

The Expanding Roles of Women in the Church

Mary Kay Klein

There is no doubt that women have, for many centuries now, been moving towards new roles in the Church. To the traditional roles such as minister's spouse, President of the Women's Auxiliary, project organizer, Sunday School teacher, giver of comfort and hospitality, and visitor to the sick and elderly, have been added the roles of minister, lay minister, Church or seminary administrator, and, in general, all leadership roles in the Church. In 1975, I took my daughter Karen, who was not quite two years old, to the ordination of Convention's first woman minister, the Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey, so that we could witness together the transition to the expanded roles of women in the Church. This expanded awareness of the choices and possibilities open to women, and the gradual evolution of our consciousness of what it means to function as women in these roles in the Church, have forever changed our ideas of human community, spiritual life, and the presence of God within us.

My own personal awareness of the distinctive feminine elements of my

experience came through a very gradual process of evolution. Like most women growing up in a patriarchal culture, I prayed to God who was masculine and related to Him in a very personal way as a male being. But I also believed, based on my own experience, that women were not in any way inferior to men, and that I was as competent academically and professionally as any male. Both of these assumptions—concerning equality of ability and the masculinity of God—slowly changed and evolved together. When my husband and I were first married and both studying for our doctorates in philosophy, I saw little difference in the way we approached life and problems. I was not particularly conscious of the heavy male bias in all of Western thought. I didn't realize at the time that Swedenborg is very special in this respect. With his emphasis on Divine Love and Wisdom, his conceptual structure is very different from traditional Western philosophy.

However, when I became pregnant with our first child, I recognized the specifically female qualities of nurturance and compassion, and the importance of the interconnectedness of and relationships in my life. I began to realize what Carol Gilligan describes in her book *In A Different Voice*, that the male way of structuring relationships, based on an ethic of justice, is different from the feminine ethics of care, nurturance and responsibility.

and the fundamental feminine wish is to be at the center of connectedness rather than at the top of a hierarchy.

Later, when I was praying with another woman, I also came to understand that God can be recognized and prayed to as female. This experience radically changed my view of myself and the whole universe. In Genesis 1 we read: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." If both women and men are created in the image and likeness of God, then I have a grounding which is truly mine. In the Bible, there are a number of places where God is referred to as female. For example, in Isaiah 49, we read that the Lord is compared to a woman who cannot forget her nursing child. In Isaiah 66, we see images relating the Lord to a comforting Mother. In Proverbs 8, the reading from last night's graduation, we see wisdom likened to a woman.

My experience seems to be a common one. Many women and men have had prophetic experiences in which the feminine aspect of the divine has become real for them, and has provided, among other things, an impetus towards the ordination of women, who are made in the image and likeness of God. Then, too, these experiences have given an added dimension to all the other roles women play in the Church, for it is not just through professional ministry that we serve the Lord.

The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, which keeps statistics on women in theological education, gives the following statistics in its

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most recent fact book. These give concrete evidence of what we as women have been living and experiencing.

Fourteen years ago, in the first year for which ATS kept statistics, women constituted 10.2% of the total theological student population. This year they constitute 26.4% of the students. This increase is more significant when we realize that a number of denominations do not ordain women. The actual head-count of women has grown by 294 or 2.0% since last year, which is very significant in light of the overall decline in enrollment of theological students this past year.

In just nine years (since 1976-77) women M.Div. recipients have increased 219% (from 462 to 1,475). In that same period of time male M.Div. graduates rose by only 7.8% (from 5,158 to 5,556).

Ordination graduate statistics are also interesting. In the United Church of Christ, women are over one-half of the candidates ready for consideration for ordination. For the United Church of Canada the percentage is 44%. For the American Baptist, Christian Churches, Presbyterian U.S.A., and United Methodists it is approximately 36%. The Church of the Southern Baptist Convention, a group which has traditionally been unwilling to approve the ordination of women, has 131 women, or 11% of last year's total graduates, ready for ordination. In our Church, too, the emergence of women has been striking. This past year, six of our nine students were women. Since the first woman was ordained in 1975, 7 of 26 ordinands were women.

The steady increase in the number of women administrators (27.6%) is close to the percentage of women students (26.4%), and well ahead of the percentage of full-time women faculty (13.2%). Over the past five years, there was a significant increase in the total of women in administrative roles (+15.2%) with the greatest growth in the categories of business officer (+30%) and dean of students (+23%). There has been a smaller increase in upper levels

during the five years. The number of women academic deans has increased from 6 to 8, an increase of 4.4% to 5.1%. Including the SSR President, there are now two women seminary Presidents out of 200 in the United States and Canada, with a third to take office in the fall.

For the future, it seems reasonable to expect that the roles of women and our understanding of these roles will continue to expand. Certainly our understanding of the feminine aspect of the divine will continue to grow, to change our awareness of ourselves, in a way that enriches all of us, female or male, in all the roles we play. ◀

Dr. Mary Kay Klein presented this address to the Women's Alliance Meeting on July 3, 1987 at Convention at the University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, Washington.

