

Oh, it is. See, that's the dilemma. The dilemma is how to make it brief enough so that you have a sense of an overview, so that you don't get lost in detail. The only way probably is to go through the story, the publication, maybe three times. The one student who pursued it farthest, in a way, was Ken Turley, who got quite fascinated by the Saul-David transition, in particular. He started what I think is a very promising way of coming at scripture interpretation. That is first doing a formal outline of the literal story, so that you have on paper major categories, your big Roman numerals. And then you

have your capital, you go IA, capital A and then your little Arabic, and then your lower case, so that, then, if this is done well, you can do your outline of the spiritual sense by just hitting the big Romans; then you can go to the subcategories under that.

**Fill it out.**

It can't be done mechanistically, but with disciplined intuition.

**What is absolutely basic to Swedenborg is the Word. I don't think you can even start talking about Swedenborg without it.**

*Except Divine Love and Wisdom!*

**That's true. The universals again.**

Yeah, the universals. I'm more and more convinced that what Swedenborg was trying to do was to present the particulars in the context of the universals. Let's face it, that's the only sane thing to do. And what the church has done is put the universals in the context of the specific. We talk about how important the Word is, but actually, the Lord is everywhere present, and therefore everywhere visible, if we had eyes to see. The Word is an example of a universal, so to speak, and the Lord had something to do with the writing of the Koran and the Gita. Revelation is a *concept* in that sense. The notion that is special about the incarnation is not how different it is from everything God always does, but how totally characteristic it is of what he's doing now. Of what kind of revelation of divine nature is it, to do something that is absolutely uncharacteristic? Dumb way to let people know what you're like! The Word is not special, then, because it's so *different* from everything else, because it's so *characteristic*.

**That seems to lend little comfort to those who, in this changing and modernizing world, find the Bible increasingly hard to fathom and increasingly different from their experience of life. I'm finding that there are lots of folks who are intrigued by the thesis of the spiritual meaning in scripture, yet find Bible-reading and (Bible) studies so other-worldly to them that they are really not in a place to begin the kind of sustained study needed. Do you think that the Word is becoming less appropriate as a vehicle, and there are other ways of getting at the same universals? Or will there be a renaissance in Bible interest?**

I guess I think there will be such a renaissance. I certainly hope so. The first step necessary for resurgence of interest in the Bible is simply recognizing it's a story. It's

not a set of theological propositions; it's not analytic; it's not abstract thought. It's a story. If you pick up, say Charles Dickens, you do not regard everything every character says as truth. Is it realistic? What are the characteristics, what is the dynamic? How do things interact? Where does it go, what do people do that works, and what do they do that's disastrous? What do I like in these characters, what do I dislike in these characters? The author is not presenting characters, saying, "You must approve of all of these because they're in my book." He's saying, "Look at how these people behave. There's meaning in that behaviour." Much of the meaning you can't see unless you see it in terms of process. The story of Amnon and Taymar (I Samuel 14) is the sort of thing you find in tabloids. Talk about the Bible being out-of-date or not relevant to the modern world! Some of that comes straight out of yellow journalism. It looks very lifelike.

**Vivid. But in a world where we are moving away from the printed word to other modes of communication and gathering information, do you see a way in which we might start experiencing the story and stories of the Bible?**

I think there are live possibilities.

**I see a good project there for the Foundation with *The Pilgrimage*.**

I've done one script, which was never picked up on. Presumably a 15 minute film, with images of creation. It would be the first Swedenborgian film to have full frontal nudity in it!

**That could help its salability.**

One little thing I would like to sneak in: I am encouraged about our church for two reasons. One is the resurgence of intellectual vitality in it. I have probably used this line on you before, but in my younger years, in retrospect, it seems as though we weren't the church of the second coming; we were the church of the second edition. We were reprinting things, and so on, and very little creative was going on. That's changed, and that I find very encouraging. The other is the basic erosion, if you will, of the polarization within Convention. It was very characteristic in earlier years of the ministry. Who in his right mind would have joined an organization that was so divided against itself? Very unattractive. Those two factors I find very encouraging in terms of possibilities of growth. I don't know when, obviously, but I think we have a lot more to offer, and we can offer it with a lot more confidence than 20 or 25 years ago. □

# The Philadelphia Story

*Ernest O. Martin*

**T**he General Convention announces the purchase of a 52-acre renewal center site in Marshallton, Pennsylvania, thirty miles west of Philadelphia, and five miles west of the city of West Chester. The property is known as Old Mill Farm and is nestled in a small valley with Broad Run stream meandering through acres of meadows and woodlands. The fieldstone farmhouse was probably built about 1730 when Thomas and Hannah Arnold constructed a cloth-making mill on the stream.

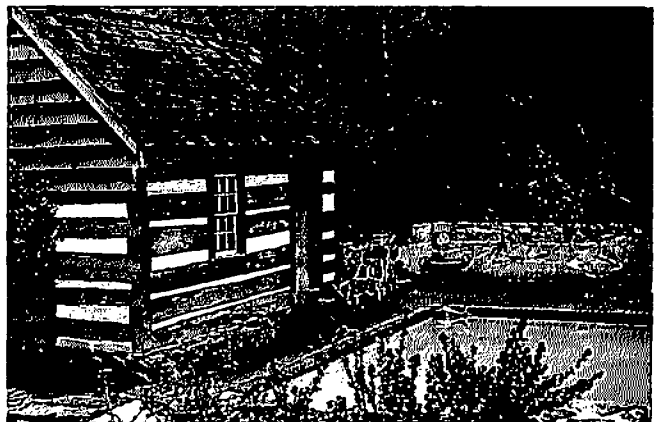
Completely renovated in the 1970s, the farm house retains all its original features, including immense old floor boards, beamed ceilings, original doors and hardware, string latches, cash drawers under some of its windows, and four fireplaces. The original section of the house contains a huge walk-in fireplace with a fieldstone hearth and a beehive oven cantilevered out at one side of the house. The kitchen, all new, was constructed from an original shed on the property, and has a cathedral ceiling, brick floor, skylights, Rutt cabinetry, and cherry wood countertops. Down the hall from the kitchen is a large room with windows on three sides, ideally suited for a worship center and meeting area. An open stairway leads to the master bedroom suite. There are three other bedrooms on the second floor at the other end of the house. In addition there are a dining room and living room, both with fireplace.

