THE MESSENGER

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FROM THE EDITOR

Swedenborg returns repeatedly to the theme that what is inside of us is more real and powerful than our external make-up. It was due to my acceptance of this basic premise that I found a recent writer's comments so compelling. He paints the picture of one day's thought life of the world creating a composite spiritual atmosphere surrounding the planet. Imagine that for every angry, brooding, deceptive and predatory thought, a small, dense and dark cloud is added to the atmosphere. For every enlightened, altruistic and helpful thought, a little bit of light shines. Taken together, what sort of atmosphere do you think our world generally maintains around itself?

If television and the newspapers are any indication of what we like to fill our minds with, we've got our work cut out for us. More sobering is my own contribution to the world's darkening clouds. If every ill thought immediately registers in the spiritual atmosphere and makes for either an improved connection with divine life or a more distant connection, then every time I indulge myself in critical and judgmental thoughts about others - whether it is the person next door or the country next door I not only make life less worthwhile for myself, but I also lessen the enlightenment potentiality for all of us, even if only slightly. Can it be that our moment-by-moment internal behavior carries so much responsibility?

Swedenborg stresses that it is so, and common sense confirms it. We create our destiny with the minutia of our spiritual lives. At the same time, Swedenborg assures us that we are not responsible for much of the destructive tendencies we find arising within us. They come unbidden from the hells and from the general environment of the world. Some of the ugliness, of course, we bring on ourselves through our lack of spiritual discipline, our preference for emotional indulgence.

Though Swedenborg does not go along with the popular New Age notion that guilt is a completely useless emotion, he does mitigate the excessive use of guilt found in so much of religion by asserting that, since much of the negativity we discover in ourselves has cosmic origins, we need not berate and blame ourselves for it. Yet, some of it is "ours" and guilt feelings can be a healthy warning signal from the divine in us.

But interpreting our position thusly does not give us, by itself, sufficient tools for coping creatively and successfully with those thoughts and feelings that we know are not helpful, but are destructive. Is not the provision of such tools the core task of effective religion?

An adequate discussion of these tools cannot be given in a few lines. Next month this space will be devoted to a consideration of the response to our human condition that our church encourages.

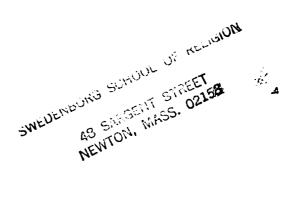
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Jesus' Revolutionary Attitude Toward Women

Friedemann Horn

to women is indicated by the following passage. Who doesn't know the story of Jesus and the adulteress?

Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

They said unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou?

This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

So when they continued asking him, he lifted himself up, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

And they which heard *it*, being convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

When Jesus had lifted himself up, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. (John 8: 1-11) To this day many theologians express a doubt as to the authenticity of this text. The Editor of the *Zuricher Bible*, for example, suggests that this passage is an "addition of a later hand." Yet, it is really not so surprising that it took a long time for this powerful story to be acknowledged by the church fathers as valid and canonical. From a psychological point of view, it is a poignant indictment of male dominance.

The adulteress, caught unawares in flagranti — that is, together with her lover — should be condemned to death "according to the law." But what is this law? We read to our surprise:

If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel. (Deuteronomy 22:22)

The command is put forth to the same effect in Leviticus 20:10. In terms of these

"From a psychological point of view, the story of the adulteress is a poignant indictment of male dominance."

examples we cannot speak of legal partiality: both man and woman, when it is a matter of capital punishment, will be dealt with on an equal basis. The facts of this case, however illustrate better than many words that Jesus' contemporaries — specifically the Pharisees and the priesthood — were accustomed to expounding the law according to a strictly male frame of reference. The resulting bias was perhaps carried out with the best conscience in the world, as they were decisively pious people. The *character* of conscience, however, is such that it, in sharp contrast to the inner voice of God, is largely formed in relationship to the ethics and moral customs of the social environment. And how effortlessly human beings repress the evil in themselves, or in contemporary language, the dark side of the ego.

One suspects, moreover, that despite the clear egalitarian intent of the law, they took custody of the woman and consciously let the man get away. For the men of the time, it was a well-established assumption that women, as the root of all evil, sought to lead men astray. They were, one might add, oppressively aware of their own ability to be led astray. From the beginning it was clear:

"One suspects that despite the clear egalitarian intent of the law, they took custody of the woman and let the man get away."

sinful deeds always have a perpetrator, as is shown in the Story of the Fall:

"The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree." And the woman said: "The serpent beguiled me and I did eat." (Genesis 3:12)

At this juncture it is perhaps allowable to mention that to this day pious Jews every morning express thanks to their Creator that they were created men, and not women.

Jesus, however, is not to be deceived. He doesn't judge the woman brought before him in order to instigate an accusation against himself, in case he, as they rightly suspected, didn't condemn her. Jesus finds, as always, the most efficacious method of silencing his opponents:

He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone . . . (John 8:7)

This expression is so precise it has even found a place in everyday speech.