International AIDS Prayer Vigil

An International Prayer Vigil will be held November 6th through 8th. If you or your church fellowship would like to participate, see Rev. Susan Turley Moore's article in the October issue of *The Messenger*, or contact your local UFMCC. ◀

Oops, Wrong Witness

Robert Coles, the Harvard psychiatrist, was to serve as a witness for the state in the Alabama school case. You remember that's the case in which Judge Brevard Hand ruled that the state schools were teaching the religion of secular humanism, thus violating the no-establishment part of the religion clause. (In an earlier opinion Judge Hand had found that the no-establishment provision doesn't apply to states, but he was overturned on that. So part of what was happening in the present case is that the Judge was saying in effect, "OK, you want to play no-establishment? I'll show you how to play no-establishment.") But back to Dr. Coles. The state figured he would come down on its side against these crazy fundamentalists who complained that the schools were cramming secular humanism down the throats of their children. After all, Coles was from Harvard and everything, and a psychiatrist to boot. Also, he had helped out the state of Tennessee by testifying in another case that "The Wizard of Oz" was not a book likely to be injurious to the mental health of children.

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Why I Am A New Churchman

But Coles is a surprising fellow who, despite being from Harvard and being a psychiatrist and everything, has a habit of thinking for himself. He started studying the textbooks and other issues in question and concluded that "There is definitely a secular religion in education today—at least that's what I call it." This came as something of a blow to the state which had touted Dr. Coles as chief witness, hailing him as the author of such notable works as *The Moral Life of Children*. After Coles' deposition, the state was sure it didn't want to use him. The plaintiffs, however, were delighted to appropriate his deposition for their side of the argument.

Robert Coles explained to the *Christian Science Monitor*: "I read through those books and thought, 'I wouldn't want my own children studying this.' Coles told the *Monitor*. 'It was pure psychological trash. I don't think most adults are aware how these books have changed.' Typical of the material panned by Coles was a 10th-grade home economics book called 'Relationships,' in which students were asked to study and discuss psychological character 'types.' The 'irrational-conscientious' type, for example, was described as having strong religious faith and as being 'cold and unfeeling.' Their 'repressed hostility makes them far too literal-minded and rigid in their righteousness.' In the teacher's guide, Jesus, Mohandas Gandhi, and Martin Luther are given as examples of the 'irrational-conscientious' type for use in classroom discussion. Many Christian students have a very different concept of Jesus and find the comparison offensive." Some people even have a quite different view of Martin Luther. ◀

From The Religion & Society Report, August 1987.

Erwin D. Reddekopp

I am a Swedenborgian because of my unique philosophy of religion based on the Theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. To say New Churchman implies something that I may not be, since that would depend on my state of regeneration. That alone the Lord knows. I am a Swedenborgian, first of all, because my father and grandfather before me were Swedenborgians. To them I owe a deep debt of thanks for the system of religion that becomes more and more meaningful as the years go on. To Jesus, our Lord, on the other hand, belong all thanks and gratitude.

My father and mother had much to do with my being a Swedenborgian. Certainly not all families have stayed in the organized church or followed the New Church beliefs of their parents. If they had, our church would be much larger indeed. But I don't think, now, that that is so important. There is a unique teaching about the New Church which I treasure—the freedom to believe and feel the way I want to. In this, I believe, our parents left us in freedom. I respect that freedom and right.

One of the early things that I recall that so impressed me was the teaching about the life after death. Father used to read about that or explain it to us, since he read mostly in German from books that had been given to him by Uncle Peter Reddekopp in Oregon. But we soon picked up on that basic truth that people don't really die as to their spirits. Their bodies die, for sure, but we, as people, go on living, either in heaven or hell. I can remember as a boy down by the old swimming hole at Sunnyslope, telling my buddies about my beliefs. They didn't laugh or scorn them at that time. That is sort of amazing. In this respect too, I soon learned to understand that Jesus, our Lord, Who is God and Creator did not condemn some people to hell and reward others to heaven. I learned not to fear God! But I soon did learn to know that I had better behave and keep the Commandments—to be honest and trustworthy and to treat other people the way I'd like them to treat me. (The Golden Rule). Later on I learned to understand that it is by choice (our ruling love) that we go either to heaven or to hell, and that wherever we go, it is of the Lord's infinite love and mercy itself.

So many things have come to me through the years that give me the satisfaction and the kind of peace with myself—to accept what I am and what uses I can serve. From the teachings of the New Church I have gained a sense of worth, but not a sense of superiority. I am who and what I am because the Lord, in His infinite wisdom, has a unique and special use for me to fulfill in the Grand Man. No one else can do that for me any more than I can do someone else's use. Heaven is a kingdom of uses, and each Angel of heaven serves his or her use in the same sense that each organ and member of the human body serves its use. Isn't that a grand idea of heaven? How wonderful human society will be when we begin to live by that principle! ◀

The Rev. Erwin Reddekopp lives happily and busily in retirement in Kelowna, British Columbia with his wife, Lisa.

National Council of Churches Executive Committee Votes Unanimous Opposition to Bork Confirmation

Citing its extensive and fundamental disagreement with the judicial philosophy of Judge Robert H. Bork, the National Council of Churches Executive Committee today unanimously recorded its opposition to confirmation of Bork as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

It was only the second time in the Council's 37-year history that it has taken a position against a U.S. Supreme Court nominee. In 1970, the Council opposed the confirmation of G. Harold Carswell to the court, citing particularly his record on civil rights issues.