Close by the farm house is a three-story stone house, built about 1840, and known as Temple House. After renovation it can be used for offices, meeting space, and overnight accommodations for retreatants.

Between the houses are beautifully landscaped walks and a formal fieldstone-walled garden. The herb and perennial beds, along with 22 mature fruit trees, are breathtaking in the spring. There are three levels of brick terraces, with a new swimming pool tucked into the top level. Adjoining the pool is an authentic log cabin, which serves as the pool house. Further up a hill is a two-car carriage shed/garage with a heated workroom and a



**Kitchen in the Old Mill Farm House.**



**Pool and gardens add charm and refreshment to the amenities of Wayfarers Welcome.**

skylit stone and cedar blacksmith shop.

In February, 1986, the General Council approved the recommendations of a feasibility study committee and voted to appropriate money for the purchase of a renewal center property in the Philadelphia area. At the convention session in Boone, North Carolina, in July, it was reported that an offer had been made for a 32-acre site in Marshallton. In August, the owner of the property offered to sell the entire 52-acre tract, and the officers of Convention, making up the Executive Committee of the General Council, approved the purchase.

Legal counsel, architectural and engineering services have been engaged to arrange for the purchase, gain township approval for church uses, and develop a plan for the establishment of a renewal center. The officers of Convention have named Rev. Ernest O. Martin as director of the center and are setting up a Board of Managers to establish policies and give overall direction to the center.

Eric Wright, grandson of Frank Lloyd Wright, has offered to design a renewal center building. Other new buildings will include renewal center housing and staff housing. Ernest and Perry Martin plan to build a house on the property for their own residence. This house will also be available for church uses, including meetings, worship, socials, and overnight housing.

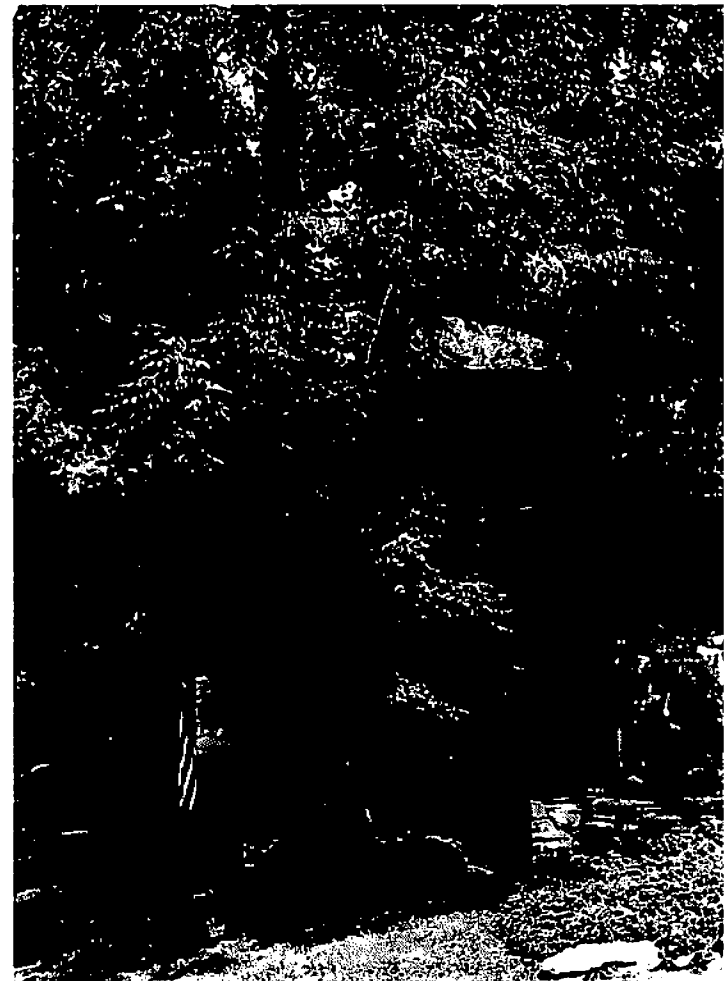
At the same time that Convention is consummating the purchase of the renewal center property, the Philadelphia Church is making final plans for the sale of its church property at 22nd and Chestnut Streets in downtown Philadelphia. This site has been the home of the Philadelphia Church for over 100 years. When the members learned that renovations and repairs would cost over one million dollars, they realized that sale and relocation was the only reasonable course to take. Because of their long-time attachment to the building, members were reluctant to sell to a developer who would tear the buildings down and erect an apartment building or office complex. Instead they granted a six-months option to the