And so they leave while he writes with his finger in the dust at his feet; one after the other they go, the oldest first. Jesus understands what occurs in the hearts of men. Their behavior shows above all that they were not without conscience. Otherwise, they would have contested her guilt and with that provoked an avalanche, among which the woman would have died, according to old Jewish custom.

Jesus' posture toward this woman, however, doesn't mean that he was indifferent to her sins. He dismisses her with the admonition:

Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. (John 8:11)

Jesus was certain that she, having so barely escaped death, would accord more regard to his admonition, than if he had reproached or threatened her with godly punishment.

Patriarchal Structures in the New Testament

The patriarchal structures in the Bible are in no way limited to the Old Testament, but are fundamental to the New Testament as well. The decisive exceptions are those passages relating Jesus' own words and deeds. When we clearly recognize that, then the *singularity* of Jesus' character is apparent.

If one wants to know where Jesus' contemporaries really stood in relation to women, one must engage in a dialog with Paul, who in all clarity embodied the ruling views among the Jews of his time. In contrast to Jesus, Paul had not resolved the negative side of his heritage and was not finished with his education as an apostle of Jesus Christ. That is especially valid in view of his position on women. The differences between Jesus and Paul have been reflected upon and debated for quite some time. On the subject of women, the difference becomes one of crass opposition between Jesus and his apostle. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians is in this regard well-known:

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. (Corinthians 14:34)

Paul is evidently thinking here directly of the command issued after the Fall, as God speaks of Eve:

And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. (Genesis 3:16) In Jesus' eyes the expression "he shall rule over thee" may have taken precisely the description of a factual condition, caused by human beings themselves, as a result of having turned away from God, than an expression of the will of God.

In this connection it would do well to think of what was finally determined regarding Jesus' dialog with the Pharisees when they "tempted" him with the question of whether it was allowed "for a man to put away his wife for every cause" [Matthew 19:3] (i.e., divorce her for an arbitrary reason). The Jewish divorce law assumed that a wife was the property of her husband, and that within the social and religious framework he had unquestioned authority and control. In principle a contradiction to Paul, Jesus answers the question in terms of the relationship between man and woman before the Fall into Temptation. And he says to those who would like to lead him over precariously thin ice:

Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female and said: 'for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.' (Matthew 19:4-6)

The Pharisees, however, are not reconciled, and they question further:

Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? (Matthew 19:7)

The "writing of divorcement," however, was a social measure meant to certify to a woman that she had lost her "innocence" in marriage; if divorced, she could otherwise not make an effort towards a new marriage, but would be forced to spend the rest of her life alone or as a prostitute.

Jesus' answer to the Pharisees leaves, in terms of clarity, nothing to be desired and shows at once that it is not the will of God which stands behind such commands, but an interpretive distortion of God's will to accomodate those people at a real distance to him. Jesus says:

Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. (Matthew 19:8) In the "beginning" then, a woman and a man in a true marriage to one another were one, and not one of the two ruled over the other. Nothing could better characterize the difference between Jesus and Paul than Jesus' return to the original state of conjugial love. Paul, however, seizes upon the expression taken from the Fall into Temptation, which was to have decisive consequences for the relationship between the sexes: "he shall rule over thee" (ergo: "the woman is subject to the man.") The following two quotes illustrate that this is not one isolated expression of Paul:

> "The Jewish divorce law assumed that a wife was the property of her husband, and that within the social and religious framework he had unquestioned authority and control."

Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. (Ephesians 5:22)

Wives submit yourselves unto your husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. (Colossians 3:18)

These quotations must suffice, although that could be much amplified in a demonstration of how patriarchal structures were smuggled into the New Testament. Emanuel Swedenborg, of course, recognized the limitations of Paul's casual letters to the various congregations, and he omitted them from his suggested list of books to the retained in the New Testament canon.

Hanna Wolff, the well-known German psychologist and theologian, has designated Jesus "the first man in world history who countermanded and annulled the projections on women." In other words, Jesus was free from the prejudices against women and free from the patriarchal need to project the shadow side of the psyche onto women, thereby enabling the image of women to be obscured, to be darkened.

Jesus and the "Shadow" of Women

In spite of the unselfish character of the women among Jesus' followers, it would be unwarranted to assert that women are better human beings than men in the eyes of Jesus. If we take the record of the struggle for power among the disciples, we discover something in the Book of Mark:

Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.

And he said unto her, what wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom. (Matthew 20:20-21)

Jesus naturally does not accede to the demand of Salome, although she is probably his aunt (i.e., the sister of his mother Mary). Her request is characteristic of what we may call the "shadow" side of women, that is, the intensive and symbiotic ambition of a mother for her son. Many sons could sing the tale of their mothers' ambition! And, of course, we know that Jesus' relationship to his own mother was not without its dark moments.

The strain was caused by two factors: due to her *real* nature, he could not remain within bounds of a human relationship, although paradoxically, Jesus' manner of relating was the epitome of what it means to be human. Jesus had to contradict an expectation on the part of his mother that they would always belong to each other in the manner in which children "belong" to those who gave them birth. It was necessary for him to step out of this mutuality in order to fulfill his real, God-given nature. And then perhaps Mary was too human to let him go completely; one thinks of the scene which Matthew handed down to us:

While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.

