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A M O N T H F O R



Detail of *The Kiss*, Constantin Brancusi, The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

M A R R I A G E

Church participation isn't a necessary requisite for one's regeneration. It simply represents an outstanding opportunity to experience the presence of God in the context of intentional community. To be sure, an aware and sensitive person can further their spiritual development in numberless venues outside of any organized religious effort. Indeed, anywhere presents a ripe opportunity for application of the Gospel, if we are to take Swedenborg's most quoted passage seriously: "All religion relates to life, and the life of religion is to do good."

And equally certain is the much-testified-to truth that a vast percentage of religious fellowships offer little in the way of vibrant spiritual community. Some are so stultifying that upon entering them a haze of oppression immediately induces a kind of spiritual stupor. And then there are those thousands upon thousands of polite congregations operating as the standard-bearers of civil religion. They offer a respectable atmosphere offensive to few, but rarely challenge the serious seeker to come out from behind habitual social pretensions.

Oh, but every once in a glorious while there blossoms into existence that exquisite spiritual community every sane human being longs for deep in their bosom. A trust palpably present, vulnerabilities shared and explored, ideas and insights crackling: together people begin to sense that some incredible Other is living in and through them. This is some of how God is collectively experienced amongst a people.

I believe that I have been graced with a little of that divine sweetness in at least three local churches—once each in a Disciples, Presbyterian, and Swedenborgian congregation. From those experiences, I'm pretty sure that God is no respecter of the signs hanging out front.

Perhaps many of you have also tasted of the invigorating elixir of profound fellowship, and perhaps, like me, you strive to duplicate it. I'm still grappling with the degree to which true spiritual community can be strategically called into being. It seems to be a mixture of elements, some of which are under the control of the congregants and some of which are not. But I feel certain that the part beyond our control cannot manifest until we do that which is under our domain.

The most obvious common denominator is a catalytic human personality. The vessel of the human soul. The Spirit is always poised, but must remain latent until it is given opportunity for expression through the Christ-like love of true seekers. I'm not sure that there is any one scriptural formula or behavioral modification that can predictably ignite Spirit in people. Somehow its mature presence is the result of a process too all-embracing to be reduced to such a codification. In each of the three graced congregational experiences, several persons carried an infectious vitality. And when two or more gathered together showing forth this Spirit, it caught! Holy Synergy!

When it is truly working, there is too much Spirit to be consumed by those present. And then the miracle happens: the Spirit is directed outward and begins to gather a contagious momentum. I have found no life experience more satisfying; it is, quite simply, this foretaste of reality that makes all the rest of it worth it.

James H. Laine

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Rev. James Lawrence, Editor
Paul Maring, Layout and Design
Christina La Conte, Typesetting

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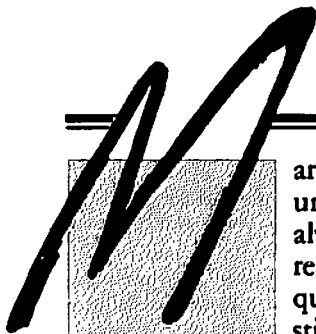
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The Polychrome Divers, Fernand Leger, 1942-46, Musée Fernand Leger, Biot, France.

Marriage on the Defensive

Howard Davis Spoerl



Marriage is perhaps the most ancient, continuous, and universal social institution. In civilized culture it has always had the sanction of public opinion, law and religion. In spite of widespread sensitivity to the frequent failure of contemporary marriages, there is still great eagerness to marry—a fact sometimes deplored in specific instances by the most ardent defenders of matrimony. Nevertheless, much of the literature on the subject puts marriage on the defensive! In book after book we find it presented as something to be protected and preserved, although it is rarely denounced or openly attacked. The situation is anomalous, to say the least.

The degree of regeneration may be indicated by the state of one's marital (conjugal) love.

Two centuries ago a student of marriage, Emanuel Swedenborg, viewed the marital situation with dismay. He too went to the defense of marriage.

Among the questions asked by thoughtful persons contemplating marriage for themselves or by their friends are: Will it prosper? Will it last? While sober concern is preferable to the casualness in which many undertake matrimony, the persistent occurrence of such questions marks the defensive attitude. Since there is no organized external enemy sworn to disrupt marriages, the trouble evidently lies in part with the conception of what marriage is. The defensive attitude is not new. It can be traced back through ancient Rome and Greece to the old Testament prophets. Two centuries ago a student of marriage, Emanuel Swedenborg, viewed the marital situation with dismay. He too went to the defense of marriage. His conception of it deserves attention because it sought the basis of marriage in the very constitution of the created universe.

A Metaphysical Universe

The church historian Ernst Benz recently wrote of Swedenborg's views that since the Reformation "nowhere is there any attempt in orthodox circles to comprehend the religious principles of marriage on the basis of a Christian understanding of sex."¹ Swedenborg presented marriage as *metaphysical unity*, cosmic in scope, rather than as a sacramental transmutation or a civil covenant, although his religious interpretation might contain these latter conceptions. He was far more thorough in developing his position philosophically than were any predecessors who glimpsed the general idea. Luther, for instance, had written that "God has set the type of marriage everywhere throughout the creation. Each creature seeks its perfection in another. The very heavens and earth picture it to us." The purpose of Swedenborg's detailed teaching was to acquaint people with the full range of marriage that they might live creatively within it toward the fulfillment of universal community:

Those are in marriage love who are in Divine good from Divine truths.² Love conjoins all; and when every one has love for good and truth, they have a common life . . . The love for good and truth is what is called love toward the neighbor.³

The metaphysical principle is "conjunction," a term standard in philosophy since ancient times to designate the unification of similar, distinct, unlike, or even contrary entities. The tendency to classify contrasting entities in two groups used the obvious analogy of the two sexes. The Chinese labeled the categories *Yang* and *Ying*. Swedenborg drew everything from the primal distinction between divine love and divine wisdom, which he also related to male and female "predominance."

The material or substance handled by the Divine Love is Good; that handled by the Divine Wisdom is Truth . . . These flow downward into man into two receptacles there built, namely: Will—Understanding . . . And so the Great Philosopher goes on steadily dividing the Creator, His creature, and creation into an almost endless series of dualisms, even down to the final dusky shadows that house the flotsam and jetsam of humanity, imperfect, unfinished.⁴

In other words union, which is reunion, is the work of conjunction. Disunion is never absolute; its relative occurrence produces the tension that makes life alive and active as we know it. The balancing or resolution of the tension is "marriage" in a generic, metaphysical sense, and also in special application to the destiny of individuals.

The conjunctive reunion is an aspect of spiritual regeneration. Marriage and regeneration imply each other. The degree of regeneration may be indicated by the state of one's marital (conjugal) love. While it was perhaps the philosopher Empedocles who first called *love* the unifying principal, the idea of

marriage as the integrating force was best developed and preserved up to Swedenborg's time by the tradition of alchemy. The "Great Work" (philosopher's stone) of alchemy, which would effect transmutation into "gold," symbolized the culmination of the regenerative process. Conjunction was the name assigned to one of the symbolic stages.

In the operations of the Great Work, the union of masculine and feminine principles was associated with the process known as conjunction; the union was sometimes represented by hermaphrodite designs . . . Ripley also writes of "the *Red Man* and his *Whyte Wyfe*"

as representing the regenerative conjunction.⁵

Swedenborg's formulation of the universality of marriage is summed up in his words):

in each and all things created there is a conjunction of good and truth. Conjunction is impossible, however, unless it is reciprocal . . . truth of good. . . is in the male and constitutes masculinity, and . . . good of truth is in the female and is femininity; . . . there is a marital union between the two within any person as well as in the world at large.⁶ The degree of union of harmony (which can be *negative*) is the tension we experience variously as desire, aspiration, longing; these are reinforced by sexual energy. Ordinary marriages and sexual love attachments are thus particular instances or "ultimations" of the general cosmic design. Swedenborg emphasized the thought that in a spiritual sense mating is the formation of one complete person from two incomplete persons. This is his famous "conjugal" principal of conjunction. Yet he also contended that the actual work regeneration depends upon a kind of love (charity) which is distinct from marital love. In attempting to clarify the relation between the two, he unwittingly put marriage on the defensive.

Cicero wrote: "The first bond of society is marriage; the next, our

children; then the whole family and all things in common." Swedenborg used greater amplification:

There are loves of three kinds that constitute the celestial things of the Lord's kingdom; these are marriage love, love for infants, and the love for society or mutual love. Marriage love is the first of all . . . Love for children follows next, and is from this; and then the love for society, or mutual love.⁷

It appears that the distinction between marital love and mutual love is that marital love is *exclusive* while mutual love is *inclusive*. Mutual love is described as being the very pattern of heaven, in the likeness of the Lord. It

consists in wishing better to another than to one's self. . . . Such angelic love is derived from marriage love, and is born from it as a child from its parent; and for this reason, it exists with parents toward their children. This love is preserved by the Lord with parents, even if they are not in marriage love, in order that the human race may not perish.⁸

This last sentence invites reflection. Swedenborg saw clearly that a heaven must be an *inclusive* arrangement, as must any true earthly community. By mutual love, as he put it,

the heavenly form is such that every one is as it were a certain centre, thus a centre of communications, and accordingly of blessings, from all; and this in accordance with all the differences of mutual love, which are innumerable . . . Nothing else endeavors to destroy this form and this order but the love of self.⁹

In contrast to such an ever-widening inclusiveness, marital love "is of such nature as to wish to be altogether the other's, and this reciprocally."¹⁰ It is also said to consist "in wishing to be in another's life as a one,"¹¹ and is frequently referred to as "love of one of the sex" in distinction from "love of the sex"—which is categorically "unchaste."¹² When marital love is manifested, even only in emulation,

love of the sex becomes "exterminated," and a man thenceforth looks upon "other women without love and on his only one with love."¹³ According to such definition, it might be possible to "wish to be in another's life as a one" without necessarily wishing better to the other than to oneself! Is not Swedenborg virtually suggesting that women in general are not a person's neighbor's'? Whatever else these references indicate, they denote or imply *exclusiveness*.

What Swedenborg had in mind 115 was that in everyday life man is sensual and adulterously inclined; having an inner spiritual nature, however, he may respond to higher impulses under the influence of love or religion; the tension of love promotes the "marriage of minds." If true marital love is encouraged, the firmer conjunction enables both partners to form an eventual unit of a heavenly society, through the exercise of charity and regard to the Lord. It should be kept in mind that Swedenborg was endeavoring to supplant the inadequate conception of marriage as a mere civil compact and the equally inadequate orthodox sacramentalism that bordered on magic. At the same time he was trying to be true to the empirical facts of life and consistent with his metaphysical system. His doctrine of marriage was highly superior, and it is not strange that Benz should award it the historical palm. Through it, Swedenborg elevated the status of woman above that of a mere chattel slave; he gave sexual intercourse a favored place in the religious sun; his husbands are not complete dictators, nor does he emphasize their property rights as civil law did; his wives have souls to call their own. In general the picture is one of cooperativeness and mutual respect.

Flaws in Swedenborg's Teaching

Nevertheless the teaching has flaws, including the fact that it is out of date. Although marital love as Swedenborg described it may have been, as he said, so rare in his day as to be practically unknown and the depiction of it incredible, its chief

ideals are now typical—as ideals—of our social and religious culture. Regard for marriage as primarily a spiritual comradeship rather than a utilitarian alliance was fostered by the romantic movement, which he himself helped to inspire. Whatever may be its present statistical frequency, unrefined lust is not socially approved in any class; unmarried males are not wholly predatory. On the other hand, modern females are not the retiring ornaments that Swedenborg sentimentally portrays, nor are wives passive and submissive subjects to male lordship. General acceptance as normal of a sequence of love interests during adolescence, especially among girls, was wholly beyond his ken. He would hardly comprehend that American exploitation of sex in fashions, advertising, and mass entertainment is neither universally licentious nor devoid of certain guilt tensions.