**Broad Run stream winds its way through the spacious fields of Wayfarers Welcome.**



**Terrace and pool offer inviting setting.**







**Living Room in  
the Old Mill  
Farm House.**



**Old Mill Farm  
House and  
surrounding  
grounds.**

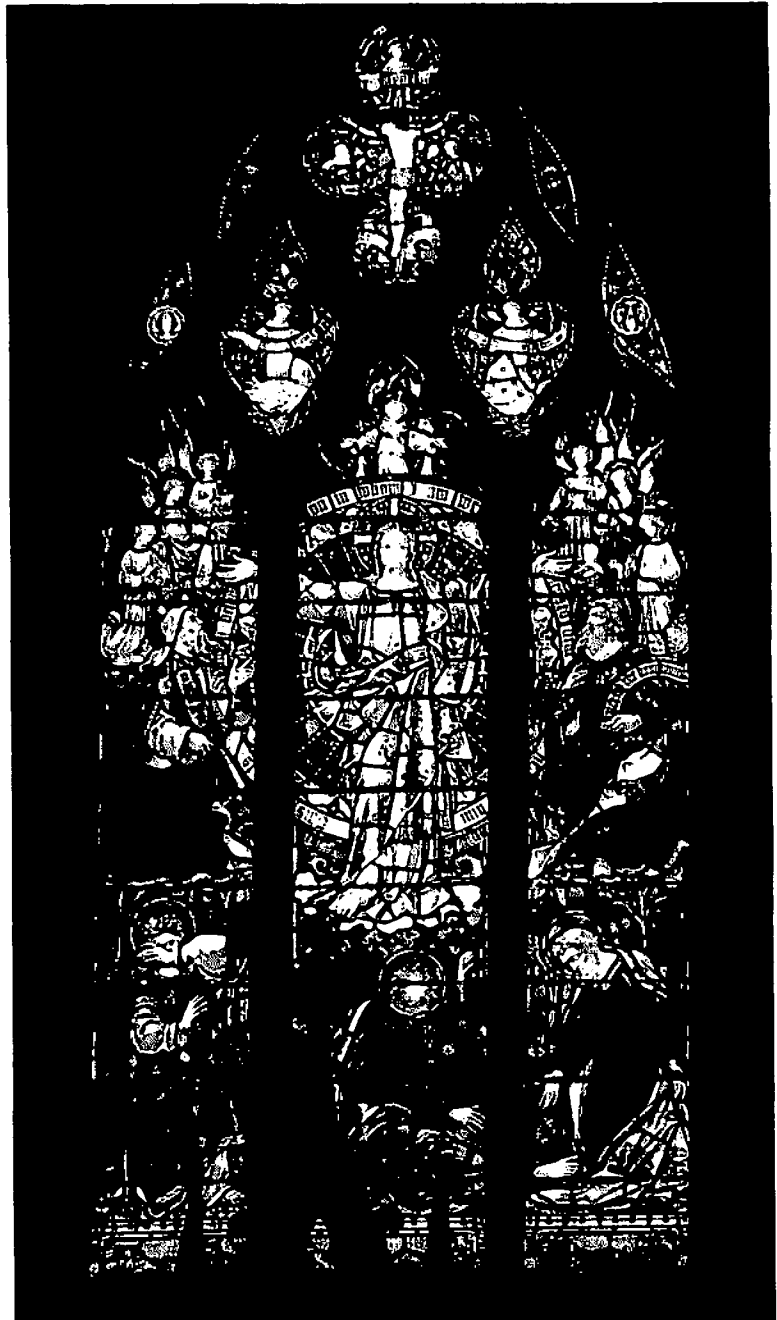
Preservation Fund of Pennsylvania, authorizing them to sell to a party who would agree to preserve the buildings, making no exterior changes.

In July officers of the church signed a sales agreement with the Edward S. Brown Group for a sum of \$850,000. The Brown organization is planning a three million dollar conversion of the sanctuary into three levels of offices, with a glass wall that would overlook the chancel and its valued Gothic ceiling.

The altar, the cherrywood pulpit, and many of the stained glass windows will remain as part of the office development, according to company officials. At a news conference, Edward S. Brown, head of the development firm, said that the chancel would be a public place which could be used for chamber music concerts or small worship services by the Swedenborgians or other religious denominations. He also said that the small garden courtyard, with its towering oak tree and shrubbery, would be retained and opened to the public. Brown said that the renovations would take about a year to complete and would begin as soon as his company finds a lead tenant.

At its annual meeting in January, the Philadelphia Church voted that upon an acceptable sale of its property, it would be disposed to move and maintain its 'home of worship' to a growth center, if the General Convention agrees to support the establishment of such a center in a convenient location in the Philadelphia area. The Society also voted to consider an appropriate financial commitment for that purpose.

The Rev. Ernest O. Martin, who has been serving as minister of the Philadelphia Church for the last two years, has been granted a three-year contract to guide the congregation in their transition. Members who have visited Old Mill Farm are enthusiastic about the possibility of establishing a new church home there. Others are excited about the prospect of setting up a bookroom in downtown Philadelphia, possibly even adjoining the chancel area of the present church building. Members want to maintain a Philadelphia presence while at the same time participating in the life of the renewal center in Marshallton. □

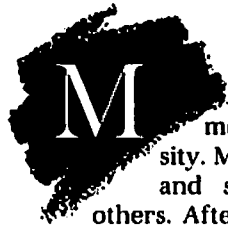


**Stained Glass in the Philadelphia Swedenborgian Church.**



## Swedenborgians at Urbana University

Dorothea Harvey



Many Swedenborgians have memories of Urbana University. My experience here is current and so may be meaningful to others. After teaching for four years at Wellesley College, six at Milwaukee-Downer College, and four at Lawrence University, I have spent eighteen years teaching at Urbana. What impresses me about the students here is their diversity. Carolyn Blackmer's phrase was a "scoopful of humanity." Students with some of the best minds I have ever taught have been here. With them have been students of all degrees of ability, a few learning that college work was not for them, but the great majority finding potential for reflection and examination of ideas and values that they did not know was there before. The University has held to its commitment to work with any student who showed college potential, and it has succeeded.

The academic program here is good. In small classes students cannot avoid recognition for what they do, or for what they might do with a little pushing. Graduates going on to other universities find themselves well prepared to compete and to know why they want to be there at all. Ed Bohlander completing his doctorate in sociology, Betsy Ledingham going on to finish an M.S.W. at Ohio State, Barbara Scholz finding that she could use her Hebrew in Jerusalem, can speak to the kind of education they encountered here. Urbana accepts students with special needs, including a number in correctional institutions, and sees that as part of a mission and a use. Urbana accepts many excellent students who simply do not want the regimentation of a large university. But Urbana is concerned with all students as individuals, as human beings, to bring out the best intellectual, as well as human, potential we can.