In background to its action today, the NCC Executive Committee commented that a review of Bork's "views on specific issues" and of "his underlying judicial philosophy" has "failed to provide 'reasonable assurance that the nominee will advance the effective protection of the full rights of all citizens,'" as called for in a 1970 NCC resolution on federal judicial appointments.

The Rev. Dean M. Kelley, NCC director for religious and civil liberty, summarized Bork's statements and opinions in two papers totaling 25 pages. To prepare the summary, Kelley "read virtually every every decision Bork has made" along with much other material, said James Hamilton, NCC associate general secretary for public policy, who presented the proposed resolution.

Bork's philosophies and positioning "run counter to so many NCC interests, positions and concerns," Hamilton said. Kelley described Bork's resistance "to measures designed to remedy racial discrimination and to project civil rights"; Bork's condemnation of the Supreme Court's "one person, one vote rulings," and his rejection of "the view that capital punishment has become—or ever could become—'cruel and unusual punishment'."

Kelley continued that Bork also has contended that "the religion clauses of the First Amendment have both been overextended by the Supreme Court and should be cut back." He also cited Bork's opposition to challenges to an executive order by President Reagan which "would permit U.S. intelligence agencies to use clergy and missionaries for intelligence-gathering purposes," and Bork's "illegal" dismissal of Watergate Special Prosecutor Cox in 1973.

"More important than all of the preceding substantive views is Bork's basic concept of the role of the federal courts . . . that the federal judiciary should refrain from deciding cases that might countermand the decisions of other branches of government, the states or foreign powers," Kelley wrote.

"The effect of Bork's advocacy of 'judicial restraint' would be to relinquish the responsibility of the federal courts to 'say what the law is,' at least in cases where the plaintiffs are individuals, minorities, or citizen groups seeking vindication of constitutional rights," he said. "It is victimized individuals, minorities and the unrecognized public good that need the protection of the courts, and it is precisely this protection that Bork's concept of 'judicial restraint' would deny them."

OPINION

Christ Teaching Men

Dear Editor,

In response to the Rev. Donna Keane's article, "Image of God: Thoughts on Gender" (*August Messenger*):

The fact that God chose to reveal Godself through Jesus Christ, who was of masculine gender, gives more power and relevancy to Christ's message of justice, equality, love, and liberation. Christ's relationship with women was one of respect, empowerment, forgiveness, and companionship. Jesus' most poignant role with men was one of teacher and instructor. Jesus demonstrated that this honorable way to engage in human relationships is reflective of one's relationship with God.

The debate, therefore, is not whether Christ's gender oppresses women while exalting men, but rather centers around a discussion of how, *because* of Christ's gender, Jesus liberates us all from the religious prejudices and cultural stereotypes. The ability to be lovingly wise is innate in all of us, a gift from the Creator. Each of us exemplifies this balance of love and wisdom in a uniquely personable way colored by life experiences and personalities. Indeed, we are called to be women and men who are wise and loving. Let us pray that we all work to this end.

Rev. Susan Turley-Moore,
California

One True Church

Dear Editor,

Jesus did not form a church or a denomination. He taught only the truth of life. If all the churches would come together as brothers and sisters under one God and obey his laws, we could have the one true church on planet earth that Jesus intended.

Merry Browne,
Louisville, Kentucky

Likes New Format

Dear Editor,

May I say that I, for one, think the new publishing strategy is a stroke of genius! The August issue with the coverage of convention was so attractive. I believe we should support this fine quality. And the September "Express" issue is also attractively done, even in its modesty. All in all, I think we are ahead with the alternating issues of the magazine and the newsletter.

Carothers Witt,
Ft. Myers, Florida

Still the Messenger

Dear Editor,

I love the new cover (August and October), and I applaud the new modified version (September *Express*). It's still *The Messenger*! I'm so glad that Eric Allison's column has become a regular feature. I look forward to it and am nourished by it. I look forward eagerly to upcoming issues!

Karen Conger,
Canoga Park, Calif.

Merger Is Underway

Dear Editor,

On behalf of the Swedenborg School of Religion, I would like to express our appreciation to the delegates to last July's Convention and to the members of the Corporation of the New Church Theological School for their unanimous support of the merger of the Board of Managers and Board of Directors into one Board of Trustees. Our new Board of Trustees will start to operate after the 1988 Convention. We expect our new form of governance to help SSR function more efficiently.

Dr. Mary Kay Klein, President
Swedenborg School of Religion

Monday Morning Blues

*My world has collapsed all around me it seems.
Where are the challenges, where are the dreams?
How can I go on in so many kinds of pain?
My body's too old, it can't stand the strain.*

*Dear Lord, in your mercy, look down on me . . .
And show me the way I'm unable to see.
Self pity is a sin, and I'm guilty today,
But I must get dressed and be on my way.*

*So Lord, as I try again, bless me I pray,
With hope and with strength to get through this day.
And if someone I meet today is unhappy, too,
Give me courage and wisdom to tell them about you!*

Myrel Allison
Alliance, Ohio

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All I Ever Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten

Robert Fulghum

Most of what I really need to know about how to live, and what to do, and how to be, I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandbox at nursery school.

These are the things I learned: Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody. Wash your hands before you eat. Flush. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you. Live a balanced life. Learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.

Take a nap every afternoon. When you go out into the world, watch for traffic, hold hands and stick together. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the plastic cup. The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.

Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the plastic cup—they all die. So do we.