The flaws, manifested in various ways, show why even Swedenborg's relatively enlightened theory of marriage placed it on the defensive. Throughout his writings he labored to harness his conjugal system to the social system of matrimony as the world knew and knows it, with all its hypocrisy, prestige-seeking, and frequent immorality. Swedenborg's arrangement is suited to *replace* ordinary matrimony; it has no business *compromising* with it. The counsel that a non-existent conjugal relationship ought to be deliberately simulated for the sake of appearances is ethically dubious and quite contrary to the spirit of the Lord's teachings. The provision for extra-marital sexual relations among certain male bachelors callously assumes a double standard. In the words of John Humphrey Noyes,

his plan necessarily involves the immolation of a large class of women to the lusts of the opposite sex. . . . Swedenborg seems not to have thought of providing for any interests but those of men.¹⁵

It is also noteworthy that in the memorable relations in the book *Marital Love* there is continual insistence that even in the spiritual

world worthy marriages are not safe; they must be protected and defended against all sorts of hazards.

The defensiveness seems to be caused mainly by the *exclusive* nature of marital love. In Swedenborg's vision of heaven each separate "society" is composed of couples united as single beings, all such beings having a similar state or outlook appropriate to their particular society. Thus the total form of heaven is an integration of diverse societies, each composed of

In plainer terms, Swedenborg's conception of conjugal union fails to abolish a possessiveness; consequently it is exclusive, in need of special protection—and on the defensive.

like couples. The individuals are severally conjoined to the Lord;

each society, which consists of many, constitutes as it were one man. . . . The whole heaven is a likeness of the Lord . . . so also is each society a likeness, and so each angel.

At the same time, "from *mutual* love all the angels are as one."¹⁶ According to the conjugal principle, marital unions are perpetuated, developed, or commenced, in the heavenly state—wherefore the segregation and careful protection. But according to the *mutual* principle, unity is attained through community of end, individual variety contributing to "the perfection of the whole." The arrangement, although not inconsistent with basic premises, is needlessly cumbersome. If all are in mutual love and are also conjoined with the Lord, must not all be conjoined with one another? In short, is there any valid ultimate distinction between marital love and mutual love? Logically, the heavenly state seems to require infinite inclusiveness and total multiple con-

junction. Considering the absence of physical sexuality from such a state, by definition, private marriages appear to be particularly pointless. The sole "offspring" are said to be "goods and truths"; however originated, these add to the total metaphysical "substance."

In plainer terms, Swedenborg's conception of conjugal union fails to abolish *possessiveness*; consequently it is exclusive, in need of special protection—and on the defensive. In a well-known passage he commends *jealousy* as a "right fear for the loss of one's own and the partner's eternal felicity"¹⁶ in circumstances that do not speak highly for either partner's personal trust or spiritual faith. However shrewd his observation may be, the tendency of the advice, as in the case of most writers on marriage, is to make marriage as such an end in itself, apart from other ends and purposes of existence. Swedenborg's logic supports this tendency through his famous doctrine of the one destined mate for each person, to be encountered here or hereafter. The doctrine puts even greater stress on the exclusiveness of marital love. It is not difficult to imagine situations in which, because of exclusiveness, marital love might come into actual *conflict* with mutual love. This is symbolized by the proverbs "charity begins at home" and "blood is thicker than water," which contrast tellingly with Luke xiv. 26 and other Gospel verses.

When he wrote of a man's coming to look upon "other women without love and on his only one with love," Swedenborg probably referred to sexual interest; yet his words exclude other interests, as if love to the neighbor did not count female friends along with males. He did not even consider the modifications of feelings experienced by betrothed girls and women—but then it is "self-evident" that it is "unseemly" for women to declare love!¹⁷ He justified the exclusiveness by appealing to a metaphysical basis for monogamy. Again the logic is consistent with premises, although the conclusions seem unsatisfactory. This is the metaphysical argument:

The marriage of one husband with several wives would present in heaven an idea or image as if one good were conjoined with several truths which do not agree together, and thus as if there were no good; inasmuch as good from truths which do not agree together becomes none at all, since good has its quality from truths and their agreements.¹⁸

Similarly we are told that "marriage with more than one is like an understanding divided among several wills."¹⁹

The question that immediately comes to mind is: why the assumption that the "several truths" are necessarily discordant? If "truth" signifies an interpretation or formulation of an awareness, and "good" a *value*, full comprehension of a value is obviously brought about through diversity and variety of interpretations. The enrichment of the cultural heritage, artistic communication, all philosophical and literary advancement, involve such a conjunction. "Life, like a dome of many-colored glass, stains the white radiance of eternity." The notion that a particular value is to be monopolized by a specific doctrinal formulation is ridiculous. Even when interpretations are discordant, the disagreement inspires new efforts to formulate the value in question.

One wonders likewise why an understanding is automatically described as "divided among" rather than "supported by" several wills. The achievement of community—a social democracy, for instance—depends upon the conjunction of many wills with a central understanding, just as it involves the conjunction of many truths with a central good. In a universe animated by love, mutuality must supposedly prevail over special interests; a mutuality guided, to be sure, but the highest spiritual insights. The celestial plan is the prototype and core of the natural, as Swedenborg continually proclaimed. In this connection, the words of John Humphrey Noyes seem especially apposite:

I insist that all love, whether general or special, must have its

authority in the sanction and inspiration of the ascending fellowship. All love which is at work in a private corner, away from the general circulation, where there are no series of links connecting it with God, is false love; it rends and devours, instead of making unity, peace and harmony.²⁰

Does not the phrase "love in a private corner" describe all too clearly the possessive exclusiveness of the

Unless one first loves another as a neighbor, how can one expect to love that person adequately as a mate?

joint life of countless couples entering marriage? "As long as we have each other," they say, "nothing else matters." The very determination to make marriage succeed is proportioned to the defensive attitude. Swedenborg performed a signal service in restoring to marriage a place in the Christian tradition. His concept of conjunction is a noble and inspiring metaphor of love's power to establish the Kingdom of God. He perceived that the initiative issues from that sexual tension which also procreates the species, and that sexuality is more than mere biology—people need not be united bodily to be united in soul. Yet he kept marriage on the defensive. In one place we are astonished to read that "there are no marriages anywhere else" than in heaven, in spiritual fulness; "below heaven there are only matings, which are formed and severed."²¹ What can this mean?

Successful Marriage Founded Upon Inclusive Love

The spiritual order pervades the natural order, everywhere exemplify-

ing some measure of conjunction. Adolph Roeder reminds us that to Swedenborg, the spiritual life "is never a *future* life; it is always the *other* life, the one which man lives *pari passu* with his earth life."²²

"Heaven" is a state within us as much as it is ever a state in which we enter. Thus marriage need not be exclusive. Every member of each sex exercises both will and understanding; each is a person in the image of God. Opportunities for integrative spiritual conjunctions are restricted only by practical circumstances. Specialized marital relationships are significant only in the context of *community*, of mutuality; their existence in a vacuum, as it were, is socially and spiritually meaningless.

Good and truth are continually flowing in from the Lord with all, and consequently genuine marriage love; but it is received in various ways; and as it is received, such it becomes.²³

If marriages in an absolute sense belong only to eternity, the final essence of any temporal marriage must remain enigmatic to the partners who form it. How many followers of Swedenborg have nevertheless striven from disguised self-love, in a perversely over-romantic spirit, to believe that in their married lives they have a special corner on eternity! How many unmarried followers have taught themselves to feel cut off from spiritual conjunction, thus starving themselves in the midst of plenty! What has made trouble for them is an esoteric interpretation of marriage that emphasizes exclusiveness. The corrective is to develop the mutual principle in all its richness. Unless one first loves another as a neighbor, how can one expect to love that person adequately as a mate?

The assumption that matrimony *automatically* includes mutual love is completely unfounded. Making it puts marriage on the defensive. Swedenborg was apparently correct in asserting that a marital impulse—whether or not it includes the mutual principle—is primary. This checks with the biological finding on a lower level that nature

seems determined to insure breeding at all costs. And our mores tacitly sanction the idealization by lovers of lofty prerogatives and sentiments which are far too often bereft of genuine, inclusive charity. Engaged couples are supposed to lead a charmed life, regardless of how unsocialized and cantankerous they may be as individuals. Romantically exaggerated erotic tensions on the one hand and the special sanctions of an individualistic, competitive social system on the other overemphasize what Swedenborg also unfortunately overemphasized: maleness and femaleness, whether on a natural or a spiritual plane of regard.

Many authorities have pointed out, however, that success in marriage depends largely on the transcending of sex differences. Alphonse Maeder wrote that in a successful marriage, "the husband as well as the wife gradually experiences through this reciprocal mental influence an evolution, a transformation of the male and the female being into *persons*."²⁴ Today it almost seems that the unmarried have a better opportunity to develop an appreciation of people as persons than have the naively and prematurely betrothed. In any event, married people need to master the same art of promoting community through *mutual* love that everybody else needs to master. This they may do within the special context of their marriage, and in relation to its special objectives, developments, and ultimate destiny. But one need not be married in order to be a full-fledged human being for the purposes of living in community with others. An inclusive outlook develops neighborly love. Any one who undertakes marriage without having learned to be human is asking for trouble. Hand in hand with his or her defensive emptiness goes the demand for the special privilege of exclusiveness. Partners become rivals in secret, and families openly so. Swedenborg, of course, did not foresee the virtual disintegration of society into an aggregation of depersonalized individualists masquerading in human shapes.

Entirely apart from the ques-

tion of the spiritual status of married partners and parents is that of the effect of an exclusive atmosphere upon children. This important matter cannot be discussed in the space available here, but mention of it may serve to emphasize the impossibility of overestimating its importance. The "sins of the fathers" are not merely visited upon the children; they are committed directly against the children. Defensiveness imparts defensiveness; isolates breed isolates. Swedenborg, who possessed such keen discernment of the inner growth of the individual, appears to ignore the vast amount of damage done to children by inadequate parents.

The marriage relationship is one among several patterns of living. According to Swedenborg, genuine spiritual marriage is eternally available to all who are fit for it—and eternity is literally timeless; it is "now" as well as "later." Like heaven, earthly society needs community-minded individuals living in the uses of regeneration, and far more than it needs indifferent candidates for matrimony who will merely produce more cannon-fodder. Meanwhile, marriage as such requires no defense by persons qualified for it. The notion that everybody is potentially so qualified may be valid in terms of eternal eventualities, but it bears no real relationship to the nature and the demands of the matrimonial state in present-day society. If world community is a social goal, exclusive marriages are as detrimental to it as exclusive business, exclusive nationalism, or exclusive religion. Wherever the marital spirit becomes *inclusive*, marriage is no longer on the defensive. In the words of Swedenborg:

when a people is one . . . when the common good of all is regarded, one does not appropriate to himself another's enjoyment and destroy another's freedom, but so far as he can he promotes and increases it. . . . With him who has for an end his own good, the Lord cannot be present.²⁵ ■

Notes

¹ Emanuel Swedenborg: *Naturforscher und Seher*. München: Verlage Hermann Rinn, 1948, p.461

² *Heaven and Hell*, No. 376.

³ *Heavenly Arcana*, No. 4837.

⁴ Adolph Roeder, *Man's Two Memories*. New York: The New Church Press, 1931, p.4

⁵ John Read, *Prelude to Chemistry*. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1937, pp.101, 102. According to Swedenborg, red refers to the good of love, and white to truths.

⁶ *Marital Love* (Wunsch translation), No. 61.

⁷ *Heavenly Arcana*, No. 2039.

⁸ *ibid.*, No. 2738.

⁹ *ibid.*, No. 2057.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, No. 2731.

¹¹ *ibid.*, No. 2738.

¹² *Marital Love*, No. 58.

¹³ *ibid.*, No. 58.

¹⁴ Quoted in Robert Allerton Parker, *A Yankee Saint*, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1935, p.118.