Then one said unto him, Behold, they mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

For whosoever shall do the will of

my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother. (Matthew 12:46-50)

In the Book of Mark we discover in this connection the reason why they came:

And when his friends heard of it (his wonders), they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself. (Mark 3:21)

It is surprising that Jesus' own family thought of him in this manner, remember, in light of the above, that his mother was simply afraid of her son. This is much the same fear that those parents today desperately feel whose children have become involved in a questionable sect of some sort. "They are out of themselves;" "they don't know what they are doing;" "they are being brainwashed." The fact is that parents and children differ in their opinions, outlook and habits. Jesus had to protect himself against the human expectations of his family, if he was to be true to his calling.

This is not the only example of Jesus distancing himself from his loving, but angstridden mother. One thinks of the wellknown scene at the marriage at Cana, described in the second chapter of the Book of John:

Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come. (John 2:14)

However we may disagree on the translation of this passage, what is certain is that Jesus is distancing himself from his mother's expectations. She wishes to induce him into action; he, however wants to determine for himself the exact moment. The spirit of Jesus responds to the voice within, to the voice of God, and not to the calling of his mother here on earth.

The Jesus that is given to us in the pages of the scriptures is a savior who revolutionized the role of the genders. He did not favor one over the other. While he refused to be swayed by the patriarchal oppression of his day, neither did he glorify women over men. Rather, he restored the egalitarian nature of the genders in their relationships with each other, much as his servant, Emanuel Swedenborg was to do seventeen and a half centuries later.

(The Rev. Dr. Friedemann Horn, formerly president of the Swedenborg School of Religion, Newton, Mass., is currently minister to the Swedenborgian society in Zurich, Switzerland and is also editor of Offene Tore, a journal of Swedenborgian studies in the German language. This piece was translated by Angela Siscamanis.)

Baby Boomers and Church

"Baby boomers go to church less than half as often as Americans over 40," says Jack Sims, a minister and nationally recognized authority on the baby boom.

Sims' firm, Boomers Consulting (Believers Outside Of Most Every Religious System), specializes in helping clients understand baby boomers.

"Baby boomers don't like boring sermons, offering plates, coats and ties or the narrow-minded Christianity many of them find in the average church. Plus, dual-wageearner households use Sunday to do the laundry, shop and spend time with their family," Sims says.

In his upcoming book, Why Are These People Smiling? Because, They Don't Have To Go To Church Anymore, Sims lists 10 traits of effective churches along with quotes from his interviews with baby boomers:

• They will be open to experience.

"Going to church has to make me feel better."

• Their Bible teaching will stress practical living.

"I don't want to hear about pie in the sky. I've got to pay my bills and stay married."

• They will place a healthy emphasis on relationships.

"I don't like sitting in a pew for an hour and looking at the back of someone's head."

• They will share their faith by what they say and do.

"It's important for me that a group's walk matches their talk."

• They will have fewer titles and less formality.

"Our minister is not called Rev., Dr., Father., Pastor or Brother.

His name is Chuck."

• They will understand the new family in America.

"Our families are more like the Brady Bunch or Kate and Allie than Ward and June Cleaver."

• They will recognize the ability of women.

"Working in the board room on Monday

and the nursery on Sunday won't inspire modern women."

• They will place an emphasis on worship.

"I want to get in touch with the supernatural."

• They will have a high tolerance for diversity.

"Falwellian fundamentalists are too narrow-minded."

• They will be action oriented.

"The spirit of the Peace Corps is still alive."

"Baby boomers don't like boring sermons, offering plates, coats and ties or the narrow-minded Christianity many of them find in the average church."

How does the church on the corner measure up? Sims suggests this experiment: Visit a church, then rate it on a scale of one to 10 in each of the 10 categories mentioned above.

Sims scores the results this way:

"Less than 65: This is a 'Christmas and Easter church.' Locate the best Sunday brunch in town and go there with your family or friends instead of disturbing the folks at this church next Sunday.

"65-80: This is a 'twice-a-month church.' It's worth your time. You will grow spiritually and make new friends. If you have children under 12, they'll like it too.

"80-plus: This is a 'worth missing the NFL pregame show church.' You are very lucky to find one near you. Arrive 30 minutes early to get a parking space. I'll bet \$100 the nursery is full too.'



Emanuel Swedenborg

"New" Swedenborg Book Glimpses Early Emanuel

George F. Dole

ust as Swedenborg completed his studies at Uppsala in 1709, disaster struck the Swedish empire. The military campaign of Charles XII, which had gained control of Poland during the previous summer, ended with a disastrous defeat at the hands of Peter the Great of Russia. Charles himself escaped to Turkey and fostered a major Turkish attack on Russia; but when the Turks took only minimal advantage of a signal victory, and when no Swedish army materialized to aid them, Charles found himself out of favor with the Sultan.

After about a year as a captive monarch, he took advantage of a change in the political climate and returned to Sweden, making the trip dramatically — in disguise, accompanied for most of the journey by a single officer, and covering the 2152 kilometers in fourteen days. On November 11, 1714, he arrived in Swedish territory at Stralsund on the Baltic Sea, not far from Rostock, where Swedenborg was getting his notes together in preparation for his own return to Sweden after his first trip abroad.