### Four Profiles

*Urbana University, founded in 1850 by members of the Swedenborgian Church, has a continuing affiliation with the General Convention of the Swedenborgian Church. Through such an affiliation, the University is proud to*

*have three Swedenborgian students on campus. The three are Karen Duffey, Elaine Sonmor, and Natasha S. Andrews.*

### Meet Karen Duffey

Karen Duffey was not Swedenborgian by birth. She was born into a Jewish household, but felt somehow there was something missing in her life. In 1981, she experienced such "tremendous spiritual growth" at a SNAP (Swedenborg New Age Pioneers) retreat that she decided to join the Swedenborgian Church. On August 29, 1982, she was confirmed into the Church at Fryeburg, Maine by the Reverend Gardiner Perry. From then on, she was active in several aspects of the Church; she participated at Convention, visited the School of Religion, and even worked at the Convention office. In 1983, she felt a call to go into the Swedenborgian Ministry. She went back to school and received her General Education Diploma. She next took the SAT College Level Exam, passed, and was accepted at Urbana University. Urbana University was chosen for the main reason that it is affiliated with the Swedenborgian Church.

Being here for three years now, she claims that she likes what she sees. She believes that some students who would not have made it anywhere else are making it here mainly because they have been treated individually by the professors and advisors. They have been encouraged and have been made to feel important. If students have a deficiency in a discipline, such as in mathematics, they are encouraged and helped with a remedial course until they are brought up to a college level. She mentions this in the light of her own experience, about which she proudly claims that she received an A in Math. This would have been impossible without the remedial course. She believes, too, that by encouraging the natural gifts inherent within each person, the school is doing its job of promoting personal growth. There is good feeling in this University, a feeling that a person can become successful, according to his or her abilities. She believes the quality of teaching at Urbana University is just as good as at any

other University. She has learned more in her three years here than she has learned during any other period of her life.

This learning also comes from having a basic philosophy, "Do unto others as you'd have them do unto you." As to what she would like to do, she plans to go to the Swedenborg School of Religion to study for the ministry. She hopes later to be able to help troubled teenagers in a counseling ministry, with sports as one main focus. Possessing a sunny disposition and optimistic attitude towards life as she does, she will probably achieve her goal.

### **Meet Elaine Sonmor**

Another Swedenborgian student on campus is Elaine Sonmor. Unlike Karen Duffey, Elaine was born into a Swedenborgian household. She comes from Saskatoon, in the province of Saskatchewan, Canada. Her father, David L. Sonmor, is a Swedenborgian minister. It was through her father, who attended a Swedenborgian Convention, that she got the information about Urbana University.

Her reasons for coming are not only to pursue a degree in Social Services but also because she wants a new experience. The University's philosophy, which is based on Swedenborg's thought, fits well with her conception of being an open-minded individual. The small size of the University is different in comparison to the University she had attended prior to coming here. Compared to Regina University, where the atmosphere is very impersonal and the education system is different, Urbana University gives her a "makes me feel smart here" feeling. Besides that, she feels the school has indeed provided her the environment in which to develop her potential. She notices that there seems to be a genuine caring from all the professors and the people she has met. Being far away from home, and being able to interact with the professors, fellow students, and friends breeds growth and a proper learning experience for her.

Another reason why she likes the University is the fact that even though it is affiliated with the Swedenborgian Church, that does not mean one has to be a Swedenborgian to be here. Not forcing students to be anything that they do not want to be, but instead leaving them free to interpret and find their own meaning is, to her, very Swedenborgian. In her own case, for instance, when she first came to the University, she wanted to join the Swedenborgian congregation here, but then she thought it was not the right time in her life. She began to question several things in a positive way and wanted to be able to make the decision from an ob-

jective point of view.

She understands that because she is a Swedenborgian student, a lot is expected of her, but she realized that these expectations could be her own. Just because she is not a member of the congregation here does not mean she has been ignoring her beliefs. It simply means that she is not directly involved with the Church here as she is at home.

Being in a University is the time when one should ask oneself lots of questions about one's religion or whether one has a religion, and at the same time be open to other religions. With such a remark, it is no wonder she says she has "lots of philosophies." In fact, she is here at the University not only for reasons given above, but because she is trying to find out what her philosophy is. She feels that now is the time of her life when all the doors are open.

As for now, the door she has entered is Urbana University. She hopes to pursue her education to a Master's degree. She would like to have a career in counseling, but she says she will postpone that until she has travelled around. One place she yearns to see is Europe.

She realizes that even though there are problems, the basic focus of the University's philosophy is alive and well, and she affirms that she is a proud beneficiary of the school's commitment to promoting personal growth and liberal education.

### **Meet Natasha S. Andrews**

Another Swedenborgian student who agrees with this open spirit is Natasha S. Andrews. Born and raised in Chicago, she would not be here today if it were not for her love of reading. In 1968, while in a Detroit library, she found Swedenborg's book, *Divine Love and Wisdom*, and it took only the first few pages to stimulate in her an interest in other books of Swedenborg.

Other interests besides reading and writing are art and film-making. She had a chance at realizing these interests when she went to art school in 1971. In 1979, she came back to Chicago. She wanted to get back to school where she could share her interests in Swedenborg. In 1985 she applied to the Academy of the New Church in the hopes of fulfilling her interests in film-making for the Foundation. In the same year, she got a job as a sexton at the Church of the New Jerusalem in Philadelphia. It was then that she applied for Urbana University and was accepted.