¹⁵ *Heavenly Arcana*, No. 1013.

¹⁶ *Marital Love*, No. 371.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, No. 296.

¹⁸ *Heavenly Arcana*, No. 4837.

¹⁹ *Heaven and Hell*, No. 379. See *Arcana*, No. 1004.

²⁰ Parker, *op. cit.*, p.186.

²¹ *Marital Love*, No. 192.

²² Roeder, *op. cit.*, p.5.

²³ *Heavenly Arcana*, No. 2741.

²⁴ "Ehe und Selbstenwicklung," in *Das Ehe-Buch*, edited by Graf Hermann Keyserling. Celle: Neils Kampmann Verlag, 1925, p.380.

²⁵ *Heavenly Arcana*, No. 1316.

Howard Davis Spoerl taught *Psychology and Religion* for many years at the New Church Theological School (now named the Swedenborg School of Religion) in the 1950s and 60s. He was a full time faculty member in philosophy at the American International College, in Springfield, Massachusetts. A much appreciative student of his, the Rev. Paul Zacharias, wrote a book about professor Spoerl entitled, *There Was a Man, copies of which can be loaned from the Swedenborg School of Religion library*. This essay was published in 1951 in the Swedenborgian scholarly journal, *The New Christianity*.

When It Counts

Betty Hill

"I have also seen things written from heaven composed solely of numbers in an order and sequence, quite as is done with things written with letters and words. I have been informed that these written materials come from the inmost heaven; also that their heavenly writing is presented in numbers to angels of a lower heaven when thought descends from it; and also that this numerical writing likewise involves hidden things, some of which cannot be grasped by thought nor expressed in words."

Swedenborg,
Heaven and Hell, #263

us, and I said, "Mother you're talking in numbers." She then answered in English. We were more amused than focused on the numbers themselves. The numbers were coming in a free-flowing conversational rhythm. There could be no doubt that she was *speaking* in numbers, as the rhythm of the numbers is something one can't miss. They were all single and double digit numbers, none too large. I can't ever recall anything in the hundreds. Frequently they would come in still times just before dozing off or just upon awakening.

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If we mentioned her talking in numbers, she would rouse herself and switch to English. It never seemed to me, however, that her responses to our reminders were actually "translations" of the numbers she had been speaking. Rather, it was as if she had been talking to herself, like reciting poetry, and now she was joining us.

Certainly, we would have concentrated on this phenomenon had we been aware of the above passage from Swedenborg. Coming from an old fashioned New Church family, I was at ease with the visions of spirits when someone is ill. It was accepted in our family that both of my uncles spoke with a dear brother. In fact, mother expected that same brother to be the one to meet her. All of which is to say that the numbers didn't upset us so much as surprise and amuse us. But Mother seemed perfectly comfortable with her new language. She was clear-headed and knew what was going on, but she was simply tired. At one point, she confided that she hoped the day would be her last day here on earth, and then she didn't bother to talk any more. ■

Betty Hill was a co-creator of the Activity Books that accompany the Doles Notes Sunday School curriculum.

It was about the last week or ten days before she went into the hospital, and Dad said she never spoke or knew anyone there. She was pretty frail, but her mind was clear and on very little medication. As I recall, and it has stuck in my memory because of the uselessness and yet naturalness of it at the time, I first heard the numbers as she was awaking from a nap in the middle of the afternoon. It was a sentence of numbers. To hear it at first was startling, and my first reaction was, oh dear, she's gone back to her childhood. I thought in the beginning that they would be numbers by rote—times tables and such. But that wasn't the way it was.

If was as if a bi-lingual person would use the *first* native language in repose or in the bosom of the family or in moments of stress, except that in mother's case the numbers came in quiet times. The routine of being ill had taken over, and she felt secure that Dad would be cared for.

The next time I heard the numbers Dad was there, and we listened together. She was looking at

37
1459
467
9

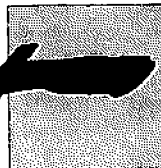
Beyond the Age of Discretion

George F. Dole

120 It was Islam that first rediscovered Aristotle, building such a brilliant culture that when Christianity and Islam met, it was Christian thought that was transformed.

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.

Isaiah 40:28



In a recent television interview, the brilliant physicist Stephen Hawking said that if we could arrive at a unified theory in physics, then we would know the mind of God. Then he qualified this statement, saying that perhaps he should not use the word "God," because for most people it implied a being with whom one could have a personal relationship. He felt that the universe was too vast, and we too small, to allow for this.

Swedenborg would not totally disagree. Through most of his theological works, he focuses on the knowable, approachable aspects of the Divine, so the general impression is clearly that God is personal. But in *True Christian Religion* (n. 787), he sets this in context. The new church which he foresees "will worship a single, visible God, in whom the invisible God is like a soul in a body. In this way and in no other can there be a union of God and us mortals, since we are natural. We therefore think naturally, and union must take place in our thought and thence in the affection of our love, which happens when we think of God as a person. Union with the invisible God is like a union of eyesight with the expanse of the universe, whose limit we cannot see. It is like sight in mid-ocean, which reaches out into the air

and the sea, and expires." In fact, the opening chapters of *True Christian Religion* center in this theme.

It is indeed a long way from the universe as Stephen Hawking perceives it and our own bedtime prayers. I should like this morning to sketch out a way of connecting them, beginning by following one theme, the theme of "discreteness," in the history of human thought.

The view of the universe which we find in our earliest texts is expressed in mythic form. It is a view in which the divine and the earthly realms interpenetrate. There is a divine "will-to-be" in every physical thing, and these various wills interact in very human ways. Reality itself is social. The individual person finds fulfillment or success by finding appropriate relationships—the Sumerian phrase describing success is "He's gotten himself a god."

It is the Greeks, as far as we know, who begin to look at physical reality as a separate phenomenon. Socrates and Plato keep a strong sense of the spiritual or "ideal," but Aristotle turns his mind to the analysis of the world as we sense it.

For centuries, Christianity followed Plato. In the feudalism of the Middle Ages, reality is still social. Individuals still reach fulfillment by finding their appropriate place in the communal fabric, defining themselves by relationship. It was

Islam that first rediscovered Aristotle, building such a brilliant culture that when Christianity and Islam met, it was Christian thought that was transformed.

In the Age of Enlightenment that followed, the most able minds turned more and more to the study of nature in its own right. God gradually receded, so to speak, to the role of "First Cause," to being the Creator who made the machine of the universe, started it going, and now was at best occasionally called in for adjustments or repairs.

We find perhaps the extreme of this view in the universe as Newton conceived it—a universe composed of utterly discrete bodies, separated from each other by absolute vacuum. In political theory, we find corresponding stress on human individuality, with the notion that society is a kind of social contract agreed to by entirely independent personal units. We ourselves accept a view that each individual has certain "inalienable rights," a concept that makes sense only in this individualistic context.

But things have changed again. At the frontiers of physics, the universe is now seen as a vast and seamless sea of energy, with matter as a little ripple on its surface. Our physical bodies are defined by fields through which matter flows—the pancreas, for example, totally renews itself every twenty-four hours. Mind, we are increasingly aware, is a relatively stable field through which thoughts and affections flow.

It seems at the moment as though I am actively addressing you, and that you are passively listening. But all I am doing is making sound waves that rattle your eardrums, sending incredibly complex signals to your brains. You are taking those signals and making meaning out of them. There simply isn't time to describe

the intricacy of that task. It is a staggering achievement. Basically, we are in this moment participants in a pattern of meaning, a pattern so interconnected that the hardest aspect of writing this sermon was ignoring the thousands of other things that could be said.

The pattern of meaning in which we participate reaches to the limits of our perception, and this is where I would take issue with Stephen Hawking. If indeed we have

It was Islam that first rediscovered Aristotle, building such a brilliant culture that when Christianity and Islam met, it was Christian thought that was transformed.

some insight into the mind of God, then we, however small we may seem, have the beginnings of a relationship with that mind, however great it may be. The only way to avoid this conclusion is to conceive of that "mind of God" as wholly passive, to believe that we actively "explore it," but that "it" is unaware of our exploration and therefore unresponsive to it. I find it difficult, to say the least, to imagine a wholly passive creative force.

"Union," wrote Swedenborg, "must take place in our thought and thence in the affection of our love, which takes place when we think of God as a person." A recurrent theme throughout his theology is that love unites, while intellect divides. Each contributes to the ultimate good of true wholeness. Intellect keeps oneness from being a hopelessly confused muddle, and love keeps the pattern from fragmenting. Simply to glimpse "the mind of God" intellectually might be to experience a sense of separation. But that very sense is a feeling, and not the most likely one. It is far more likely that there would

be feelings of beauty and awe, of reverence. Thought and affection are inseparable aspects of our own being. While the apparent proportion between them may vary, neither occurs without the other.

There is one more facet of the situation to look at before we close. If the pattern in which we participate does reach to the limits of our perception, then our thoughts and feelings are necessarily particular manifestations of that pattern. We, in our being and in our process, are somehow representative of the whole. In Biblical language, we are created in the image and likeness of God. 121

This brings us, finally to a specifically Christian focus, but one that may not be traditional. Theologians argue whether what God did in Christ was unique or characteristic. I would suggest that we must discover that it was both. It was unique as the most extraordinary perfect instance of what the transcendent Divine is doing at all times—in us, in the Muslim, the Jew, the Buddhist, the agnostic, the atheist. The one valid reason for being a Christian is that in character and quality of the Christ we find presented precisely those qualities of the infinite Divine which are not limited to one nation or one sect, but which reach to the very limit of our perception.

I'd like to leave you with an image that brings the cosmic and the personal very close together. Stephen Hawking has Lou Gehrig's disease. He lives in a wheelchair, and is incapable of speech. He is not preoccupied with these limitations, though, and describes himself as contented. Why? Because (and he put them in this order) he has lovely children and is successful in his work. These for him are the salient facts of his life, facts which outweigh one of the most debilitating of human illnesses. When we see those "two" circumstances as distinguishable facets of a single whole, then we glimpse the mind and the love of God. ■

The Rev. Dr. George Dole, professor of the Swedenborg School of Religion, preached this sermon in the New York New Church (Swedenborgian) on April 10, 1988.

A General Introduction to the PARABLES of the Old and New Testaments

William R. Woofenden

In one of the charming early collateral works of the church written by the indefatigable John Clowes

(possibly as early as 1815—I was unable to find an exact date for the first edition, but a second edition appeared in 1839) the Introduction is written in question-and-answer form, much like an old-fashioned catechism. It reads as follows:

“Q. What do you mean by a *parable*?

“A. The word *parable* is derived from a Greek verb signifying *to compare*, and therefore it means a comparison made between things in their nature different, but which yet in some points have a resemblance to each other.

“Q. In what respect do the parables of Jesus Christ [and I think we can infer *all* of the

“That the Lord when He was in the world spake by correspondences, and thus both spiritually and naturally at the same time, may appear from His parables, in which every single expression contains a spiritual sense.”—Doctrine of Sacred Scriptures n. 17

Word, which is written in the language of parable] differ from other parables or comparisons?

“A. They differ in this respect, that they are not mere comparisons, but real agreements or correspondences between the things compared; thus they are the agreements or correspondences between things natural and things spiritual.

“Q. And in what do you conceive these agreements or correspondences to be founded?

“A. In the eternal laws of creation, by which it is appointed that all natural things and objects shall be the representative images and figures of those

spiritual and eternal realities in which they originate; and that thus the universal world of

creation, with all its parts, may be a representative theatre of that eternal world from which it is derived, and with which it is in perpetual connection. When Jesus Christ, therefore, spoke in parables, He expressed eternal spiritual truths relating to his kingdom under images of natural things relating to the kingdom of this world, and in this figurative language impressed those truths more beautifully and affectingly on the minds of His hearers than He could have done in any other way.

“Q. What, then, would you say was the reason why Jesus Christ spake in parables?