Swedenborg was only one of many who wrote extravagant compositions celebrating the King's spectacular return. His *Festivus Applausus* was printed in Greifswald shortly thereafter. Only two copies of this first printing are known to exist, though after Alfred Stroh discovered the work in 1905, The Swedenborg Society of London published a phototype facsimile.

The present edition is extraordinarily informative. While much of it requires a thorough grounding in Latin, it abounds with historical detail, and in this respect is comprehensible without reference to other sources. It is well organized, written and indexed, and has a valuable bibliography.

In the present review, I should like to focus on a few matters of particular interest to people who know Swedenborg primarily as a theologian. There is a little hint in Festivus Applausus of the Swedenborg we know. The work begins with a discourse on the Pythagorean theory of cycles, inviting the reader to suppose that such ancient heroes as Hercules, Theseus, and Aeneas have through the ages been reincarnated, and have again done heroic deeds. This theme recurs throughout; and in fact through the whole work, Swedenborg takes pains to use classical geographical and ethnic names rather than contemporary ones. Needless to say, it is Charles XII in whom ancient heroes have come to life again.

He also expends considerable ingenuity in portraying Charles' failures. "Who can win the prize if he does not leave his enemies far behind and if he does not energetically spur his horse, driving him to the prize, while he himself, still in the saddle, turns round to see his rivals behind him?" (Par. 9). This is part of the description of Charles' escape to Turkey after the disastrous defeat mentioned above. When Charles and his garrison were overcome by the Turks and he was made prisoner, he apparently slipped and fell in the fighting, it is stated that "... he had surrendered only to the ground, to Europe, his mighty mother ..." (Par. 19).

The result is a work that is distinctly fulsome to the modern ear. Charles is wholly without blemish and his enemies have no redeeming features whatever. Charles is the sun, the hero, and the stars themselves shine more brightly on his return. Mr. Helander, however, defends Swedenborg against insincerity, a task necessitated particularly by the evidence that Swedenborg privately believed that Charles was leading Sweden to ruin (years later, he would find this monarch in hell, see *Spiritual Diary*, 4745). The essence of the defense was that this was simply "the thing to do."

I would note that in our own times, even the most hostile political editorials are normally phrased with some care, and the reader suspects strongly that the writer's opinions would be expressed quite differently in private. We do not regard this as insincerity. If we can multiply this attitude by a prevailing ideology of the divine right of kings, we can perhaps appreciate the fact that a eulogy such as this was not intended to deceive. It simply expressed what was quite true, namely that Swedenborg was a loyal and articulate subject of the crown.

The language of *Festivus Applausus* is distinctly more difficult than that of the theological works. The vocabulary is much more extensive, the syntax much more involved, and the sentence-units notably longer. Stylistically, it reminds one much more of *The Worship and Love of God* than it does of anything from *Arcana Coelestia* on, including the Memorable Relations. This reinforces the present reviewer's conviction that Swedenborg the theologian consistently strove for simplicity and clarity, and that these qualities should be reflected in translation.

Because of this difference in style, it may come as a surprise that Mr. Helander notes three particular themes as continuing through the theological works. Specifically, in the recurrent use of natural symbols he sees the principle of correspondence; in the stress on heavenly influences on wordly events he sees the principle of influx; and in specific images he sees the principle of cycles in history. While these elements in *Festivus Applausus* may at first sight seem to be too general to be regarded as parallels to later specific doctrines, the point should not be lightly dismissed.

Swedenborg's readers would have been familiar with such ideas, and he would have known of this familiarity. When he wrote about the seasons of human life or of the church, the "new" element may not have been so much the general principle as its attachment to specific values and, perhaps particularly, its integration into a disciplined and scientifically acceptable system.

This may in some respects complicate the task of understanding his theology in the late twentieth century, when the principles themselves seem to have been undermined by an essentially materialistic view of reality. I would suggest that a clearer understanding of the peculiarities of the eighteenth century would help us to a clearer understanding of the peculiarities of our own, and that this in turn could enable us to address current needs more effectively.

(Emanuel Swedenborg: Festivus applausus in Caroli XII in Pomeraniam Suam Adventum, Edited, with introduction, translation, and commentary, by Hans Helander. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Latina Upsaliensia No. 17; 1985.)

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Ministers Take New Positions

As happens most years, a number of changes occur over the summer giving new faces to various Convention ministries. The new church year of 1986-87 has perhaps more than the usual number of changes.

There were five candidates ordained into the ministry at the 1986 convention in Boone, N.C. Three of them were formerly lay ministers in the Western Canada Conference. Of those, one minister, the Rev. David Sonmor, will be embarking upon a full-time regional ministry for the Conference. The other two, the Revs. Henry Korsten and John Bennett, will continue their co-pastorship of the Edmonton, Alberta, New Church.