Now that she is here, she says, "Being able to deal with the situations is another step in my renewal." One of the University's



objectives in striving to achieve its mission of providing a liberal arts education and fostering personal development, is to provide the environment for students to develop their potential. Evidently, for our three Swedenborgian students, the University does indeed provide them with such an environment and also with the skills they need for their chosen careers as well as for their continuing growth and service to society.

### Meet Margaret Ball

Margaret Ball is a third generation Swedenborgian. She attended Chapel Hill School, Waltham, Massachusetts, Urbana University for a year, and Wheelock College in Boston, from which she graduated. She and her husband, Cassius, were married in the Cambridge Chapel, Cambridge, Massachusetts. They have three children, whom she proudly claims were all baptized by Rev. Antony Regamey when the Balls were members of the Boston Society.

Asked how she chose to come to Urbana University, leaving her husband and family in California, she said that when she got her M.A. not so long ago she thought she might one day come back to Urbana. Three years ago, she heard at Convention that Swedenborgians were being encouraged to become more involved at Urbana. In the spring of 1984, on her way home from a Swedenborg School of Religion Board of Managers meeting, she stopped over at the college and talked with the Swedenborgian community here. Mary Kay Klein, then Director of Title IV, encouraged her to come as a tutor. She became a Title IV tutor in the Fall of 1984 and Spring of 1985. Some of her tutoring was done at the Marysville Women's prison and at London Men's prison. At present she is a full-time Instructor of Basic Skills in English at the London prison campus.

Asked how she likes the job, she says she has never worked so hard in her life, but that she enjoys it nonetheless. In fact, she claims that, "Coming here is no sacrifice; it's purely selfish, because I enjoy it so much." It is also rewarding in that it helps her fulfill her need to be of use. She finds contact with the students at London very positive, because the interaction with them amounts to far more than just the teaching of reading and writing. She observes that their need for contacts with the outside world is paramount, especially in the areas of relating education to life. She helps in defining what "being educated" means and in discovering the importance of reading and writing as tools for effective communication.

Beyond reading and writing, good com-

munication to her includes each person's ability to speak freely and yet with respect for the other person's point of view. It involves being understanding and kind, forgiving, and yet requiring the best that another person can give to the job.

As for the main campus, she loves it and feels that the University has made a turnaround. All systems are continually improving, but along with the improvement in the running of the college, she feels it is important that we build a community of trust and confidence, so that when systems break down, we can talk about it and work together to improve the situation. In her own words, "Sometimes on the job one has to take more Vitamin B and try to stay calm in the face of some 'terrible' odds." In spite of the frustrations that still exist, there is a feeling of optimism with the University community.

Being a Swedenborgian on campus seems less important than living the Christian life. The guidance of Swedenborg and her understanding of the Christian life are so intertwined that it is difficult for her to separate what it is to be a Swedenborgian. She notes that the posters quoting Swedenborg, which are displayed around the campus, are a refreshing part of the campus's scenery. To her, they are little gems of inspiration. Quoting Swedenborg, she says, "When we are moved by truth, we delight in living it out, and we act from love."

Some years ago, she realized that she had no recognizable talents, but that she really loved people. If it is true, that "Love is the life of the person," and "what you do to your brother you do to me," then loving people is a pretty good life. She believes in the life of use, and Urbana is the place where she feels there are needs to which she can contribute. Margaret says she can recommend the campus experience to any Swedenborgian who is interested in taking part in the University life.

*The University sees the importance of its church relationship in many ways and wishes to make this stronger. To accomplish this we need people from the church on campus. There are many things to be done besides teaching. Please consider your talents, and write to Dr. Paul Bunnell, President of Urbana University, Urbana, Ohio, 43078. □*

*The Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey is professor of religious studies at Urbana University. Among her academic achievements is her contribution as an Old Testament scholar to the widely-used Interpreter's Bible Commentary.*



## **WOMEN COMMUNICATING**

*Phyllis Bosley*

### **Fryeburg In The Fall**

*Ola-Mae Wheaton*

*"The Lord Hath Done Great Things for Us"*

*Psalm 126:3*

Every fall during the last few days of September and the first days of October the streets of the small village of Fryeburg, Maine, are jammed with vehicles. Amid the rolling foothills of the White Mountains with their spectacular fall foliage, people are going to "the Fair." Folks from near and far come to enjoy the varied program and exhibits of the Western Oxford Agricultural Society's annual fair which, except for the Springfield (Mass.) Exhibition, is the largest agricultural fair in the northeast.

Early in the 1950s, the Fryeburg New Church Society was beset with financial woes and faced upcoming expenses to maintain and improve its 75 year old church and parsonage. A building became available on the Fryeburg Fairgrounds to use as a food booth. A young Alliance president with encouragement from the energetic wife of the "new" minister spurred the approximately 20 active members of the Alliance to undertake a 5-day concentrated effort to improve the treasury of the Alliance and, in turn, that of the Society. With no knowledge of the fast food business, but with much advice and assistance from a next-door competitor and the help of volunteers from the Alliance, a profit of \$324 was reported. Since that beginning the profits have become larger and larger as business practices improved and the menu became more varied. With more and more work involved, all people whether young or old, male or female, friends from within and from outside the New Church Society have donated their time and cooking abilities so unselfishly that the New Church Booth at Fryeburg Fair is now a major source of income for the Society.

The reputation as the "best place on the grounds for homecooked food prepared under clean conditions" necessitates 1100 volunteer staff hours for the 9-day period that the booth is open. Those hours are over and above time spent planning, ordering, preparing stews, baking beans, making sandwiches, and baking pies. The demand for pies (thirty-eight a day) has outgrown the original solicitation of 2 homemade pies from each church family. Now, in addition to those, one hundred and fifty whole pies or crusts to be filled are made in the church kitchen by about 8 people. Those pies are kept frozen until needed. The Fryeburg New Church Society has a membership of approximately 250, but no more than 100 of those are in a position to assist the booth in any way. Those who do participate find their reward in greeting friends made through the years and knowing that good, healthful food goes out the booth's windows.