"A. This mode of speaking answered a double purpose: First, in communicating to His humble and sincere disciples the lessons of Eternal Truth in the most significative and impressive language; and, secondly, by concealing truth from others who were not in a disposition to receive and profit by it, and who, consequently, might have suffered injury by its reception.

"Q. Is it possible, then, that any man can suffer injury from admitting the truth into his understanding?

"A. Yes; man has no greater enemy than the Eternal Truth if he is not in a disposition to form his life accordingly, by rejecting those evils which the truth makes manifest, and by cherishing those graces and virtues which the truth recommends, and at the same time communicates. Jesus Christ therefore says, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil' (John iii. 19). In receiving, therefore, into our understandings the knowledge of Eternal Truth, we receive either *life* or *death*; *life*, if we suffer it to influence our wills, and conduct us to the possession of the Supreme Good, which is the love of God and of our neighbour; and *death*, if we suffer it to remain fruitless, by burying it under the mire and clay of our natural evils, unforsaken and unrepented of.

"Q. Is it said that Jesus Christ spake nothing without a parable?

"A. Yes, in Matt. xiii. 34, Mark iv. 34; from which we are plainly taught how important it is to understand the parabolic language of Scripture if we would be 'wise unto salvation;' and the object of the following exposition is, that the devout reader of the

Holy Word may have an enlightened and spiritual discernment of the Divine things contained in the parable of our Saviour God, in order that his mind may be more opened to receive and to love the things of heaven and eternal life."

This pioneering work of Clowes remains today a trustworthy reference work. Today, however, we have a number of other collateral works that one can turn to for help in understanding the parables. I should like to single out for special consideration the two books of Edward Craig Mitchell, one on the parables of the new Testament (which significantly augments Clowes' work), and the other—which, so far as I know, stands alone—on the parables of the Old Testament. The one was published in 1888 and reprinted in 1900; the other in 1903. Sad to say, both are out of print.

Mitchell had an absolute genius for breaking a topic down into thought compartments. I have long appreciated his details, but must confess I have never understood his plan of organization (assuming he had one). Most of what I am about to say is drawn in general from Mitchell's Introduction to his first book, but radically rearranged according to my sense of logic.

There is no question about it: the parable is a powerful teaching device. One reason for this is that it operates on the principle of analogy. I'll just mention in passing that theologians have debated for years about the validity of so-called analogical knowledge of God. But I don't think we need to concern ourselves with that for now. An analogy, by definition, is a relationship of likeness or similarity between two things. As a teaching device it draws on knowledge one already has to lead to knowledge of something as yet unknown. Probably analogy is the most widely used teaching device.

From the Swedenborgian point of view, the analogical basis of parables can be defined as being in accord with the law of correspond-

ence. Our teachings tell us, for instance, that this is the law by which the Scriptures were written; the literal sense of the Bible treats of outward things, and, on the surface, the Bible looks much like many other literary works. But within its letter, as a soul within its body (the teaching continues) there is a consistent, coherent, continuous spiritual sense, always relevant to the life of our spirits. One of the great advantages to this law of correspondences is that it provides us with a fixed principle of interpretation, "open to all open minds, in all ages, in all countries, and in all conditions of progress" (as Mitchell put it).

Further, this relationship of correspondence is not a merely natural one—in the sense that a statue or a painting or a photograph of a person is an image of the person; such images are at best superficial and give us only a very limited knowledge of the person depicted. Correspondence is a spiritual principle, and what we gain from the parable is not more natural knowledge but insights into our inner, spiritual being. Each parable, furthermore, will embody one great central truth. And in our efforts to understand the parables, we do well to seek first to grasp the central truth each parable teaches, and then to look at the details.

The way to do this will vary considerably, depending on the form the parable has taken, as well as the degree to which its lesson touches the real state of our inner being. Is its lesson, for instance, one which we desperately need but one which our present disorderly spiritual state makes us incapable of seeing dispassionately?

One difference in form that we need to appreciate is that while most of the parables, especially in the New Testament, are spoken, some are actually enacted. The spoken parable is typical of those given directly by Jesus; the enacted parable occurs most often in the books of the prophets, most obviously in some of the strange actions of Jeremiah, such as hiding his linen belt in the rocks until it was ruined and useless [13:1-11].

Whatever form they take, one thing the parables have in common is their attention-getting qualities—a power we recognize in all forms of story-telling. Spiritual truths tend to seem abstract to us unless we can see by analogy how they relate to the natural things of our everyday life. This is precisely what the parable does: presents truth, so to speak, in duplicate. To cite Mitchell, "the spirit of the truth is provided with a body of facts, and the body is pro-

state. And our true spiritual state is that of our will, not our intellect. This in turn calls attention to another key point about the nature of parables. The parable reaches the will. One may hear any number of great truths presented in clear intellectual light, give tacit assent to them, and store them away in the memory for possible later rumination. But the unique form of the parable strikes immediately at the will, forcing the door of the intellect,

leave his disciples—to "teach you all things and . . . remind you of everything I have said to you." (Jn. 14:26)

Finally, the parables are interrelated. They are not merely detached stories, independent of each other; they all belong to one family. Perhaps the most obvious illustration of this is found in Matthew 13, in the series of seven parables—beginning with the sower, then the wheat and tares, the mustard seed, the yeast, the treasure in the field, the pearl, and finally the net—each distinct and with its open central truth, but at the same time all connected, illustrating together the process of regeneration. Mitchell suggests we think of the parables as a sort of one-artist show in a picture gallery, arranged to show the progressive development of the artist's ideas and message. Each can be viewed and appreciated separately, but as we study the entire exhibit we come more and more to realize the interrelatedness. Like paintings in a series, each serves to explain the rest, and all help toward the understanding of the whole.

As we ponder together this week a number of the Biblical parables, let us be alert to the central truths they portray, to their appeal to the will, and to their interrelatedness, pointing out clearly the path of life. ■

The Rev. Dr. William R. Woofenden, professor of the Swedenborg School of Religion, is the author and compiler of a comprehensive Swedenborg researcher's manual to be released in the fall of 1988. He presented the above article as a lecture at the Swedenborgian family camp in Fryeburg, Maine in 1983.

Some parables seem especially intended to rebuke prevalent sins, while others seem to have been given simply to illustrate great truths; but if we look closely we shall find that both of these elements are present in each parable.

vided with a spirit of principle." Or, to put it another way, abstract principles are embodied in concrete form. Even so, the message of the most vivid of parables may escape us if we are not spiritually ready for it. To illustrate this by analogy, let us note that the truths of the Word are often likened to seeds. And the growth of a seed depends not merely on what is planted but also on the condition of the soil in which it is planted. This, you will realize, is the central truth of the parable of the sower.

Continuing our analysis, it is important to note that parables are not argumentative, but illustrative; by and large they were given not to teach new doctrine but to illustrate and confirm doctrine already given. Some parables, it is true, seem especially intended to rebuke prevalent sins, while others seem to have been given simply to illustrate great truths; but if we look closely we shall find that both of these elements are present in each parable. The apparent emphasis may simply be a reflection of our individual spiritual

so to speak, provided the mind is ready for change—even though it may not welcome the idea of change.

An apt illustration of this is Nathan's parable to David, intended to rebuke him concerning Bathsheba. The parable presented, or, better yet, illustrated (through the vivid image of the poor man and his own little ewe lamb) the truth to David, arousing his indignation against evil portrayed; but at that point he had no perception of his own identity as the sinner. But, the truth having found its way into his will (instead of being bypassed into his memory) the prophet could complete his task, and the application of the truth to David was then easily made.

This is genuine spiritual teaching. It is not so much the communicating of accurate information as it is the opening of the door of the hearer's mind and consequent appeal to the hearer's will, allowing the listener to receive the truth that dwells within the information. This is that gift of the Holy Spirit which the Lord promised as he was about to

Plea for Humanitarian Aid to Mozambique

Church World Services today issued a public appeal for \$1.5 million for development and relief assistance to Mozambicans who, committee members heard, hunger for food, for home, for security and for peace.

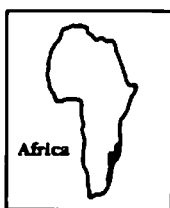
Funds will support the work of the Christian Council of Mozambique as it provides emergency relief goods; conducts health programs; provides training in health care, nutrition and farming, and supports agriculture

us just because we are unsure of their political preferences.

Church World Service has responded to Mozambicans' need for development and relief assistance by issuing a six-month appeal in October for \$1.5 million in cash for use by the Christian Council of Mozambique for emergency relief; health programs; training in health care, nutrition and farming, and support of agriculture and water supply development. CWS has worked with



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and water supply development in a country wracked by widespread internal violence. They also will be used to assist Mozambican refugees in South Africa, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

In Mozambique today, 4.6 million people in a population of 14 million are at risk of starvation, according to the U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Hunger. In addition, 550,000 Mozambicans have fled to neighboring countries, putting a heavy burden on these countries where late or deficient rainfall has made food harvests unreliable.

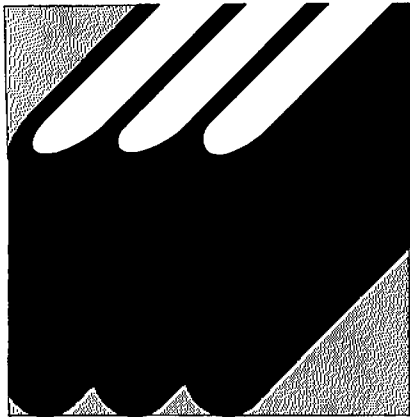
The choice before Mozambique is not between socialism or capitalism but between life and death, a Christian Council of Mozambique delegation said here. Stating that suffering in Mozambique knows no political or ideological motives simply means we are allowing people to die in front of

the Christian Council of Mozambique for five years meeting emergency relief and development needs, forwarding more than \$780,000 in cash and \$2.9 million in material aid in 1987 for distribution in Mozambique and to assist Mozambican refugees in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and South Africa. ■

The above article has been supplied by the Office of Information of the National Council of Churches of Christ.



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE



BOOK REVIEWS

A Welcome New Translation of a Swedenborg Classic

George F. Dole

The True Christian Religion, Translated from the original Latin by John Chadwick (London, the Swedenborg Society, 1988) 2 Vol's.

For some time, I have been sorry that John Chadwick was delaying completion of his invaluable Lexicon of Swedenborg's Latin in order to work on this translation, but I am sorry no longer. The two volumes just received amply justify the time and effort spent in their preparation. As a translator, I have many questions in matters of details; but as a translator, I am also aware that most of these are of concern to translators only. I shall mention some of them below.

First and most emphatically, though, I want to state my belief that this translation works. In preparing the present review, I read about twenty-three paragraphs quite closely, comparing carefully with the Latin Text, before sampling elsewhere more in the mode of the usual reader. Mr. Chadwick's English reads very much like Swedenborg's Latin—clear and straightforward, occasionally vivid. Above all, there is no trace of the pedantry that has marked older translations, or of the awkwardness I feel in some of my own.

I particularly appreciate the handling of syntactic problems. There are no long sentences beginning with noun clauses ("That the x is y, is evident from the fact that . . ."). Mr. Chadwick uses the device of nominal phrases ("the oneness of God" for "that God is one"), or transposes so that the clause follows rather than precedes the verb, as non-pedantic English style requires. He also breaks Swedenborg's sections into paragraphs that stand out clearly, which significantly eases reading.

In vocabulary, he has often been quite bold. For example, the former "There is a universal influx from God into . . ." (n. 8) now

reads, "There is a general feeling emanating from God and flowing into . . ." Elsewhere, "influx" becomes "radiation" or even "influence," "life" becomes "the vital principle," and "Operator" becomes "Active Force." Given the previous conservative policies of the Swedenborg Society, this freedom is as surprising as it is welcome.

The net result is a translation that reads well, and that, in my estimation, very fairly represents Swedenborg's intent. I have no fear that the reader will be misled as to what is meant or put off by cumbersome locutions.