The other two ordinands are new graduates of the Swedenborg School of Religion, who will both be taking parishes in the Boston area. The Rev. Donna Keane will be the new minister at the Church of the Open Word, Newtonville, Mass., while the Rev. Marlene Laughlin will pastor the New Jerusalem Church, Bridgewater, Mass., succeeding the Rev. Dr. William R. Woofenden, who retired from that parish to devote fulltime effort to his academic and teaching responsibilities at the seminary. Both the Rev. Keane and the Rev. Laughlin are pursuing doctoral degrees in addition to their new duties as parish ministers.

The Rev. Dr. Robert E. Bossdorf, a former Methodist minister who is a faculty member at the Swedenborg School of Religion, and who completed a course of study with the faculty there, was inducted into the ministry of the New Church during the ordination/induction service on Friday evening during Convention.

Another significant development is occurring with the ministry in the Philadelphia area. The congregation in that city, under the pastoral leadership of Rev. Ernest Martin, has arranged to sell their downtown church on Chestnut Street. Meanwhile, they are avidly pursuing acreage in rural Pennsylvania within easy driving range from Philadelphia. Rev. Martin is well along in his plans for establishing a Swedenborgian spiritual growth center that will be sponsored by Convention and possibly by the Philadelphia congregation. The center is expected to serve the general public, Convention as a whole and the Philadelphia congregation.

A team ministry approach is beginning this summer in the San Francisco Bay Area. The San Francisco Society is made of two parishes: San Francisco and El Cerrito. The Rev. Rachel Martin will be joining the Rev. Dr. Horand Gutfeldt in a team ministry at El Cerrito's Hillside Community Church, while her husband, the Rev. Jim Lawrence, will be joining the staff at San Francisco's Church of the New Jerusalem.

Replacing Rev. Lawrence at St. Louis' Church of the Open Word is the Rev. Dickson Beall, who is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ. Rev. Beall's interest in the Swedenborgian movement led to a decision to candidate for the St. Louis position. He will be involved in a study program with the faculty at the Swedenborg School of Religion in Newton, Massachusetts and is looking forward to being inducted into the Council of Ministers when that program is completed.

The Rev. Paul Zacharias has returned from his eight-month temporary position with the Birmingham, England Swedenborgian church. Rev. Zacharias will be rejoining the Rev. Eric Allison in a team ministry at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario.

The Rev. F. Gardiner Perry has resigned from the Church of the Holy City in Detroit to pursue his "tennis and spiritual growth" ministry full time. Rev. Perry will remain active at the national level on the Council of Ministers as secretary of the council.

The Rev. Carl Yenetchi has answered the call to become the new chaplain at Urbana University. This position has been created in anticipation of the retirement of the Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey, current chaplain and professor of religion at the university. The Rev. Yenetchi was formerly pastor at the Elmwood, Massachusetts New Church.

The Rev. Ivan D. Franklin, M.D. and his wife, Eva, are returning from the Tacoma Washington area to work and live in Del Mar, California. Rev. Franklin will be working with the Riverside, California Swedenborgian church.

Swedenborg Tricentenary

Several groups have launched significant programs and projects to celebrate the tricentenary of Swedenborg's birth. Goals of such programs are to increase awareness of the life and career of Emanuel Swedenborg and to further the work of the Swedish scientist and seer through the arousal of interest in his contribution to religion and

philsophy.

The Swedenborg Foundation is embarking upon several major projects:

1) The Foundation is producing and distributing a museum exhibit that will be available to major science and cultural museums in the United States and Canada, as well as to other sites where the public would have access to it. 2) The Foundation will be distributing a new full-length motion picture now being produced on the subject of life after death. It will be entitled, "The Other Side of Life." 3) The Foundation will be producing and distributing to television a 1988 film featuring Swedenborg the Scientist during the era of the birth of modern scientific thought. 4) The Foundation will be arranging for a 1988 scholarly world conference and discussion on a philosophical topic of contemporary interest. 5) The Foundation will be releasing a major hard cover anthology of approximately 40 notable authors. The anthology will be fully illustrated, will feature Swedenborg's impact upon the arts, science, religion and psychology and will include a full biographical section. The tentative title is, Emanuel Swedenborg, 1688-1988: Continuing Vision. The Foundation is also interested in supporting the activities of various Swedenborgian organizations by supplying posters, program covers, radio spot announcements and other information materials based on the tricentenary theme.

Leon S. Rhodes, of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, is spearheading an effort to increase recognition of Swedenborg's tricentenary. He is calling his project "Swedenborg Tricentenary" and welcomes the sharing of ideas. He is publishing a newsletter for this purpose and is inviting anyone to join in this effort. To receive the newsletter, write to: Leon Rhodes, Swedenborg Tricentenary, Box 23, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009.

A group in Canada is undertaking the important goal of securing the issuance of a special commemorative stamp for the occasion of the tricentenary of Swedenborg's birth in four countries: United States, Canada, Sweden and Great Britain. They are especially hopeful that groups and individuals will circulate petitions to demonstrate the necessary support for this significant recognition of Emanuel Swedenborg. Upon request, you or your group will receive a "stamp petition kit," which will explain fully the relatively simple process of administering a successful petition. Write to: Candace Frazee, 7 Thorburn Ave., #303, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M6K 1C4.