Questions such as "Isn't that church built yet?" give opportunity to briefly pass on information regarding the New Church. The cheerful and helpful attitude of the volunteers and their steadfast dedication to hard work speaks to all of the philosophy of our members; they cause other local organizations to marvel at the goodwill and devotion within the Fryeburg New Church. The workers who follow the circuit of fairs are always helpful and are our best advertisers and customers. Seeing New Church ministers carrying in food or manning the grill does much to impress those who are at the fair, as their own strong work ethics create a bond with others who also labor.

The young people within the Society look forward to being old enough to work in the booth. For the most part we have been able to hold to the criteria that each must participate in the Senior League. Their 4-hour stints have filled a real labor need during late afternoons and week-ends.

All who work the counters at the booth handle a great deal of cash, but that has never created a problem of loss. In fact,

when an occasional tip is given, particularly to the younger worker, it is very honestly turned over to cash receipts.

To those of us who lived through years of financial crisis in the Fryeburg Society, the booth at Fryeburg Fair has proved that Divine Providence has been with us. First, by providing a means to support the Society, then, even due to unfortunate events in individuals' lives, allowing people to have the time to give tirelessly to the success of the booth. Most important, however, are the people who have become acquainted with us and, within the Society, to have a project that gives a sense of supporting the church, as well as establishing a greater sense of camaraderie among our New Church members.

*"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which He has given thee."*

## From the Treasurer

Dear Members and Friends,

On behalf of the Alliance of New Church Women, I want to thank all of you for your generous contributions to our various funds. Overall your contributions totalled \$2,278.

I thought you might like to know how the money is used. This year we were able to make increased contributions to:

Urbana University Library  
*The Messenger*  
Convention Baby Sitting  
Travel Assistance for  
Convention President's Wife  
Church Camps (5)  
Church Women United  
New Church Youth League

We are also helping Kei Torita in her ministry in Japan.

A tenth of the money coming from Sustaining Memberships and General Contributions (\$145.00) was sent to Church World Services Crop Fund to help alleviate world hunger.

The 1986 Mite Box total is \$1,864.05, which was to be sent to the Mooki College Fund. Because of the unsettled conditions in South Africa, we have invested the money and are holding it until we can safely send it.

Again I want to thank all of you who have made this such a successful year for your Alliance.

**Mary C. Ebel, Treasurer**

## Injury and Healing: Spiritual and Natural

Alice Van Boven

Some time ago, while pruning one of my fruit trees, I was careless enough to let the pruning saw fall onto my wrist. It caused a slight wound, which healed in a few weeks, so that no mark remained to prove that there was an injury. I suppose that the blood stream brought new life in the form of new cells to replace those that had been injured. The memory of that episode, however, can never be erased from my mind. I will always remember that I was careless once and let a saw fall and injure my wrist.

It is similar with spiritual injuries. We sometimes do something out of ignorance that is not quite right. Sometimes it is from carelessness, or it may even be that we deliberately undertake an injurious action to satisfy some need at the moment.

Our faith tells us that repentance is called for, and reformation, so that the Lord can give us new life. This new life from the Lord does heal the wrong; we learn never to make the same errors again. But the memory remains with us. Nothing is erased from our spiritual memories. It may be hidden so deeply that it almost never comes to mind, but all our actions remain with us.

In the next world we are judged, not by mistakes we may have made, but by the love and wisdom which may dominate our lives after we have received new life from the Lord — new life that heals the wounds of our incompetence. □



## SSR Announces Fund Raising Campaign

Mary Kay Klein

The Swedenborg School of Religion, as the center for theological education for General Convention, looks to the future with great hope and enthusiasm.

In the past year, we have revised our curriculum and field education requirements, and laid the foundation for a new program for lay leaders. We have realized that we have enormous potential for helping the Church through continuing our efforts to develop our academic programs, and by looking towards creating continuing education programs for ministers and lay people.

However, we also see that our endowment is no longer adequate to serve our present needs and will become less so as time goes on. To prepare for the future education of ministers for General Convention, the Development Committee of the Board of Directors has authorized several fund-raising efforts, including a "giving chain" and a major gifts campaign.

Our "giving chain" program is based on the idea that many small contributions can make a large difference in endowment building for SSR. This proposal has its start with the SSR Development Committee (John Perry, Chair; Larry Young; and the Rev. Jerome Poole) and the other members of the Board of Managers and Board of Directors. Each will subscribe a minimum of \$20.00 per year for a three year period. In addition, each one will enlist three more persons to pledge likewise and subsequently enlist three more persons. After several levels of this process, SSR will have a significant contribution toward its endowment.

The major gifts campaign is based on the premise that there are ways of giving which can combine a strong and genuine desire to be charitable with the need to meet personal requirements for income and security.

There are several ways one can make a sizeable gift to SSR, retain current income, and possibly benefit the future settlement of his/her estate. Currently held investments, business interests, pension plan assets and life insurance policies can be used to make significant gifts to the Swedenborg School of Religion.

For example, you own your own business, earn a relatively good income from it and look forward to your child(ren) owning the business after your death. You would like to make a useful gift to SSR but don't know how you can do it since you currently need all of your income.

You can have your business appraised, to establish its value, and then give some of your closely held stock to SSR. The gift of stock will create an immediate tax deduction, which will improve your cash flow. Your child(ren) then enters into an agreement with SSR to buy the stock back, at your death, for the donated value. Your child(ren) will be able to make the purchase because you'll make a gift of your tax savings to him/her, which he or she will use to purchase a life insurance policy with a face amount equal to the value of the stock donated to SSR.

Looking back: You made a gift that did not impact on your cash flow. SSR ultimately received stock in your company, estate tax-free and for no cost to them. All appreciation was kept outside of your estate, as well.