In format and typography, the book is quite attractive. My only suggestion would be that block quotes be indented. As it is, all the paragraphs begin flush left, and the eye has no aids in picking up the extended quotes from Scripture (or, as in n. 9, a Creed).

I hope that the contemporary reader will not be put off by the exclusive language. Chadwick does occasionally use "person" for *homo*, but more frequently uses "man," and uses the masculine pronoun throughout. To me, inconsistency in this respect is no improvement, but rather calls attention to the fact that there is a problem here that has not been resolved.

I hope also that the contemporary theologian will not be put off by the use of the definite article in the title. "*The True Christian Religion*" suggests that it is the only one, and implies a kind of sectarian spirit quite alien to our theology. I find myself bewildered that a translation otherwise so excellent should present itself so inauspiciously.

I do, as noted, have many questions in matters of detail, of which three examples may suffice. Much as I appreciate Mr. Chadwick's boldness, I do not think that "influence" or "radiation" adequately convey the intent of *influeret/influxus*. To me, Swedenborg definitely intends the image of flowing in (cf. *Arcana Coelestia* 6200), and "influence" can

be by simple surface contact, while "radiation" focuses on flowing out. Mr. Chadwick's choice of "Coming-into-Being" for *Existere* is a vast improvement over the misleading "Existing," but its inadequacy is apparent in the statement, "Unless Being comes into being, it does not exist" (21.2). My own choice of "Presence" (on the basis of *The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine* n. 32) is perhaps more controversial, but in this instance as generally, it would seem to make more sense. It also puzzles me why "Jupiter" stands in the text in n. 9.3, with "Jove" in the footnote, when *Jovem* stands in the Latin text, and Swedenborg is calling attention to the possibility that the name relates to Jehovah.

I suspect that Mr. Chadwick would still subscribe to his description of himself in a letter of 10 October 1975 as "... only a humble Latinist, not a philosopher or theologian." Whether humble or not, he is an excellent Latinist and a skilled translator. I would indeed challenge him on a number of theological details, but would not want that to be the residual impression left by this review. So I would close by stating that in my judgment, this is definitely the best available version of *True Christian Religion*, one which belongs on the shelf of every serious student, and one which can be given to any serious inquirer. ■

The Rev. Dr. George F. Dole has translated Swedenborg's Heaven and Hell, and Divine Love and Wisdom, for the Swedenborg Foundation. His translations of Soul-Body Interaction and The Universal Human was published in 1985 by Paulist Press with their acclaimed Classics of Western Spirituality series.

Can the Soul be Measured?

Polish scholar Janusz Slawinski, Sc.D., Professor of Biophysics at the Institute of Physics of the Pedagogical University of Krakow, has published a thesis that anyone interested in the survival of the physical will want to be aware of. Just published in the

Journal of Near-Death Studies (Winter, 1987), the abstract is as follows:

"The question of survival of bodily death is often considered to be beyond contemporary scientific methods and conceptual categories. However, recent research into spontaneous radiations from living systems suggests a scientific foundation for the ancient association between light and life, and a biophysical hypothesis of the conscious self that could survive death of the body. All living organisms emit low-intensity light; at the time of death, that radiation is ten to 1,000 times stronger than that emitted under normal conditions. This "deathflash" is independent of the cause of death, and reflects in intensity and duration the rate of dying. The vision of intense light reported in near-death experiences may be related to this deathflash, which may hold an immense amount of information. The electromagnetic field produced by necrotic radiation, containing energy, internal structure, and information, may permit continuation of consciousness beyond the death of the body."

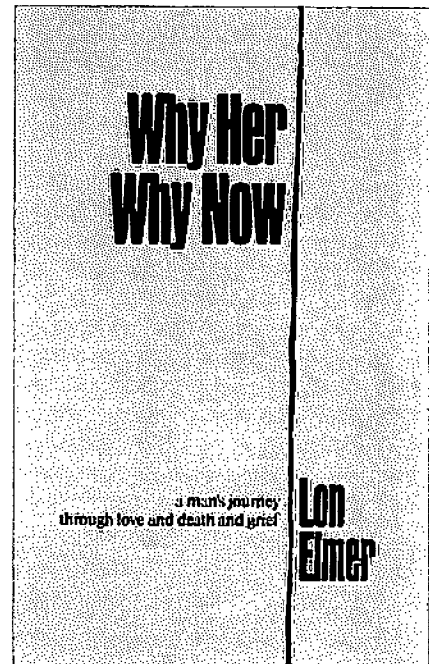
In a special issue devoted to this study, the editors of the journal elicited response from ten prominent writers, including Stanley Krippner and Rupert Sheldrake. For a copy of this journal, write to: *Journal of Near-Death Studies*, Human Sciences Press, Inc., 72 Fifth Ave., NY, NY 10011-8004. ■

Seattle Swedenborgian Publishes Book on Grief

Those who attended convention last year in Tacoma, Washington will no doubt remember Lon Elmer, a prominent member of the hosting committee. Mr. Elmer is a free-lance writer who has just released *Why Her, Why Now?* from his own Signal Elm Press. A moving autobiographical account of his journey through love and grief in the death of his wife, the book has already received an endorsement from Elizabeth Kubler-Ross. On the back cover, the following quote appears

from George Dole: "I deeply believe that all our efforts to find healing in anesthesia or denial are self-defeating. The road to wholeness travels to the realm of attentiveness, of sensitivity. There seems to be no other way to awaken the deeper self that transcends the pain. Lon's story is told without reserve and without exhibitionism, and carries the same message on a profoundly human level."

Copies may be obtained by



sending \$11.00 postpaid to the
Stone House Book Room
16244 Cleveland St.
Redmond, Washington 98052. ■



Birthday, Marc Chagall, 1915-23, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.



How to Survive a 20th Century Marriage and Actually Enjoy It

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James F. Lawrence

Why do weddings occupy such a prominent place in the ministry of the San Francisco Swedenborgian church? Beyond the rarefied architectural elements that seem to convey just what so many couples want for their wedding, there is perhaps no church where the concept of marriage plays such a central role in its overall view of life and the creation. Emmanuel

More that finances, more than sex, more than in-laws, recent studies have confirmed what many of us already suspect: the lack of quality time together is suffocating the greatest number of American marriages.

Swedenborg was gifted with deep insights into the design of all creation, realizing that the *principle of marriage* is at work at all levels of life. In the mineral, plant and animal worlds, there is the union of two elements into something more complete, more beautiful, and more enduring. In all aspects of reality, there is a never-ceasing complementarity between the feminine and masculine principles: Substance and form, emotion and intellect, passivity and activity.

In the human world, especially, there is a union of a man and a woman in marriage, from which emerges a more complete and beautiful life that leads the couple to a greater fulfillment of their God-given potential. Swedenborg also came to understand that there is a union of two elements *within* God—namely, divine wisdom and divine love. This principle of marriage in the Divine Being is reflected in all things He has created, great and small. A steadfast commitment to the universal principle of marriage gives us the ongoing inspiration and joy to offer a wedding program at the Swedenborgian Church that does its best to *launch* marriages with beauty and dignity.

Helping so many of you begin your married life is truly a joy for us, because weddings are generally such positive and upbeat times to participate in people's lives. When we wave good-bye to most of you, the spirit is buoyant and the glow is on your faces. And yet, all is not completely well. The waters are smooth for the most part as the couple departs from the harbor, but we know that none will escape certain rough storms ahead and that perhaps half will not be able to survive the voyage with the relationship intact.

Being married takes much more skill than it once did. There was a time when much less was asked of the institution of marriage than what is generally asked of it today. Marriage is not foremost a seminary for the human race and a pragmatic economic arrangement in today's modern western world; today the institution of marriage is entered into

with the expectation that it will become the primary vehicle for intimacy and personal fulfillment in couples' lives. But these much sought-after experiences do not come merely for the asking: they are rewards for diligent and artful relationship-building.

With the going as choppy as all sociological signs suggest that it is, I propose three skills that we need to carry with us for a not-only-surviving-but-thriving marriage kit bag for the eighties and nineties.

Use Teamwork to Find Time Together

In the first place, I am convinced that the number one challenge for modern marriages is the lack of quality time together, once the marriage has settled in. More than finances, more than sex, more than in-laws, recent studies have confirmed what many of us already suspect: the lack of quality time together is suffocating the greatest number of American marriages. This state of affairs arises primarily due to the pressures of two careers trying to navigate increasingly complicated lifestyle patterns in supra-sophisticated urban environments.

A marriage relationship is very much a living organism. We might liken a marriage to a house plant. It will flourish if it receives the proper attention and will wither if it is ignored. Time is to a marriage what water and sunlight are to a house plant.

But so many times it is not practical for one member in the marriage to quit a job, or for either of them to work fewer hours, or for them to move to the country. In so many situations, people are truly pinned between the proverbial rock and hard place with regard to their obligations. What then? A realistic response that would apply in virtually all situations is offered in an article on this subject in *Marriage Encounter* magazine by a couple who chose to use the fictitious names, Dave and Aileen. In their situation, Dave was in a responsible executive position that required him to be out of town

quite a bit and to work late nights and weekends on a fairly frequent basis. If he didn't put in the hours, his advancement in the company would almost certainly be severely limited.

Aileen had left her job when the first child came. Though she was enjoying motherhood, she no longer received all the positive reinforcement that came from her employment and she found that she was not only as busy as before, but actually more exhausted. The marriage began to show signs of significant deterioration. Then when the second child came along, the distance between husband and wife began to seem frighteningly wide. The root problem, they both agreed, was that they were simply starving their relationship through a lack of time together.

That fear of losing it all motivated them to seek counseling. They were fortunate. Because they still really cared for one another, they were able to get back on track within a very short time.

The solution they came to, however, was not some romantic tale of leaving it all behind for an idyllic existence in a mountain cabin. Since then, the family has grown to five children and Dave's responsibilities at work are considerably greater. He says, "When Aileen and I look back to that time when we almost split up, we can laugh about it, because we thought that was a busy time then. Today we are far busier. The difference is that we communicate constantly about it. We juggle our schedules endlessly and it is almost a game between us, to see how we can carve out little chunks of time here and there to be together. We approach the challenge as partners and we find that we value the time we do get together as precious. Because we are always in dialog about it, we stay in touch with each other's feelings.

Sometimes in our marriages, we have to be realistic and accept some things that we will not be able to change. But our challenges must draw us *closer* to one another, not push us apart. Therefore, the first fundamental skill we need, and it does not come naturally but requires

effort, is the ability of working together when we tackle the problems in our marriages. Any problem is cut in half immediately, if it is truly shared by both partners.

Learn the Ability to Live with Change

Another skill in an eighties and nineties not-only-surviving-but-thriving marriage kit is the ability to live with change. I once had a teacher who grabbed my attention by declaring that he had lived through five distinctively separate marriages. They were all with the same woman, and they have never been divorced! Perhaps some of you present who have been married for many years will be able to relate instantly to such a declaration. Change is the only constant in life, as the saying goes. When we are in the moonstruck "falling in love" stage of a newly budding conjugal relationship, we want it to last forever. And just when we begin to wonder if maybe it will, it starts its inexorable process of evolving into something else. And not only does love change; people change, too. The marriage ceremonies I am most leery of performing are those for very young adults. I am concerned about their level of maturity for the rigors of marriage, but I am even more concerned that they are still in the middle of their identity-formation years. In two or three years, studies show that it is quite likely that they will have become very different people in fundamental ways, and they may discover that they have almost nothing in common.

But not just young adults. All of us move through significant transformations, and not all of our changes will necessarily be appreciated by one's spouse. I have come to the conclusion that every marriage requires a commitment to the *personhood* of the other and not merely to various superficial manifestations of them. For instance, I know of a marriage where the wife was a doctor, and she suddenly announced that she wanted to quit doctoring and become a mother and housewife. The husband was so in love with the idea of

"Love is to care enough about someone not to use them in the achievement of one's life goals."

being married to a doctor that he couldn't find his love for her as a homemaker. He loved the doctor, not the woman, and they ended up divorced.