And then remember the book about Dick and Jane and the first word you learned, the biggest word of all: LOOK. Everything you need to know is there somewhere. The Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation. Ecology and politics and sane living.

Think of what a better world it would be if we all—the whole world—had cookies and milk about 3 o'clock every afternoon and then lay down with our blankets for a nap. Or if we had a basic policy in our nation and other nations to always put things back where we found them and cleaned up our own messes. And it is still true, no matter how old you are, when you go out into the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together. ◀

(Reprinted from, the Kansas City Times, Sept. 17, 1986.)

Commemorative Essay

Two Hundred Years of the New Church in the World

Dennis Duckworth and John Elliot

Swedenborg died in London on 29th March 1772 and his body was laid in the vault of the Swedish Church in Princes Square, Wapping—fifteen minutes' walk east of the Tower of London. He founded no church, left behind no following of disciples, and was mourned by few. Yet he left to the world the most precious of all bequests—his published and unpublished works, containing the whole *corpus* of the Heavenly Doctrine of the New Church.

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How does a church begin? This is an intriguing question, not simple to answer. There is no problem with *The Church*—the spiritual church which is the kingdom of heaven on earth. This begins in God, and like the Lord's Word is universal and ubiquitous. The spiritual church has no beginning in time, just as it can have no temporal ending. But what of the church specific—the visible, external representative with its many parts and denominations? These “churches” have their clearly seen epochs and demarcations, and their temporal beginnings and endings. The New Church in its visible outer form in the world had such a beginning—when a number of people, deliberately and conscientiously decided to leave their former allegiances and to regard themselves as a distinct and separate body, calling themselves “The New Church on earth.” This movement and decisions can be dated: 31st July 1787.

During the ten years following Swedenborg's death just a few individuals privately read and studied his Latin theological works. In 1783 five persons first met together and decided to continue (the London Coffee House meeting). They increased in number, took a room in New Court, Inner Temple, and called themselves “The Theosophical Society.” Influential persons of a speculative turn of mind were attracted to them, and they delved and prospered. Before long an inevitable question came to the fore: Was it possible to accept the Faith of the New Church and stay within the confines of the Old Church? A movement towards separation began to develop, strongly fostered by Robert Hindmarsh of Clerkenwell, Printer by appointment to the Prince of Wales. It was this that led to the meeting of 31st of July 1787 at No. 6 Poultry, the home of Thomas Wright, Watchmaker to the King, when eleven persons took the Bread and Wine of the Holy Supper together and five others were baptized, and they called themselves “The New Church in the world in its visible and external form.”

There were those of course who considered it most unwise to separate in this way from the traditional Christian Church. And Rev. John Clowes, Rector of St. John's Deansgate, Manchester—who had been reading and preaching the New Church doctrines for a number of years—came especially to London to appeal against such separation. “Let the new truths speak for themselves and so permeate through the historical church,” he pleaded, “that all Christendom will be converted.” But the London ‘separatists’ remained unpersuaded; and this is why 31st July 1787 can fairly be regarded as the date of the commencement of the organized New Church. For historically speaking, the New Church as a distinct and separate entity has existed in the world from then until now, and we are now celebrating the 200th anniversary of that interesting and significant happening.

Those present at the No.6 Poultry (sixteen in all) were: *James Hindmarsh*, ordained by John Wesley; *Robert Hindmarsh*, his son, the moving spirit among them; *John Augustus Tulk*, a gentleman of influence and culture; *Thomas Wright*, a watchmaker, and a Quaker; *James Glen*, from Scotland, a sugar-planter of Demerara, Guyana; *John Willdon*, active in the early New Church; *Thomas Willdon*, probably John's brother; *Samuel Hands*, from Derby, founder of the church in Birmingham; *George Robinson*, not otherwise known; *Samuel Bembridge*, not otherwise known; *Robert Brant*, became a leading member in Birmingham; *James Raynor*, not otherwise known; *Isaac Brand*, later to Liverpool; *George Wright*, son or brother of Thomas, otherwise not known; *Margaret Parker*, wife of Thomas Parker, Great East Cheap; *Jane Grant (Miss)*, she lived on the Strand.

After this inauguration, the New Church began to spread rapidly. James Glen, the sugar-planter of Demerara, sailed to America, taking the Heavenly Doctrines with him. He lectured in Philadelphia before moving on, and the seed of new truth germinated in the rich virgin soil of the New World.

Just about this time also, Robert Hindmarsh sent a box of New Church books with the first colonist fleet to Australia under the Captain Arthur Phillip. We have no record of the influence of the teachings among the early settlers in New South Wales—convicts, soldiers, and administrators; but as in America the virgin soil was rich, and the New Church grew and still grows in the great new commonwealth “down under.” (Next year the Australian Commonwealth celebrates its bicentenary).

After the separation came the need for worship. Towards the end of 1787 a chapel was leased in Maidenhead Court, Great East Cheap (now Nicholas Lane, Cannon Street). It was “commodious,” and over the entrance was the inscription *NUNC LICET* (“now it is possible”), referring to the passage in *The True Christian Religion*, No. 508, that “it is now possible to enter with understanding into the hidden things of faith.” Rev. James Hindmarsh was appointed minister; Sunday services were regularly held, and here were held the first five general conferences of people from many parts of the country and even from abroad. Here, tradition has it at the first conference in 1789, William Blake—who was certainly present with his young wife—composed the poem *The Divine Image*, based possibly upon *Arcana Coelestia* 222-224.