Traveling Johnny Appleseed Show

Would you like to meet and experience Johnny Appleseed? You can-almost. Marc Joel Levitt, an accomplished storyteller who has performed throughout the United States, does a traveling one-man show entitled: "Johnny Appleseed-Gentle Hero." He

performed recently at the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church, of which performance the pastor, Rev. Edwin Capon, writes, "Marc Levitt does an engaging and moving presentation of Johnny Apple-seed." He also brings in the Swedenborgian connection for Swedenborgian groups. His outstanding performance would be excellent for any of our churches or retreat centers. He travels around the country with his good-for-all-ages portrayal of Johnny Appleseed, and it is possible to work in a performance for your group when he is in your area. For further information, write to: Marc Joel Levitt. 562 Main St., Wakefield, Rhode Island, 02879.



Marc Joel Levitt

Sunday School Teachers!

The Fryeburg New Church has loose-leaf Dole Bible Study Notes in all of the series for most of the age groups. Complete teachers' sets, handwork and handouts will be sent on request. Postage for handling is expected. Church of the New Jerusalem, 8 Elm St., Fryeburg, Maine, 04037.

Attractive Swedenborg Note Cards For Sale

The Church of the Holy City, Wilmington, Delaware, has produced and is offering for sale cream-colored note cards with quotes from Emanuel Swedenborg in attractive blue calligraphy on the cover In each packet are twelve cards-three each of four quotes. The quotes are: "Love is such that its joy is to be of service to others"; "Love has power only through wisdom"; "In good works love and faith are together"; and "The love of one man for one woman is the jewel of our humanity." Each packet is \$7.00, plus \$1.00 postage. Quantity discounts are as follows: twelve to twenty four packets, \$6.00 each, plus postage; twenty five and over packets are \$5.00 each, plus postage. Order from: Church of the Holy City, 1118 N. Broom St., Wilmington, Delaware, 19806.

Presidential Trips/Meetings 1985-86

July

- 10 Ad Hoc Mtg w/Ad Liebert, Wilm, De, September
 - 14 Mid Atlantic Assoc, Exec Comm Mtg, Wilm, De
 - 18 Growth Center Comm Mtg, Wilm, De
 - 19 Exec Mtg General Council, Newton, Ma
- 19-21 Ad Hoc Mtg, Newton, Ma
- 24 Comm on Worship, Narberth, Pa
- 26-28 Dept of Communication, Blairhaven, Ma October
 - 2 Growth Center Mtg, Wilm, De
- 10-12 Board of Missions Mtgs, Newton, Ma
 - 13 Boston Church
- 14 Conv. Computer Comm, Newton, Ma
- 18-19 Board of Education, SSR, Newton, Ma
- 19-20 Cleveland Church, preach, meet w/members regarding future
- 21-22 Exec Mtg, COM Cincinnati
- 22-24 Comm on Goals & Priorities Mtg, Cincinnati, Oh
- 24-26 Urbana Trustees Mtg, Urbana, Oh November
 - 7 View conference facilities for General Council and Clergy & Spouses Institute, Myrtle Beach, SC
- 10-15 CAM, Newton, Ma
- 15-17 Board of Managers SSR, Newton, Ma
 - 17 Installation Service, Elmwood Church, Ken Turley
 - 22 Urbana Univ & Church Relations Comm Mtg, Urbana, Oh
 - 23 Urbana Exec Comm Mtg
 - 24 Installation Service Gladys Wheaton
 - 25 Mtgs w/Rev. LeVan, E. Munger, &
 - congregational dinner, La Porte, In

26 Sunday School Teacher Mtg, LaPorte, In December

- 4 SSR President & Central Office Director Mtg, Newton, Ma
- 4 Computer Comm Mtg, Newton, Ma
- 5 General Council Exec Comm Mtg, Newton, Ma
- 5-7 Ad Hoc Comm Mtg, Newton, Ma
- 8 Growth Center Comm Mtg, Newton, Ma 1986

January

- 10 San Francisco
- 11 Mtg El Cerrito, Dinner w/San Francisco Church members
- 12 San Francisco Church
- 13 Santa Cruz Property
- 14 Los Angeles Church Mtg
- 15 Mtg Riverside Church, Mtg w/Mac McCormick, Dinner w/clergy of Los

Angeles area

- 16 Wilm, De
- 19 Pittsburgh Mtg w/Church Board Members
- 24-25 Conv. Planning Mtg, Newton, Ma
- 26-28 Prototype Cabinet Mtg, Newton, Ma
- 30-31 General Council Mtgs, Highroad
- Program Center, Middleburg, Va February
 - 1 General Council Mtgs, Highroad Program Center, Middleburg, Va
 - 10 NCCC-Churches Emergency Comm on South Africa, NY
- 18-20 Ad Hoc Mtgs, Newton, Ma
- 20-22 Urbana Trustees Mtg, Urbana, Oh
- March
 - 3 Council of Ministers' Comm on Worship, Narberth, Pa
 - 10 Mtg w/ D. Tafel on Refinancing of Urbana, SSR, Newton, Ma
- 10-12 CAM mtgs at SSR, Newton, Ma
- 13-16 SSR Board of Managers Mtgs, Newton, Ma
 - 15 Mtg with Paul Bunnell on Urbana
 - 16 Preach Worship Services at Boston Church
- 16-17 COM Clergy Compensation mtgs, SSR, Newton, Ma
 - 18 Church & College Relations Comm, Newton, Ma