All throughout the life of marriage there are changes that signify important developments in each person. A sports car is traded in for a conservative sedan. Long beautiful hair is bobbed short. Beards are shaved (or grown). Political parties are switched; religious interests

are not just a skill or tool. It is really the entire ground for our marriages. And that is love. Where there is genuine love in a marriage, then everything else can be worked out.

There are countless definitions of love. Swedenborg gives us numerous definitions in various places throughout his writings. For example, Swedenborg tells us that the essence of love is to love others outside of oneself . . . to want to be one with them . . . love is happy

need to be in alignment with the eternal purposes of God—that higher power, however you conceive it, that called us into being and guides us into the greater realities for which we were created.

God wants your marriage to work—the very heavens and all his creation declare it. To know this is to possess an awesome resource. It is the very presence of the Lord's divine love and wisdom that moves us to understand each other at our deepest levels. It is the divine presence within that provides the impulse for us to face and work on our personal shortcomings that are hindering the marriage. And it is God's divine love that opens up channels of warmth and acceptance so that we can become more truly ourselves.

Guiding you on your marriage voyage and steering you to safe harbor is perhaps the greatest blessing God can ever bestow upon you. To take seriously your marriage vows and to diligently build skills for a thriving and joyful marriage is perhaps the greatest gift that you can give back to God and to the creation. ■

The Rev. James F. Lawrence will be beginning a co-ministry with his wife, the Rev. Rachel Lawrence, at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Fryeburg, Maine this summer. The above was given as the sermon message at the annual Marriage Sunday at the San Francisco church on March 6, 1988 to an overflow crowd of couples married at the church.

The solution they came to, however, was not some romantic tale of leaving it all behind for an idyllic existence in a mountain cabin. If we want to keep our spouses trapped in a snapshot of who they were on the wedding day, we will be in for frustration and disappointment.

bloom—or fade. We all know the plaintive exclamation, "You're not the person I married anymore!" Aha! Welcome to the journey of a real marriage! Such people have not cultivated the skill of knowing how to grow and live with change. If we want to keep our spouses trapped in a snapshot of who they were on the wedding day, we will be in for frustration and disappointment. If we are attached primarily to outward signs and expression of their spirit, we may find ourselves in a situation one day for which we did not bargain. But if we are committed to the well-being of our partner, to their soulful and spiritual development, to their *personhood*, then we will find that love does not leave as changes come and go.

The second skill for the not-only-surviving-but-thriving marriage involves consciously loving the PERSON we married, and then we will develop the ability to live and grow through change.

In a Word: Love

Lastly, the third skill for our kit

when other people are happy . . . love wants to love and to be loved . . . love is based upon goodness and results in endless varieties of joys and delights . . . love is to care enough about someone not to use them in the achievement of life's goals . . . love consists in caring, expressing compassion and concern, and this with the long-range benefit of the other person in mind. There are many splendid faces of love. No conjugal relationship can be called a marriage without it, and without love it is impossible for two souls to integrate intimately.

Here are the three skills, then: 1) the ability to work together to find real time with one another; 2) the ability to live and grow through change; 3) the ability to truly and deeply love one another.

The Silent Partner

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not suggest the need for a silent partner in your marriage. To build a good marriage we need more than good intentions, more than good counsel, more than hard work. We



Edward Robeson Taylor's poem was inspired by the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church. Here the church is seen as it was in the first decade of this century.

In A Church

*Tile-roofed and low it meekly stands,
The loving work of loving hands,
And views, from out its cross-crowned tower,
Its garden plot of tree and flower.*

*Within, madrona trees, love-slain,
With joy renewed live once again,
To hold, in still unwearied arms,
The naked ceiling's modest charms.*

*A holy hush is in the air,
As though the spirit's essence there
Had been distilled and entered all
That lay within the sacred wall.*

*The song is sung, the prayer is said,
The Book, and sermon thence, are read,
While from the wings of Peace outspread
The balm of blessedness is shed.*

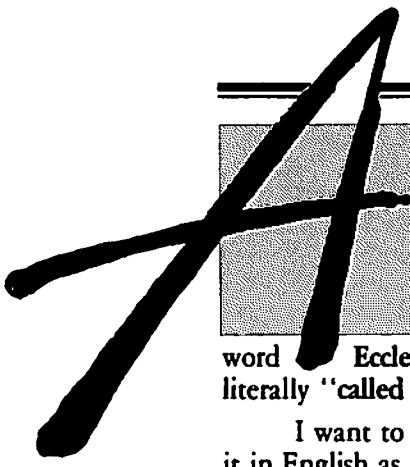
Edward Robeson Taylor



The famed interior of the San Francisco Church as it appeared in the Twenties and Thirties.

134 **The Ecclesia:
In Search of the Church**

Brian Kingslake



word Ecclesia, which is generally used for the "Church," means literally "called out."

I want to consider this word "Ecclesia" at some depth. We use it in English as "ecclesiastic." Swedenborg uses it throughout for the "Church." In the Greek New Testament it means an "Assembly." The famous Ecclesia in ancient Athens was a special Assembly of leading citizens, who were summoned or "called out" from time to time to decide on urgent matters of government. A herald with a scroll would ride on horseback through the streets of Athens, calling out the names of the councillors. As each man heard his name, he would stop what he was doing and hurry to the meeting-place on the hill.

We might translate the word Ecclesia as "paged." In the old days before electronics, a page-boy would go through the lounges of a hotel, "calling out" people's names. Today it is done on a public address system. Have you ever been paged at an airport? It gives you quite a shock to hear your own name booming out over the loud speakers! You feel everybody is looking at you, as you straighten your tie or pat your hair and set off proudly to meet the one who has "called you out."

The early Christians thought of themselves as being paged, or "called out," by the Lord Jesus Christ, "summoned" to a special meeting with him. "I heard a voice from heaven" (said John) "saying, Come out of her, my people." They had not chosen the Lord but, incredible as it might seem, he had chosen them! The pagan world, symbolically referred to as Babylon, was about to be destroyed; but to the Christian a voice was sounding on the celestial loud-speakers, "come ye out of her, you, and you, and you, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Those who responded to the summons, setting themselves apart and refusing to conform to the ways of a wicked and adulterous generation, were in the short term persecuted by the pagan world, even put to death; yet they knew in their hearts that their beloved Lord had taken them to himself. The Christian Ecclesia grew rapidly. After three hundred years converts had been "called out" from every corner of the Roman Empire. That was Christianity's finest hour.

Then an astonishing event took place. The Emperor Constantine, whose mother St. Helena was a Christian, made Christianity the official religion of the whole Roman Empire! The Christian community hailed this as a magnificent triumph for their faith; God's reign on earth had begun. Ironically, however, Constantine's well-meant action just brought the Christian Church to an end. Christianity became fashionable. All were now in it; nobody had to be "called out" from paganism any more. Pagans became Christians overnight. People without the slightest pretensions to spirituality were baptised, and even became bishops and cardinals and popes. Soon it was impossible to tell, from man's manner of life, whether he was truly Christian or not. Standards dropped lower and lower until the Church itself

became the Scarlet Woman, and the Lord's cry from heaven, "Come ye out of her, my people" was no longer heeded.

In Protestant Britain, after the Industrial Revolution, the Church became equated with Big Business. Wealthy factory owners supported and attended the parish church, and took it for granted that they were Christians, even though perhaps their life-pattern ran counter to all the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus had said: "Blessed are the poor, the mourners, the meek, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure of heart, the peace-makers." Big Business said: "Blessed are the rich, the unscrupulous, those who can elbow their way to the front and can satisfy all their hungers and desires."

Missionaries were embarrassed by this situation when they began to make converts in heathen lands. At first the native peoples wanted to join the Church because they thought Christianity must have some very strong magic in it, since it made these white foreigners so powerful, rich and clever. They attended the mission schools and learned to read, and were given the New Testament as their text-book. Then their bewilderment began, because it became evident that there was no relation between the way these white people lived, and the religion expounded in their holy Book. The white men said with their lips, "All men are brothers, equal before God," but in practice they placed the white man on top and the colored man underneath. They called their Christ the "Prince of Peace," but they were always at war, and built empires by conquest. Jesus had apparently lived and worked with the outcasts of society, the ne'er-do-wells, traitors and prostitutes. He had been at loggerheads with the establishment, calling rulers a "breed of snakes"; yet the Christian Church was one of the biggest establishments in the world, and the drunks and molls and hippies had to stay outside. It is difficult for the missionary to explain that the white man is not exactly lying, nor is he consciously hypocritical; it is just that the

religious words of the New Testament have lost all meaning for him. The phrases used in church are just so much cotton wool, which pads him round and makes him feel comfortable and good; it never occurs to him that his whole way of life is challenged by them.

The obvious situation is that the Church of Jesus Christ which lost its distinctiveness back in the 4th century and became equated with civilization, has by now just about worked itself out. As an institution it is still impressive, but to what degree does it influence the life and thought of the people? A sociological survey over a large and representative segment of Protestant church-goers reveals that only a negligible proportion of so-called Christians pays any attention to the attitude of their churches on any live issue; the vast majority form their opinions from radio or TV, the *Readers Digest*, and their local newspapers; or just go the way their fancies lead them.

We have come to the point in human history where the Old Christianity is dead, and a New Church (a Nova Ecclesia) must be inaugurated. And, in fact, a New Church has been inaugurated by the Lord himself, who has delivered new teachings for its use through the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. All of us, I am sure, want to belong to this New Church. But to be members we shall have to make a clean break with most of the attitudes and values of our pagan culture, and become a real Ecclesia, "called out" from the world to live this special kind of life. I do not mean we must separate ourselves from the world in the sense of forming a closed community. Jesus himself said of his disciples, "I pray not that they should be taken out of this world; but that they should be kept from its evil." (John 17:15). As members of the Ecclesia, we should live in the world, facing its temptations, getting along with other folk, earning our living, and so on. We should not hold aloof from other people, nor look down on them with scorn or in a patronizing way; but we should be "peculiar people" in the sense that we should adopt a different scale of values, abiding by the

Ironically, Constantine's well-meant action just about brought the Christian Church to an end. Christianity became fashionable . . . People without the slightest pretensions to spirituality became baptized.

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uncompromising standards of the Church to which we have been called.

Most people regard life as being so-many years of time, which are to be passed through as pleasantly as possible. But in the new Ecclesia we learn that we are not in this world just to pass the time. We are here for a specific divinely-ordained purpose: to become angels in the Lord's heavenly Kingdom. This world is an anteroom to eternity, a school in which we are supposed to train for angelhood. Unfortunately a large number of the students in this school do not take their studies seriously.

Our sole goal in the world is to become regenerated, reborn as children of god. We start life dominated by love of self and love of the world; our task during life is to get rid of these two loves (or at least put them in a subordinate position) and become motivated instead by love to the Lord and the neighbor. From being ego-centric we must become God-centric, and from being concerned only with the things of this world we must become supremely concerned with the things of heaven. When you die and enter eternity, nothing will be asked of you at all, except the one vital question: To what degree are you regenerated? Regeneration is an interior thing, and only what has entered your interiors will go with you after death. All those surface interests, brilliant and exciting though they may be, are really a waste of time, because you will leave them all behind. We only take with us what has percolated through to the roots of life, forming our inner Ruling Love.

We Westerners are a restless people. We rush around doing things, filling up every moment of the day. We even pride ourselves on how busy we are! We say we are fulfilling the Doctrine of Use. But if the things we are doing fail to develop love to the Lord and the neighbor, then they are not serving any genuine use. I suggest that, as New-Churchmen, we should resign from all commitments and responsibilities and membership of clubs and societies and boards and what-not, if they merely exhaust our

energies and do not get us any nearer to heaven. We must trim our business lives and rearrange our whole program so that we are not too preoccupied to spend time on the things that really serve a use, such as a quiet period every day in the Lord's presence, when we can open up our inner will and align it with the will of God. We should give ourselves time to exercise our creative talents, and develop a love of beauty; time to read and meditate on books which give us new spiritual insights; and pre-eminently, of course, time to study the Word of God and the teachings of our Church. You will probably find that you need to spend more time with your married partner and your children. There are friendships you should cultivate on a deep level. By doing such things as these you will fulfill the Doctrine of Use.