The Divine Image

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

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

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

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

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

William Blake

It is not possible in a brief essay as this even to outline the history and the vicissitudes of the early New Church in London. Nor is it possible here to detail the developments in popular education in the early years of the New Church as to show that New Church members, such as Samuel Wilderspin and James Buchanan, were pioneers in Infant Education throughout the country. Suffice it to say that the Great East Cheap congregation eventually split into two parts, from which two large and prosperous churches developed—Cross Street, Hatton Garden (Rev. Samuel Noble) and Friar Street, Doctors' Commons (Rev. Manoah Sibly).

Samuel Noble at Cross Street was missionary-minded. He wrote his famous *Appeal on behalf of the Writings of Swedenborg*—a kind of New Church *Magna Carta* for the Victorian age. He travelled extensively throughout the southeast of England and established new groups and societies. He was the first secretary of the *London Printing Society* in 1810 (now *The Swedenborg Society*). Cross Street survived till 1872, when its members found new premises in the outer suburbs of Camden Road, Holloway.

Manoah Sibly at Friar Street brought his gentle pastoral influence to bear upon his lively and somewhat volatile congregation. worshipping in the shadow of St. Paul's Cathedral, they prospered in the things of charity, understanding, and practical beneficence till about 1844, when they gradually transformed themselves into a new society in Argyle Square, Kings Cross. (Closely connected with the early days of Argyle Square was the establishment of the New Church College in Devonshire Street, Islington—handsome premises still standing, and since about 1930 the headquarters of the Polish Catholic Church in Great Britain, and during the war of 1939/45 the nerve-centre of the Polish Resistance Movement.)

But all this time the New Church "in its visible and external form" was spreading abroad—in the counties and towns of Britain, in Scandinavia, Germany, and France, in America, in Africa, and in countries far afield. This is not our particular story here, yet what a fascinating story it is! Doctrine (being what it is) needs to be interpreted and assimilated into life. Not all New Church people and bodies have interpreted and assimilated doctrine in the same way. There have been conservative and liberal schools of thought, differences of emphasis, and divergences of practice. Towards the end of the last century the General Church made its own distinctive contribution, and took its place as part of the developing organization here and elsewhere. In 1910 the Swedenborg Society celebrated its centenary, hosting an *International Congress* in London, which commanded the attention and the approval of the thinking world.

Then came the wars—the violence, the suffering, and the deprivation. The two world wars drained the church of so much of its physical strength—the tragic loss of so many young men and women, the depleted congregations and the sparsity of needful things, the danger and the damage in places like London, and for all, the sense of waiting, marking time, and longing for a new world. The organized church faced up to the grim realities of both these world-wide wars in a brave and courageous way. The large and beautiful romanesque church in Argyle Square was razed to the ground; most of our churches in more of our towns suffered severely; and when the second war was over in 1945 the New Church "in its visible and external form," battered and bruised, tottered to its feet, stretched its limbs and surveyed the scene. The last forty years have seen great changes. Some of our churches and groups never recovered, and disappeared; others survived, revived, and began to adjust to a strange new world. There is no doubt about the fact that we live today in a rapidly changing world, in some ways more mature, and in other ways more experimental and uncertain. There are still as many problems as ever, but also many unexpected opportunities; and the New Church today—31st July 1987—is in good heart, here in our capital city of London and throughout the world. There is greater tolerance, greater mutual respect, and a greater sharing of the essentials of the life of religion.

From the point of view of this bicentenary celebration, let it be said briefly that the Camden Road and Argyle Square churches came together in 1954 as the North Finchley society. A year ago this society moved to the Greenhill district of New Barnet; and so Greenhill is the great-great-grandchild of Great East Cheap.

This explains why Greenhill is host to the bicentenary weekend, both for the two services and for the Guildhall meeting. But it must be said very firmly and strongly that this is *not* just a Greenhill event: it is the bicentenary celebration of the New Church wherever it exists in its visible and external form. It is a celebration for our Kensington friends in their lovely church in Pembridge Villas; for our many friends in South London, moving this year into their new premises; for members of the General Church who worship together at Michael Court, Burton Road, Brixton; for those in Bournemouth, Brighton, Colchester, Southend . . . and for all, wherever they may be, who profess the name "New Church." It is intended to be a rejoicing for all the church, every part of the church, and every person of the church. We come together as one church—as indeed we are ONE in the sight of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the One God of heaven and earth. ◀

The Revs. John Elliot and Dennis Duckworth are Swedenborgian ministers in England.

ECLECTICA

Wayfarers Chapel in the Movies and on the Move

Wayfarers Chapel has purchased the building and property at 6118 Palos Verdes Drive South, one-fourth of a mile west of the chapel entrance. Land movement at the Chapel has placed severe limitations on growth and expansion, so this acquisition is greatly welcomed by the burgeoning program needs of the now-famous Lloyd Wright memorial to Emanuel Swedenborg.

Accordingly, the Chapel receives strange and marvelous requests, including a recent one from the filmmaker Steven ("E.T.") Spielberg. One of the brightest summer films of 1987 is a Spielberg production entitled *Inner Space*. Starring Dennis Quaid and Martin Short, this PG film is suitable for the entire family. The final scenes of the movie are filmed at Way-

farers Chapel showing not only beautiful shots of the exterior of the Chapel, but the gardens and parking lot as well.