April

- 3-5 Board of Missions mtgs
 4 Mtg w/SSR President, Mary Kay Klein, Newton, Ma
- 7-9 East Coast Peer Supervision Mtg, Newton, Ma
- 9 View possible property in Penn w/Growth Center Comm, Wilm, De
- 10-11 Ad Hoc mtgs, SSR, Newton, Ma
 - 19 Mid Atlantic Assoc Mtg, Washington, DC
- 24-25 Wayfarers Chapel Board Mtg
- 28-30 COM Goals & Priorities Comm Mtg, Almont, Mi
- Мау
 - 1 COM Goals & Priorities Comm Mtg, Almont, Mi
 - 3 Augmen Fund Mtg, SSR Newton, Ma
- 14-15 Ad Hoc Mtg, Newton, Ma
- 19-20 Computer Training Prog, MBI Offices, Cambridge Ma
 - 21 Exec Comm/General Council Mtg, Newton, Ma
- 24-25 Mtg w/St. Louis Society, Jim Lawrence & Dickson Beall, St. Louis, Mo
- June
 - 2-4 Prototype Cabinet Mtg, SSR Newton, Ma
- 18-19 Convention 1986 matters

Query

How shall the wind discern north from south? How a blown sail — concave, convex? And how will trees discern which to continue green and which, through passage of gold, must set? And how, my heart, will you discern the convent of pure Intent?

> Margherita Faulkner West Lafayette, Ind.

Christ is the Answer

"Christ is the answer," Answer to what? All the world's evils? Surely He's not. Surely He suffers, Tortured again By the world's hatreds, By the world's pain. We have the answer, Answer He gave: Now and forever

Always to love.

Theodore J. Cutting





Come by the Hills

(A Scottish folk tune sung at convention that we'd like to share with all of you.)

Come by the hills to the land where fancy is free.

And stand where the peaks meet the sky, and the Lochs meet the sea.

Where the rivers run clear and the bracken is bold in the sun.

And the cares of tomorrow must wait till this day is done.

Come by the hills to the land where life is a song.

And sing where the birds fill the air with their joy all day long. Where the trees sway in time and even the wind sings in tune.

And the cares of tomorrow must wait till this day is done.

Come by the hills to the land where legends remain.

Where glories of old fill our hearts and may yet come again.

Where the past has been lost, and the future is still to be won.

And the cares of tomorrow must wait till this day is done.



Convention in the Hills Boone, North Carolina

Carole Rienstra

This year convention had the Great Can-Am Dress Out with original and outlandish costumes from "nowhere" and disappeared to there, too.

It had Donna LaRue, liturgical dance, moving early one morn outdoors as rain held off and sun shone at the Alliance Morning Devotions. And it had Muff singing "Amazing Grace" at evening service.

Convention was staying up late and getting up early It was new people and old friends And it was "Peace Like a River" at Sunday Morning Worship.

Yes . . . this year convention "came by the hills and the cares of tomorrow did wait till this day was done." Convention came by the hills . . . and it was lovely . . . as lovely and lush as the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains that surrounded us.

This year convention was lunch and dinner served with lace doilies and black tied waiters and "y'all need anything else?"

It was Learning to Live served up Southern Style surrounded by all the charm and hospitality one could imagine And it was beautiful babies and beautiful Broyhill and . . . "the dorms!"

Convention had wooded paths and rhododendron "trees" It had hand clappin', toe stompin' Appalachian folk music And it had hugs and handshakes mist and fog sunshine and rain thunder and lightning.

New Officers for Women's Alliance

President: Doris W. Tafel 1st Vice President: Polly Baxter 2nd Vice President: Barbara Penabaker Secretary: Nina E. Tafel Treasurer: Mary Ebel Mite Box Chair: Carole E. Rienstra Publications Chair: Phyllis Bosley Nominating Committee, 1991: Carol Kearns Religious Chair: Donna Keane Round Robin Chair: Katherine B. Swiger

Thank You!

I want to thank my Alliance friends for the lovely signed greeting card from convention in Boone. It surely made me "feel in touch" and I strongly urge that this feeling continue among all of us through the entire year to strengthen our Alliance of New Church Women. Through communication, our meetings next year will be even more enthusiastic. Hope to see all of you in Seattle in 1987!

> Mareta Saul Los Angeles Society

(The Women Communicating pages are open to all women in the church. Share your poems, thoughts, hopes, experiences with us! All material should be addressed to: Phyllis Bosley, 3931 Sacramento, San Francisco, California, 94118.)



OPINION

Polish Mission

Dear Editor,

Please accept my warmest greetings from Poland. In this letter I want to thank you very much for publishing my request for books and information regarding the Swedenborgian Church. With great joy I can inform you that my request has been heard. I have received some letters and parcels of books and brochures.