It is also characteristic of our western culture that we should be ambitious. We are told that we must get on, succeed, do better than the next man and make a name for ourselves. Why? No reason, apparently, except to satisfy love of self. Yet the whole purpose of life is to suppress love of self! So as members of the Ecclesia we must go into reverse on the ambition line. We should have only one ambition: to love the Lord our God, and our neighbor as ourself.

Again, our culture requires that we should pile up possessions. High-pressure advertising persuades us to buy more and more of a bewildering variety of consumer goods. Why? To satisfy our love of the world. Yet the purpose of life is to soften our love of the world! The less we pander to it, the easier our regeneration becomes. Jesus said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, but lay up treasures in heaven; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

A member of the new Ecclesia must develop an altogether different set of values, priorities and standards. These will revolutionize his thinking. They will transform his attitudes towards politics, business, education and the upbringing of his children, the use of leisure, towards

everything. The change will come out very strongly in his home life. His wife will find him very much easier to live with. The children will catch something of it, and will ease up on their own quarrels and struggle for mastery; there will be less shouting and nagging in the house. His friends will notice it; they will see he is developing a new kind of maturity and poise, recognizing that he has "got something." In a crisis, he will be the stable one, on whom others

When you die and enter eternity, nothing will be asked about you at all, except the one vital question: To what degree are you regenerated?

lean. Because of his growing intimacy with the Lord and his deepening prayer life, he will have an ever stronger trust in Providence: his fears will vanish, stresses and strains will ease, and he will begin to experience a deep happiness which no outward trouble can touch. You see what is happening? He is becoming an angel, and his environment is therefore becoming Heaven! That is what is supposed to happen with every one of us as we grow older, and the fact that it so seldom does happen indicates the urgent need for the inauguration of a New Church.

Are you to be included in this New Church? Perhaps you believe you are already in it! Perhaps, like me, you were born of New-Church parents and have been attending doctrinal classes all your life. But don't let us deceive ourselves. Merely to know and accept the Heavenly Doctrines will not necessarily get us to heaven. To suppose it will is to subscribe to the heretical belief in *Salvation by Faith Alone*, which they roundly condemn. Look at yourself for a moment. Does your life conform to the

Heavenly Doctrines for the New Church, or are you just drifting along with the secular culture, never having consciously answered a "call"?

What particular doctrines seem to be calling your name? Give the matter some thought, as it is vitally important. At your next doctrinal class or discussion group, I suggest that each member should be given ten minutes to enumerate the doctrines which are helping him most in his daily living. These are the ones which should be concentrated on, not those which for him are merely theoretical. Each person must discover for himself the aspects of truth which speak to his present condition. You are the one who is being "called out" for the new Ecclesia, and it is you who must respond to the divine summons.

Let us visualize what this summons might be like, getting back as close as we can to the original meaning of "Ecclesia." A royal car drives down your street with a loud speaker on the roof booming out a list of names, including your own. "Come out of Babylon, my people," says your God. And you are left to consider whether you are prepared to respond to the summons, to go against the stream of your environment and culture, to "Come out" of the humdrum, mediocre, secular, complacent, self-centered life you have probably been living up till now. "Depart ye, depart ye" says the Speaker. "Go out from thence; touch no unclean thing."

Where is this new Ecclesia to assemble? On the top of a hill, of course. Which hill? The Acropolis in Athens? No. Listen: "He carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain (a spiritual mountain) and showed me that great city the holy Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven, having the glory of God." That is the hill on which the new Ecclesia is to assemble! If you accept the summons and join the Ecclesia, you will find that you have to travel back and forth between your present home and the holy city on the hill-top, over and over again. There will be meeting after meeting, every day probably. You will become a com-

muter, commuting to and from the New Jerusalem. In the end you will think, "This is ridiculous! Why not uproot myself from where I am, and go and live in the New Jerusalem altogether?" And that is exactly what we all must do, as New-Church men and women! We must abandon our present abode in the secular world, and become permanent residents in the golden city itself, living for the rest of our lives in perfect peace and heavenly joy near the royal palace of the King of kings. "The spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." ■

The Rev. Brian Kingslake was formerly pastor at the National Swedenborgian Church in Washington D.C. He has also served in Black South Africa and in England. He lives in retirement with his wife, Jill, in Bath, England.

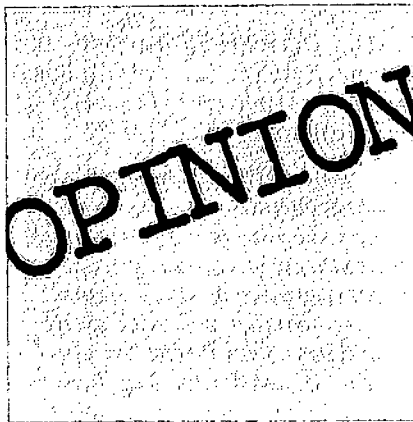
Still Relevant Today

Dear Editor,

Recently while browsing through some old correspondence I came across a fascinating letter from Carolyn Blackmer which might be of interest to *Messenger* readers. I had been asked to edit a special issue of the *Messenger* on "New Directions in the Church," and had asked her for an article on the topic, "The Retraining of the Laity." From Bath, Maine on Feb. 8, 1969 she responded:

"One of the possible areas of New Directions might be Ways of Discovering them. Is anyone else covering that angle? It seems to me that it isn't so much resistance to change that is the trouble with our societies as it is uncertainty and confusion about the right way to go about changing to something new, and the right reasons for doing so. So would it be useful to suggest *how* laymen could discover new directions? As I have thought it through at this point I thought I would center on opening out the *implications* of what E. S. has written—the ampliative inferences" as C. S. Peirce called this way of projecting from what we know into what we have to discover. Then suggest the different modes into which our developed doctrines could be translated to make them serve human needs in new ways: philosophical and psychological modes especially. The point I want to make is that we could invite creativity for innovations, and by getting at some new concepts we could become more perceptive about new directions, new ways to be a church. At present we are rather limited to doctrinal generalizations and to imitative use of new methods initiated by other churches. All of this discovering new ways hinges on differentiating between using E. S. as an open system—open to fuller and fuller interpretations—and using him as a closed system of theological dogma.

I hope someone will write on our church *organization* and the possible new directions that might come from laity initiative so as to bring new life. I have thought that the people in our societies know very



little about the issues before us as an organization and have very little voice in decisions. Someone should dream up a new structure that would allow the people to get information and discuss it in their local groups—perhaps helped by learning how to discuss issues. If we continue to have a form of 'representative' government we will continue to neglect our best resources—our laymen in their local parishes."

Paul Zacharias
Kitchener, Ontario

Institutionalized Theft

Dear Editor,

Can George Kessler be serious when he suggests that we need a government that taxes all our earnings, giving us "exemptions" for the necessities (Opinion, February 1988, *Messenger*)? This is hardly a Christian system at all. I consider the phrase "Christian tax system" to be an oxymoron. What is Christian about using force to take something from one person for your own or another's use? Indeed, government does need to follow the Golden Rule. And for more specific guidance I'd suggest it follow the commandments against theft, murder and lying.

Why do we keep debating whom we should steal from, kill or lie to and never consider that perhaps we and our government should do none of these things at all? If the commandments are true for us as individuals, they do not change when applied to groups, including governments. Surely God didn't mean, "You shall not steal, but if you can lobby to get others to steal for you then it's okay." Let's hold govern-

ments to the same standard we hold ourselves. The result may not be perfect, but it will be far better than the institutionalized theft, murder and deceit we have today. In a structure of individual choice and responsibility, we will encourage spiritual growth and brotherhood most.

Ian Woofenden
Guemes Island, Wash.

Love and Compassion, but Order too

Dear Editor,

After reading the article by Bill Cook, "Replacing Ignorance and Hate with Knowledge and Compassion" (February *Messenger*), I thought how appropriate the cover artwork for that issue was: two hands, one evidently a child's grasping an adult's. To me, it portrayed the ultimate of life, procreation. How many times I have read an article in *The Messenger* or a sermon in *Our Daily Bread* and thought the author was answering my dilemma of the moment. This time, the cover artwork did that for me.

Cook writes about homosexuality with authority, but apparently without biological knowledge, nor spiritual guidance. My understanding of Divine Order does not have a place for homosexual practice. Our bodies do not seem designed for this usage of sex, especially multiple sex partners, as the current epidemic obsessing our society suggests.

Yet, the Easter message can be seen as addressing this state of affairs, for it signifies that radical disorder can be faced with love and compassion. With prayer and the Lord's guidance, we can overcome hellish inclination. Before the crucifixion, the Lord taught us that, above all, we must love our neighbor as ourself. Another maxim that applies is "love the man, but not the deed."

Margaret Dyck
DeBolt, Alberta

Is Contempt the Root?

Dear Editor,

I was much interested in Bill Cook's article in the February

Messenger, "Replace Ignorance and Hate with Knowledge and Compassion." If I understood Mr. Cook rightly, he would have us believe that "homosexuality is ordained by the creator . . . the choice of our Creator . . . what God has ordained . . . God created him or her that way," (p. 40, columns 1,2). Mr. Cook urges knowledge and compassion. In that vein, I would like to share the work of the Aesthetic Realism Foundation in New York City, which is the only place I know of that is experiencing steady and permanent results in helping men change from homosexuality.

The philosophy of Aesthetic Realism and the theology of the New Church have much in common. For example, the New Church teaches that all of nature is "a theatre representative of the heavenly kingdom" (*Arcana Coelestia* #s 3000, 3483, 3518, 5173). Aesthetic Realism teaches this as well, helping people to discover the beauty and heavenly splendor amid the pots and pans of ordinary occurrences of daily life.

There may be a link, according to Aesthetic Realism, between contempt and homosexuality. Eli Siegel, the founder of the philosophy, points out that the homosexual person tends towards loving himself—and loving that which is similar to himself. Although there might be something of what is called "love" in a homosexual relationship, often it is a means of conquering another human being, and of setting up a master/slave relationship. (Of course, this can also be true a heterosexual relationship.)

Aesthetic Realism teaches that the homosexual begins life early with a generous degree of contempt for the world. Usually it arises through a mother's love being too easily had. The boy gets the feeling that he can manipulate his mother, and get her to do whatever he pleases. A mother's love, had on such easy terms, can only encourage contempt in a young boy. There are numerous testimonies on file at the Aesthetic Realism Foundation where men changed their sexual orientation after working through their contemptuous inner feelings into feelings of love for life.

I have written an article on this philosophy, which treats the homosexual question extensively, entitled, "Liking the World: Some Tenets of Aesthetic Realism Seen in the Light of New Church Teachings." For a copy, please write to me at the address below.

Rev. Dr. Ray Silverman
299 Le Roi Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15208

The Case Against Denominationalism

Dear Editor,

I believe that Emanuel Swedenborg is correct in stating that the religious establishments existing today, will not be the New Age religious groups of the future. For instance, can you imagine WHEN the Methodists, Baptists, Quakers, Shakers, Mennonites, Catholics and/or Swedenborgians, or any other religious groups would voluntarily lose their denominational name of identity to become a part of the Universally acceptable "All Inclusive" Family of God? But, the truth is that those who will form the New Religious groups will be, and are coming out of the old-time religious establishments.

There are sure to be many good, sincere people who will and are rebelling against any changes that are predestined to come, who will cling to the old-time religious teachings, ways of worship, and all of the old traditions, but regardless of the rebellions "all things will be made new," and are now in the process of renewal.