The story revolves around a high tech company's approach to miniaturization and what happens when an unscrupulous competing firm attempts to steal the secrets. Instead of being injected into a rabbit as originally planned, the hero and his spaceship are injected in a human being. The adventures are suspenseful and fun-filled.

Bryn Athyn's Swedenborg Symposium '88

Over the period of February 7-9, 1988, the Academy of the New Church in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania is hosting an international symposium in celebration of Swedenborg's Tricentenary. Speakers from all

branches of the Swedenborgian Churches (several from out of the country) will be program speakers, as will notables from outside the church, including the keynote speaker, Dr. Inge Jonsson, Vice President of the University of Stockholm, who has written an important book on Swedenborg. See ad in this issue for more information.

Two Swedenborgians Featured in Local Papers

As the Rev. David and Mrs. Carole Rienstra prepared to depart for new ministry adventures in St. Louis, Missouri, they were showered with presents and wishes of goodwill. An area paper, the *Bridgton News*, ran two feature articles, one covering a farewell party for the beloved pastor and his family, and the other featuring an oil portrait of David given in his honor to the New Church of Fryeburg by artist Virginia Earle.

The Rienstras spent ten years in Fryeburg, their first pastorate. Carole spearheaded a youth program that is one of the largest in Convention, and she also was the regular organist for worship services, weddings and other occasions. In addition to his role as a minister to both church and community, David was a member of the Fryeburg Rescue Service, and he has had responsibilities each year at the Swedenborgian family camp located just outside of Fryeburg. He was only the sixth minister to lead the Fryeburg church since its beginning in 1877. David and Carole and daughter, Katie, are already settled in St. Louis at the Church of the Open Word. Their son, David, 22, is an architect in Ashland, New Hampshire, and their daughter, Sheri, is in her second year at Roger Williams College in Bristol, Rhode Island.

On the other side of the country, in Redlands, California, fifth generation Swedenborgian Alice Van Boven has

In the Swedenborgian Spirit

Emanuel Swedenborg spent years searching for the soul through in-depth knowledge of every field of learning available to him, whether biology or theology, astronomy or meditation. *Chrysalis*, the journal of the Swedenborg Foundation, keeps this questing spirit. Each issue's theme, be it "Freedom," "Aspects of African Spirit," or "Wise Women: A Human Process," is full of ideas for the questioning mind. To its readers, *Chrysalis* offers the thoughts, work, and experiences of others who are just as interested as they are in growth toward inner strength and balance.

Within this spirit of communication and sharing, such a journal cannot survive without subscribers. Please support this new journal of the Swedenborg Foundation with a subscription—only \$20. a year for three well-written, beautifully-illustrated issues. Each volume contains articles, poetry, art, current book and film reviews, and even an anacrostic puzzle! There is still time to become a charter subscriber, and the Swedenborg Foundation will send a free second subscription and gift announcement to a friend or relative of your choice in time for Christmas.

For everyone who has ever sought a reunion of mind, body, and soul amidst today's challenge, *Chrysalis* means new inspiration. In offering its readers articles which combine practical experience with aspects of spiritual growth, *Chrysalis* explores the world. *Chrysalis* is growing. Become a reader, spread the word, and join the celebration! ◀

Subscriptions: Send \$20 to the Swedenborg Foundation, 139 East 23rd Street, New York, New York 10010; enclose your own and your giftee's mailing addresses.

CONVENTION 1987 A First-Time, First-Person Experience

Barbara Norris

When the suggestion was made at the Chapel Board of Managers Fall Meeting that the business manager might attend the sessions of the General Convention in Seattle/Tacoma in July of 1987, my first thought was "Who'll mind the store?" In April when the decision was made, I knew that capable staff members would keep the Chapel running quite well, but just what the Convention experience would be was still a mystery. In the 12 years I've served the Wayfarers Chapel, I've sent the ministers off to conventions held in various parts of the US and Canada, peered curiously at the reported proceedings in the Convention Journal, survived the rigors of preparing a Mexican Fiesta for one year's gathering, but until this year had never considering attending myself. Over those twelve years I've met numerous good Swedenborgian folks when they've come to vacation in California or to visit or to serve the Chapel. So I hardly considered myself a stranger when I checked into the Convention office at the University of Puget Sound. I found myself warmly welcomed. This lovely small campus laid out with generous expanses of vine-covered red brick buildings with wine-covered red brick buildings was the Student Union Building where meals were served, books and materials were displayed, mains were held and General Council held their meetings.

Due to a few misadventures I had actually getting to the university from Sea/Tac Airport. I barely had time to check into the dormitory room and weigh the relative merits of the upper vs. the lower bunk when the hour arrived for the Chapel's presentation to General Council regarding the purchase of a property near the Chapel. The

Redlands Horticultural Society. She has received numerous community service awards over the years. Since 1919, Mrs. Van Boven has been an active member of the Riverside, California Swedenborgian Church, except for a brief interlude when she lived in Berkeley and attended the San Francisco church. ▶

been featured in the *Redlands Daily Facts* for receiving the Living Treasures award from the Redlands Area Historical Society. Mrs. Van Boven, 87, was secretary for several years of the San Bernardino County Historical Society before its merger with the San Bernardino Museum Association. She was president of the

No single book in the past twenty years has done more to advance knowledge of Emanuel Swedenborg than Martin Larsson's *New Thought, or, A Modern Religious Approach*. This book was reviewed in *The Messenger* in October, 1985. Widely read in New Thought churches all over the country, Swedenborg's life and teachings reached thousands of churches and pastors.