In the second example, you have municipal bonds which are generating your retirement income. If you're like many other people, the interest rate volatility of the past few years has left you wondering if there is a better way to receive a tax-free return without accepting the accompanying market risk. There is, and both you and SSR are the winners.

Liquidate your bonds (the value of bonds is inversely related to interest rates and because rates have dropped significantly over the past year, your bonds are probably of greater value now than when you purchased them) and make a gift to SSR. SSR will purchase a Single Premium Whole Life (SPWL) policy on your life with a death benefit nearly twice the size of your gift. SSR will pass on to you the tax-free earnings from the policy, which will replace your former municipal bond income, and you'll realize a current tax savings as well.

Looking back: You made a gift to SSR and created a tax deduction (less than the



value of the gift, since you're maintaining a life income interest). SSR reinvested the money, assuring safety of principal and a tax-free income, as withdrawals from SPWL policies are not taxable. While maintaining your income, you have reduced your estate by the gift amount, thus lowering your ultimate estate tax. When you die, SSR receives the death benefit for its endowment.

Gifts of a mutual fund investment, or other income and growth assets, can provide similar benefits to the previous example. Although the income wouldn't necessarily be tax-free, SSR could pay out to you the monthly withdrawal paid to them from the investment. The advantages of making a gift, reducing your estate and providing continuing income for yourself are still present.

In all circumstances, final planning will involve your own personal advisors. The Rev. Jerome Poole, President of the Corporation of the New Church Theological School, is available to assist anyone who would like more information.

In addition to the major gift and giving chain programs, SSR is open to the possibility of considering the endowment of a chair, as well as any amount of contribution - small or large - toward its endowment.

## Wellness for a New Age

### Gentle Self-Discipline

Dorothy Travers-Davies

Convention is a time for interchange between people, sharing, learning, 'businessing' and seed sowing. I appreciated the feedback that I got from so many readers, although I confess that one really afforded me a huge chuckle when a gal said, "You look so unlike how I pictured you. I thought of an old, wiry woman in tennis sneakers."

But a seed started germinating in my mind during a class that I took with Bob Kirven on "Process Theology." First, I was intrigued with the relationship with this "new" movement and the Swedenborgian tradition. In addressing itself to Christian witnessing "P.T." states that Christian Witness is a "Speech Act" with double structure of act and content and Dr. Kirven suggests that we notice not only *what* we have to say, but *where*, *when* and *how* we say it.

This started me thinking about what I have been writing in *The Messenger* and how I have been getting certain health

points across.

But when the class got into a discussion of the (to quote Kirven) "continuously negotiated tension between a spiritual inner self and a physical body," I suddenly found the topic turned to food. Erni Martin spoke of his inner processing of the dilemma of whether or not to eat the big scoop of ice cream with the cookie on top at dinner the night before. He ate it, I might add, as most of those attending convention ate most of the sweet, gooey, delicious desserts.

I offered to the class that I gave myself permission to cheat a little but either I was not understood or the word cheat was too strong. I was actually trying to lighten up this inner tension of choice, but I was also sitting there feeling that in my Christian Witnessing of writing a column on health practices I had been perhaps laying out a heavy guilt trip on those who live with tension and try always to be perfect.

Often I have said to my patients, "Don't try so hard; loosen up, relax and accept yourself." "I have never met anyone who walks on water and I never expect to," I usually conclude. (Even though now I do number among my friends those who have walked through fire.)

Let's look at the word cheat. I used it as a verb, not a noun, and Webster's second definition gives 'to influence or to bring about by artifice.' In the case of the ice cream I influenced myself.

What is of interest is that I gave myself permission to do this and consequently I never had the "moment" of tension that Erni Martin did. I give myself permission not to be perfect. Does that make me a less effective Christian Witness? And is God going to punish me because I am not perfection? How do I resolve this permissiveness with my personal regenerative path?

Working with these ideas, I have concluded that in the Swedenborgian tradition I can examine who and what I am and whence I have come. On page 76 of George Dole's book, "*A View From Within*," the third state is translated as one of "repentance, in which the individual, from the inner person does talk reverently and devoutly and does bring forth good (actions), but out of a state of trial and constraint, not out of faith and charity."

But the fourth state is when "the individual is moved by love and enlightened by faith . . . so now faith and charity are kindled in the inner person, and are called the two great lights."

In the Hindu tradition of chakras, and in the work of Carl Jung, this fourth state is

where each one of us begins to understand love and wisdom and to live in faith and charity. Bravo! But remember, Charity begins at home; and it begins with yourself. To love and accept yourself you must forgive yourself, for lack of forgiveness is the stumbling block to acceptance of self!

It is possible to forgive yourself for not being perfect, for eating ice cream once in a while, for losing your temper and showing your emotion, for stuttering and being too heavy, for having highs and having lows, for thinking harshly about politics and judging people.

As we go through life we learn to love. Take the parent who forgives his child all the little foibles, who prays that that child will outgrow his childish ways. Now think of the most loving parent of them all, the one who has breathed life into his children and treasures every one from the beginning to the end of time.

Can't we take just one small page from His book and lovingly parent ourselves?

Reminiscing, I can recall the day I learned not to lie, the incidents that showed me about life after death, and the time my son, Fred, came to me from spirit and taught me how to forgive him for dying so that I could replace the anger in me with love and reach out to him again. Perhaps these are some of the "moments" which in Process Theology are moments of continuity and novelty that lead to Repentance, Reformation and Regeneration.

I am not the child that I was 50 years ago — self gratifying and selfish, in the second state. I am not the child I was 30 years ago when I thought I needed to be president of every organization I belonged to and in the third state. I started putting away my childish things when I was nearly 50 years old and learned about life after death and found faith and charity kindled in my inner person.