I would like to mention the names of those who responded: Mr. Leon S. Rhodes, Mrs. Robert C. Munger, Mr. Gail Christensen, Mrs. F. Dristy, Mrs. Lynne McCure (all from the United States) and Mr. R.A. Foster from Germany. It is wonderful to know there are those who are able to understand our situation over here and who can respond as sisters and brothers. The books will certainly get some circulation. I send all of you my deep love and wish you many bessings in your work for humanity.

> Andrzej Boryna OS. 30-LECIA PRL Br/c20 73-rro STARGARD SZCZEC Poland

Where Lies Justice?

Dear Editor,

While I very much appreciated Rev. Dole's thoughtful treatment of the concept of reincarnation, and especially liked his attitude of goodwill toward those with whom we disagree, I feel that he did not sufficiently address the most compelling feature of reincarnation theory. He suggests that in the Swedenborgian view, all people attain the spiritual state that they most desire, which makes unnecessary multiple sojurns through the physical plane.

I am most uncomfortable with the implied assumption that those who are pointed in the wrong direction at the time of their death have in any meaningful sense chosen that path. Even more questionable is the overall sense of justice in this view. Just because a sick person "gets what they want" in their sickness, it does not diminish the tragedy of a soul lost to heaven.

What Swedenborgianism and reincarnationalism share is a belief that the physical plane is the arena for pivotal spiritual change and growth. The essential difference is that in the theory of reincarnation there is the conviction that ultimate freedom consists in loving God, while Swedenborg defined freedom as a clear choice between the extremes of good and evil. I find it difficult to imagine a God who could create a system whereby a large percentage of his creatures could be consigned to an endless—forever and ever—fate of ugliness, viciousness and self-absorption, even if it is "what they want." But thank you for a very stimulating piece.

> Carothers Witt Ft. Myers, Fla.

A Point to "One More Time"

Dear Editor,

This letter is in regard to Rev. Dole's much appreciated article on reincarnation, though I hesitate, because this response would bring us beyond the "one more time."

"We all get exactly what we want." All? I had a little child who couldn't walk, couldn't talk. Could he want?

"There is no point in coming back to earth to try to attain a higher state" and "We can progress to eternity in Heaven." Might there be a point in coming back to earth to help someone going through the same anguish you may have gone through? Can I believe that the purpose of humanity's existence, in heaven or on earth, is to be more spiritually advanced?

> Ella Baker Madison Heights, Mich.

Correction

Dear Reader,

I mistakenly described the Swedenborg Society in London as the publishing arm of the General Conference of the New Jerusalem (June issue, p.145). The Swedenborg Society is legally unaffiliated with any church organization, much as the Swedenborg Foundation in New York is a separate and unattached non-profit organization not connected with any of the Swedenborgian denominations in this country.

The Editor

Which New Church?

Dear Editor.

I recently watched a film on Australian television entitled, "The Star Chamber," featuring Michael Douglas and Sharon Gless. It was set in a city on the West Coast of the United States, I think. The film credits included the following information: "New Church" performed by the Lords of the New Church, courtesy of Iris Records.

I wonder whether any reader can throw light on this credit, the origin of the music and whether the group has any affiliations with the New Church organization.

> Neville C. Jarvis Roseville, Australia

Personals

Dear Reader,

Two young men recently wrote in to see whether the policy of *The Messenger* would allow for exchange of information somewhat resembling the "Personals" sections of some publications. As far as I know, there is no policy at all, because the question has never come up. I frequently allow for people to request books and related materials through the letters section. Therefore, I have decided to try as an experiment, another type of request.

Two young college-age men, Kit and Quint Billings, are currently living in a college town where there is an apparent shortage of Swedenborgian young women. They both stress that their religion is vital to them, and they are hopeful of discovering young women whose values are compatible with Swedenborgian concepts and teachings. These two brothers are currently living together and may be reached at: P.O. Box 4092, Brookings, Oregon, 97415; tel. (503) 469-5264.

Found At Convention '86

One retractable lipstick brush One suitcase pull strap, brown One light blue pullover patterned ladies' sweater (lower patio, Sat. night) One pocket calculator with blackish vinyl cover One black leather camera case bottom (35 mm) One small vinyl camera case (Ricoh) Owners who write/phone in identifi-

Owners who write/phone in identification will receive them by return mail. Contact:

Central Office 48 Sargent Street Newton, MA 02158 (617) 969-4240

COMMENCEMENTS

Births

Perry — Summer, daughter of Shirley and Steven Perry (and granddaughter of Convention V.P. Fred and Nancy Perry) of Jackson, NH, was born on June 7, 1986.

Turley — Emily Rose, daughter of the Rev. Ken and Laurie Turley, Blairhaven and Elmwood New Church, Massachusetts, was born on August 5, 1986 at Blairhaven.

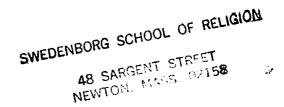
Confirmations

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

Deaths

Carter, Dorothy C. — aged 96, a longtime member of the Newtonville Church and later active in the Cambridge Society, passed into the higher life on May 20, 1986. A memorial service was held at the Cambridge Church of the New Jerusalem on June 8, 1986, the Rev. F. Robert Tafel officiating.

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



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