That edition sold out quickly and the publishers have released a "revised and updated" edition with a new title, *New Thought Religion: A Philosophy for Health, Happiness and Prosperity* traces Swedenborg's powerful impact on New Thought, which elevated Christianity out of some of the historical superstitions and non-evident dogmas. The entire book is completely predicated upon the mission of the writings of Swedenborg. All Swedenborgians who wish to be informed regarding the historical development of several quasi-Swedenborgian religious movements (Christian Science and the Unity School of Christianity among them) will want to have this book on hand. Cover price is \$16.95 from Philosophical Library, 200 West 57th St., New York, NY 10019.

As we move into a presidential election year, many will want to be fully informed about the role religious activists are playing in 1988. Richard John Neuhaus, director of the Rockford Institute Center on Religion and Society, has produced with Michael Cromartie *Piety and Politics: Evangelicals and Fundamentalists Confront the World*. Fred Barnes, Senior Editor of *The New Republic*, says, "Forget nuclear freezes and yuppies. The emergence of the evangelical voting bloc is the most important political development of the 1980s, and Neuhaus and Cromartie tell everything you need to know about it. This is the most complete analysis I have seen anywhere on the evangelical movement—and the best." Harvey Cox of Harvard Divinity School calls it "a widening collection by a rich variety of writers. It should disabuse people of the opinion that all evangelicals and fundamentalists hew to the same political line." Available for \$12.95 in soft cover, plus \$1.25 postage from the Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1030 Fifteenth St., NW—Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20005.

John Odhner of the General Church has written a manual released by the General Church Publication Committee entitled *A Light Burden: Easter Ways to Shun Evils*. This is a pastoral, written-for-the-layperson booklet that is based solidly on Swedenborgian ideas and offers concrete aids in the ubiquitous challenge of temptation. Available for only \$1 plus 50 cents postage from the General Church Publications Committee, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009.

A prolific writer on parapsychology and the author of the preface to the last three printings of Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* published by the Swedenborg Foundation, Colin Wilson has written a book entitled *Afterlife*, put out by Doubleday and available in your local bookstore. ▶

Chapel team of Annella Smith, board chairperson; Harvey Tafel and Jay Lee, ministers; and I were elated that the proposal was accepted.

My impression of the Swedenborgians as a large group was an extension of my view of them in smaller batches! They are warm, loving folks, fiercely proud of their church and its history, and dedicated to its continued life and growth in the future. This year was an especially exciting one in the life of the church, as it marked the beginning of operation under the new constitution and bylaws, which, although adopted last year, did not go into effect until the fall of the gavel this year. President Randy Laakko spoke in his opening message of the excitement of the first year, that it would be a shake-down cruise, depending for its success upon the cooperation of all the members.

The business sessions were of great interest to me as I observed the working of the Convention. I was honored to be introduced at one of those sessions. I especially enjoyed the hymn singing at the beginning of opening session, brought unexpectedly by the non-cooperation of the video equipment. I attended a mini-course on "Planned Giving" taught by the Rev. Jerry Poole. Harvey, Jay and I share in the administration of the Chapel and we were each excited individually over the potential for the Chapel in the ideas brought out at that class.

The Independence Day social evening was a great pleasure with its boat trip to Blake Island, delicious salmon dinner and Indian dances, and then the exciting culmination of the evening: the dark sky filled with fireworks over the Seattle skyline as we paused on the boat trip back to the mainland.

The closing service of worship was filled with emotional impact from the ordination of two new ministers and the stirring message of the Convention preacher, Jay Lee. People saying goodbye to each other impressed the idea that this had been a very special convention.

My impressions when it was over,

were that it had been extremely well organized. Those responsible, including the local committee, had done a fine job in pulling it all together. It must have been an enormous task. I felt gratitude to the Chapel board for giving me the opportunity to have the convention experience first-hand.

For the first-time Convention goer, it was a busy five days filled with renewing old friendships, making new ones, absorbing as much as possible about the larger church, representing the Chapel to the best of my ability, and catching some of the vision of Swedenborgians. ◀

God Loves Us All

*He made us all with a will to live
and a gift to give.*

He made everyone someone in His eyes;

He knows this as He looks down from the skies.

Everyone has something they can give,

A special personality to live.

A chance to become His friend,

and His will that we all mend.

Suffering and all are His alone

as it says on His stone, but

Because of this, He doesn't want us to miss

our chance in life, despite and through our strife.

He loves us all.

Donna Caldwell,

Church of the Open Word, St. Louis

SWEDENBORG SYMPOSIUM '88

Swedenborg and His Influence

Academy of the New Church, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania
Sunday-Tuesday, February 7-9, 1988

An international celebration of Emanuel Swedenborg's tricentennial examining his wide-ranging thought in relationship to his culture and to ours.