Now, at 62, I am trying to work out of the sixth state "when a person says what is true and does what is good from faith and therefore from love." This is when "the spiritual life of such a person is delighted and nourished by things related to insights of faith and works of charity, which are called food; and the natural life is delighted and nourished by things related to the body and the senses."

Look back at your own "Process" and love and respect yourself for where you are on your own regenerative path. Maybe, once in a while, you can even give yourself permission to have a gooey dessert with a cookie on top.

Let's drink a carrot juice cocktail to that!

## OPINION

### Convention Memories

Dear Editor,

Congratulations on your efficient report of Convention '86, especially in the midst of your move to California. I want to share some of the special happenings for me in that long and busy week.

— Coming out of a meeting and finding the registration area filled with gas balloons, thanks to the Swedenborg School of Religion President, Dr. Mary Kay Klein, and the NCYL members.

— Dream-sharing group of ministers' spouses, led by Alice Adelman, which offered some deep intimacy and magical moments of insights.

— The increasing number of small children gracing our annual gatherings and the nursing mothers who chose to make the effort to be there.

— Enthusiasm of the pre-convention Personal Growth Conference spilling out onto the mountain-view terrace.

— The "Human Machine" invented by the Music and Movement workshop.

— The powerful talk by Rev. Dr. Rena Karefa-Smart on apartheid issues, and the interest of the audience, who were willing to stay up late after a long day, expressing concern for the real world out there.

— Morning memorial-communion led by the Revs. Rachel Martin and Jim Lawrence, indescribably moving.

— The outdoor Women's Alliance luncheon, with all the ladies wearing white Convention caps, instead of the hats they used to wear.

— Leading with Lorraine Sando an early morning worship and the spontaneous cooperation of Kim Kearns (dance), Steve Pults (piano), Judy Dennis (recorder), Millie Laakko (clown), and enthusiastic participation by all.

— Square dancing on the outdoor terrace for all ages, including for confirmed non-dancers, on our last evening together.

— Hard-working staff and participants sweating out the last two days of meetings for supervisory training, after everyone else had gone home, except for —

— Unruffled Muff, who finally piled her stuff and stuff in her buses and headed north.

**Perry Martin**  
*Bridgton, Maine*

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## Gratitude

Dear Friends,

Since it is impossible for me thank you all personally for your thoughtful expressions of sympathy at the time of Lew's death, I am taking this means of reaching you. It is comforting to know that Lew was thought of so highly, not only by members of his home parish, but also by others in the wider church fellowship.

**Berneice B. Small**  
*St. Paul Society*

## COMMENCEMENTS

### Baptism

**Brugler** — Jessie Marie Brugler, daughter of Valerie and Rev. Ronald Brugler, was baptized into the Christian faith on August 3, 1986 at the Almont New Church Assembly, the Rev. F. Robert Tafel officiating.

### Confirmations

**Almont** — William Baxter, Kit Billings, Nikki Cunningham, Heather Jerrett, Sharon Lau, Ashley Locke, Robert Neil, Melissa Sommers, Jennifer Tafel, Alicia Titus, Barry Winston, Bev Winston, Craig Winston, Jeff Winston and Phil Winston were confirmed into the life of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches on July 27, 1986, at the Almont New Church Assembly, Almont, Michigan, the Rev. Ronald Brugler officiating.

**Lange** — Heather Lange, daughter of Sylvia Lange, was confirmed into the life of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches on August 3, 1986, at the Virginia St. Church (Swedenborgian), St. Paul, the Rev. Richard H. Tafel officiating.

### Marriage

**Ideka-Mine** — Chizuko Ideka and Yoshiaki Mine of the Tokyo New Church Group were united in Christian marriage on July 24, 1986 at the Cambridge Church of the New Jerusalem, the Rev. Robert E. Bossdorf officiating and the Rev. Kei Torita assisting.

**Kortes-Penabaker** — Debra Kortes and Gregory Penabaker were united in Christian marriage on June 21, 1986, at the Almont New Church Assembly, Almont, Michigan, the Rev. Ronald Brugler officiating.

## Deaths

**Bell** — Leo R. Bell, 87, entered the spiritual world on August 17, 1986. Resurrection services were held on August 19, 1986 at the Fryeburg (Maine) New Church, the Rev. David L. Rienstra officiating.

**Brauer** — Wilhelm "Bill" Brauer entered the spiritual world on August 8, 1986, in North Battleford, Saskatchewan. Resurrection services were held on August 11, 1986 at the Third Ave. United Church of Christ, North Battleford, the Rev. David L. Sonmor officiating.

**Cady** — Claire Fletcher Cady, formerly of the Chicago Society, more recently a satellite member in Florida, entered the spiritual world on April 22, 1986. Resurrection services were held on July 27, 1986, at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Park Ridge, Ill., the Rev. Gladys Wheaton officiating. Mrs. Cady was the granddaughter of the Rev. Adolph John Bartels.

**Denzin** — Alice Rose Denzin, 85, a satellite member of the Illinois Association, entered the spiritual world on December 28, 1985. She was the sister to the late Mabel Green of the LaPorte Society.

**Dhuez** — Alfred Joseph Dhuez entered the spiritual world on August 20, 1986 in Rosethorn, Saskatchewan. Resurrection services were held on August 23, 1986 at the Rosethorn Mennonite Church, the Rev. David L. Sonmor officiating.

**Small** — Lewis S. Small, longtime member of the Virginia Street Church (Swedenborgian), St. Paul, passed into the spiritual world on July 24, 1986 in Minneapolis. A memorial service was held at the church on July 30, 1986, the Rev. Richard M. Baxter officiating. □

## Cosmology

*How to stop from pressing open-mouthed  
Against the cosmic scheme  
Of how and when  
And where and why  
Those neat equations in the sky  
That form a frail calligraphy  
To fret the mind and eye?*

*Betty White*  
San Francisco Society



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