Session Topics

- Swedenborg & the American Enlightenment •Swedenborg & Science
- Swedenborg & European Literature •Philosophy & Social Science
- Swedenborg & the Arts •Religion
- History

Costs

- ① Full registration (includes program, proceedings volume, lunches, dinners, and banquet) \$100.00
 - ② Registration & banquet only 65.00
 - ③ Registration excluding meals & banquet 50.00
 - ④ Students: Full registration 50.00
 - ⑤ Students: Registration excluding meals & banquet 20.00
- Discount of \$10.00 for all registrants to November 30, 1987.*

For further information, write or call: Dr. Jane K. Williams-Hogan
Academy of the New Church College, Box 278, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009
215-947-4200 ext. 301

COMMENCEMENTS

Baptisms

Payne—Nicole Victoria Payne, daughter of David and Marlene Payne, was baptized into the Christian faith on September 1, 1987, at the parents' home in Saskatoon, Sask., the Rev. David L. Sonmor officiating.

Dow—Michelle Dow, daughter of Neal and Delores Dow, was baptized into the Christian faith and confirmed into the life of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches on August 23, 1987, at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. David L. Rienstra officiating.

Confirmations

Dow—Delores Dow was confirmed into the life of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches on August 23, 1987 at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Fryeburg, Maine, the Rev. David L. Rienstra officiating.

Light—Jacqui Skinner Light was confirmed into the life of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches on the celebration of New Church Day, June 14, 1987, at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Boston, Mass., the Rev. G. Steven Ellis officiating. Mrs. Light is Circulation Coordinator for *Chrysalis*, the journal of the Swedenborg Foundation.

Rienstra—Kathryn J. Rienstra was confirmed into the life of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches on August 23, 1987 at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Fryeburg, Maine, with her father, the Rev. David L. Rienstra officiating.

Death

Welch—Edna A. (Unruh) Welch, 82, was a lifelong resident of Pawnee Rock. She was church organist for 65 years, as well as a frequent Sunday School teacher and Bible Class leader. She is survived by her son Lynn and his family of Pawnee Rock, by daughters Lois and Vivian and their families, by her sister, Velma, of Fort

Collins, Colorado, and her brother, Roger, of Pawnee Rock.

Marriages

Allen-Major—Nancy Ruth Allen, daughter of Bow and Miriam Allen, and Maurice Lee Major were united in Christian marriage on July 18, 1987 at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Boston, Mass., the Rev. G. Steven Ellis officiating.

Casali-Chapin—Kimberly L. Casali and Michael Chapin, son of George and Joan Chapin, were united in Christian marriage on July 10, 1987. A wedding ceremony took place on August 8, 1987 at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Boston, Mass., the Rev. George McCurdy officiating.

Fenske-Rennels—Nancy Fenske and Stephen Rennels were united in Christian marriage on September 19, 1987 at the Swedenborgian Church, San Francisco, the Rev. James F. Lawrence officiating.

Lieber-LeVan—Patte Lieber and the Rev. Ted LeVan were united in Christian marriage on August 21, 1987 at the LaPorte, Indiana New Church, the Rev. Carl Venetchi officiating. Mr. LeVan is the minister of the LaPorte New Church Society.

New Address

Rev. Obed Mooki
P.O. Box 993
Johannesburg, South Africa 2000

Correction

The address for the Rev. Laura Cameron Fraser's Foundation for Inner Enlightenment and Spiritual Freedom was incorrectly given in our August issue. The correct address is:

Foundation for Inner Enlightenment and Spiritual Freedom
P.O. Box 71010
2213 N.W. Market St.
Seattle, Washington 98107

Special Fund Available For WOMEN'S ALLIANCE MEMBERS For The Convention 1988 Swedenborg Tricentennial Celebration To Be Held In Newton, Massachusetts

Room, board and registration may be available upon request for those who have not been able to attend recent conventions because of the expense. This fund is made available by **THE MITE BOX, 1987.**

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CONVENTION CALENDAR—Fall/Winter 1987/88

November

- 4– 6 National Council of Churches Governing Board, Jacksonville, FL.
- 5– 7 Wayfarers Chapel Board of Managers, Palos Verdes, CA.
- 8 Pretty Prairie, Kansas Church 100th Anniversary Celebration.
- 9 Swedenborg Foundation Board Meeting, New York City.
- 9–11 Council of Ministers Executive Committee at Temenos at Broad Run, Marshallton, PA.
- 20–21 Temenos at Broad Run Board of Managers, at Temenos.
- 26–30 Swedenborg School of Religion Thanksgiving break.

December

- 4– 6 General Convention Cabinet at SSR, Newton, MA.
- 6– 7 Convention's Executive Committee, at SSR.
- 7– 9 Education Support Unit, at SSR.
- 14 Swedenborg Foundation Meeting, New York City.
- 14–Jan. 1 Swedenborg School of Religion Christmas vacation.
- 24–Jan. 4 Convention Central Office open as needed.

January

- 4 SSR classes begin.
- 8–10 Communications Support Unit, place to be decided.
- 11 Swedenborg Foundation Meeting, New York City.
- 16–17 Information Management Support Unit at Reston, VA.
- 22–24 General Council meeting at Temenos at Broad Run.
- 28 Urbana Church celebration of Swedenborg's Birthday.
- 29 **Swedenborg's 300th Birthday.**

February

- 7– 9 Swedenborg Symposium '88, Bryn Athyn, PA.
- 8–10 SSR semester break.
- 22 SSR Faculty meeting and student registration.