If any religious groups are to remain, they will have to become a fellowship for individual spiritual advancement, and not an establishment as a Big Business way to raise money and to fatten the purses of a few big name religious leaders. Heretofore, many pulpits have become high pedestals for the religious leaders, from which they look DOWN on the congregations and the people in the pews are LOOKING UP to only one individual minister, priest or leader.

New fellowship groups can

form, and are forming, which will have a Universally acceptable name such as "The Family of God," which will be "All inclusive," and never exclusive. If necessary, there could be an East-Side "Family of God" group, and a West-Side "Family of God," or any "Family of God" group with a name preceding which would indicate the location. Instead of having ONE minister or priest to preach and to read to us from the Old and New Testaments, or any writings, there would be 5, 10 or 20 staff members and/or leaders in each "Family of God" group, with designated Offices and duties, WITHOUT PAY, and perhaps one minister in each group could be paid for performing weddings, funerals, etc. (with elective renewals, each year.) (Most rituals of the outward form of Worship would be abolished.)

The leaders could "take turns" in leading the services, which might include some unison readings of various meditations, along with individual readings of meditations, articles and reports. Also, there could be vocal and instrumental music by individuals and various groups. Money could be collected for One Salary, only, and for specific needs of the members and to pay for utilities, equipment like hymnals, and for rentals or upkeep of building. Each individual should feel free to select their own reading material and to participate in the services, but NOT To DOMINATE.

BABYLON is falling NOW, and those who have eyes to see will SEE, and those who have ears to hear will HEAR their own PERSONAL Lord, saying, "Come out of her my people." The Truths that make us free people will be established, and there will be mutual understanding between leaders, and the congregations, for ALL ARE ONE IN "THE FAMILY OF GOD."

Bessie Behrendt
P.O. Box 1402
Great Bend, Kansas 67530

The Upper Room

Trees of Righteousness

Leon C. LeVan



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A tree is one of the most beautiful things in nature. Trees are as necessary to our sense of beauty as green fields and blue skies—as lakes and mountains and streams. Joyce Kilmer immortalized himself in the hearts of men and women when he wrote: "Poems are made by fools like me; but only God can make a tree." There is something of real promise and sustaining hope in every man and woman who has a genuine love of trees.

Trees are mentioned often in the Bible. The first chapter of *Genesis* has trees in the Garden of Eden. The last chapter of *Revelation* has trees beside the "pure river of water of life clear as crystal" in the holy city New Jerusalem. One of the reasons Jesus took his disciples so often to the Mount of Olives was perhaps because the Mount of Olives abounded with trees.

Why are trees so important that even the scriptures, which are devoted exclusively to the salvation of souls, are forested, as it were, with them? The First Psalm gives a suggestion of the answer:

*Blessed is the man that walketh
Not in the counsel of the ungodly
Nor standeth in the way of sinners
Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful;
But His delight is in the Law of the
Lord,
And in His Law
Doth he meditate day and night.
And He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water
That bringeth forth his fruit
In his season;
His leaf also shall not wither
And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

"Trees" (scripturally) signify men and women. Their trunks are their

way of standing for God. Their branches are the sweep of their Heavenly principles. Leaves are their numerous doctrinal truths. Seeds and fruits are their works for the Kingdom of God. Think how a tree would look with only one or two branches and six or eight shriveled leaves as compared to a tree with many branches and thousands of leaves. Or think of a fruit tree loaded with splendid and ample fruits as compared to one that has poisonous or no fruits at all.

In the vineyard of the Lord (which is the church of the Lord) there is good ground, sunlight, water, care, and every spiritual help that a person can ask. All that can be done for the soul of a man or a woman can in most cases best be done in the church. If men and women do not become "trees of righteousness" with all the planting, watering, cultivating that the Lord bestows or permits to come on them, then surely it must be because they will not have it so. "What more could have been done to My vineyard that I have not done in it?" the Lord asks in *Isaiah*: and the answer is that even God cannot make a life spiritual if the man or woman will not permit.

Jehovah-God placed humanity in the Garden of Eden in the midst of which was the "Tree of Life." The "Tree of Life" was to be the true food for the human spirit. Opposite to the "Tree of Life" was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—the Tree of Death. The Tree of Life is divine will. The Tree of Death is human self-will. Had Adam and Eve eaten only of the Tree of Life, the Human race would have continued in its primal integrity; and the glories of this world would now be beyond imagination. But they ate of Death. They put self-will and self-intelligence where the Lord (and wisdom from the Lord) should have been—with the consequence that Sin and Death came into the world. Those who prefer their own self-will and self-intelligence to the Love and Wisdom of the Lord still eat the fruit of the Tree of Death today. How sad to eat of the Tree of Death when the Tree of Life is ever at hand.

Only a few days before His crucifixion, Jesus and His followers walked to a certain fig tree between Bethany and Jerusalem because the Lord was hungry. He who is the "Bread of Life" hungered on earth. The Lord hungers for our salvation. He desires to give us of Himself; but if people shun and dodge and abhor Him, still the Lord hungers to save their souls. When Jesus and the disciples arrived at the fig tree, they found it barren—no fruit on it—and the Lord said: "No man eat fruit of thee henceforth forever," and the tree withered that very day. It is sometimes said that Jesus "cursed" the barren tree. But that is a scriptural way of saying that a life unproductive of Heavenly qualities curses itself and withers away spiritually.

A certain clergyman of my acquaintance worried because his congregation was only 400 people of a Sunday. And well he might worry. For his church listed one thousand two hundred members—which means that 800 people or two thirds of the membership were absent each Sunday. Let us say that one hundred were absent each Sunday because of illness or for some other good reason. That would leave 700 in the classification of unproductive or uncaring members of the church. The hymns and singing of that church might be of the finest, but those 700 never hear. The scripture readings might be the very Word of God speaking to humanity, but those 700 never know. The sermons might be scriptural—straight and true for the things of salvation, but those 700 never care. The Lord God Almighty cannot give Himself—His love, His wisdom, His life—to the man or woman who deliberately shuts Him out. "Behold I stand at the door and knock—" but that door must be opened from within. ■

New Board of Trustees for Seminary

The Secretary of State of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has approved the amendments to Swedenborg School of Religion's (SSR) Articles of Organization which complete the process of merging the Board of Managers and the Board of Directors into a new Board of Trustees. At the 1987 Convention and the 1987 meeting of the Corporation of the New Church Theological School there was unanimous support for the creation of the new board, which will have final responsibility for all policy decisions affecting SSR. The new Board will begin functioning at the 1988 Convention and Corporation meetings.

Under the merger plan, Convention will elect half of the Trustees, and the membership of the Corporation of the New Church Theological School will elect the other half. This will be made possible by having two classes of members in the Corporation: General Council will represent Convention as the "representative class" of the Corporation; everyone who has signed the Corporation book will become a member of the "at-large class." The "representative class" and the "at-large class" will each vote for two members of the Board each year.

Elections of the Board of Trustees will involve different procedures for the two groups. The at-large class will vote directly for half of the Board of Trustees. Convention will vote for the other half of the Board: nominations for these positions will come from Convention's Nominating Committee. Convention's choices, voted on by the membership, will become the nominees for the representative class of the Corporation, who will vote for these or other candidates in the election at the Corporation meeting.

Ultimately, the Board will consist of twelve elected members with three year terms staggered so that four members are chosen each year. It will take two years to reduce the

Board to twelve elected members, as the terms of the current Managers and Directors expire. Unlike the current Corporation Bylaws, which stipulate that the Clerk and Treasurer are elected directly by the Corporation, the new Bylaws call for the Board to choose the Clerk and Treasurer. A consideration in electing nominees is the fact that having a Treasurer and Clerk who are elected board members would be very helpful to the Board of Trustees.

The new Board of Trustees will eliminate the unintended duplications and inefficiency of the current two-board system, and will allow for long-term planning and the development of consistent policy. The creative energy which has been evident since the two Boards began meeting together will be enhanced as one Board is able to focus on all the issues related to theological education in a Swedenborgian context. ■

United Fund Drive Begins

The Swedenborg School of Religion (SSR) and the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches are beginning a cooperative fund drive to provide resources for the continued growth of both organizations. A four person steering committee, with two representatives from each organization, will coordinate the drive.

In order to become more effective, SSR has adopted a five-year plan for growth, and is working toward the development of an M.A. program in Swedenborgian Studies. SSR plans to apply to the Massachusetts Board of Regents for authority to grant this degree, which would meet the needs of those studying for ministry as well as those lay people desiring an enriched knowledge and understanding of Swedenborg. The major areas in which SSR plans to develop its program are: preparation for practical ministry through coursework and field education, con-

tinued support and development of a faculty which knows and values Swedenborgian thought, preservation of books and documents in the archives and completion of the library's research collection, and the extension of SSR's services through correspondence courses, publications, and continuing education programs.

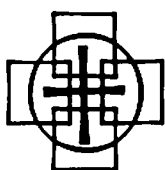
General Convention is developing a five-year plan covering all facets of its operation. Convention's fund drive will be geared toward needs and projects for ministry to be developed by the new support units, and the expansion and development of programs already underway, such as the Urbana Chaplaincy, church camps, Temenos, and Wayfarers Chapel. Convention is also seeking support for Augmentation Fund so that ministry to its churches can continue and grow.

Gifts to Convention and SSR will become part of the endowment of each organization and will not be used for operating expenses. In addition to accepting contributions and pledges, the Development Committees of the two organizations will be working toward building an awareness of the importance and benefits of planned gifts. Portions of a person's living estate can be transferred to General Convention or SSR and still provide the income received prior to making the gift, along with significant tax benefits. Gifts of life insurance policies, old or new, appreciated securities, and real estate can provide significant help to endowment-building, and with proper planning also assure income to the donor and provide an inheritance for loved ones. Gifts can be planned so that they support local churches as well as SSR and Convention.

Join with those working to build the New Church of the future! To discuss making a gift, or for more information, contact SSR Steering Committee representatives Dr. Mary Kay Klein, SSR President or Rev. Jerome Poole, SSR Corporation President, and/or Convention Steering Committee representatives Hampton Schoch or Peter Toot, members of General Council. ■

Nominating Committee Report

Vice-President:	Frederick G. Perry, Jr.
Secretary:	Dorothy deB. Young
Treasurer:	John C. Perry
General Council:	Minister: Robert E. Bossdorf, Quincy MA
	Layperson: Howard Torpey, San Francisco, CA
	Layperson: Alfred Chivers, Kitchener, Ontario
Communications Support Unit:	Lorene Lederer, San Francisco, CA
Education Support Unit:	Martha Richardson, Fryeburg, ME
Financial and Physical Resources Support Unit:	Keith Mull, Larned, KS
Growth and Outreach Support Unit:	Christine Laitner, Midland, MI
Information Management Support Unit:	Steve Koke, Grass Valley, CA
Pastoral Ministries Support Unit:	Pat Zacharias, Kitchener, Ontario
Committee on Admission to the Ministry (CAM):	Minister: David L. Rienstra, St. Louis, MO
	Layperson: Elizabeth Johnson, Bellevue, WA
Nominating Committee: (two to be nominated, one to be elected)	Muriel Bennett, Pawnee Rock, KS
	Norman Bestor, Cleveland, OH
Board of Trustees of SSR: (Swedenborg School of Religion):	Mary Crenshaw, Detroit, MI
	Margaret Kraus, Pretty Prairie, KS



GENERAL CONVENTION Statistics as of December 31, 1987

Associations	Societies		Ministers Ordained	Members		Total	Delegates No. of
	Active	Inactive		Active	Inactive		
Canada	1	0	2	141	41	182	16
Connecticut	1	0	1	11	0	11	3
Illinois	6	0	3	118	35	153	13
Kansas	3	0	3	163	32	195	18
Maine	2	0	1	157	103	6	17
Massachusetts	6	1	13	214	102	316	23
Michigan	2	0	3	84	8	92	10
Middle Atlantic	3	0	4	140	59	199	16
New York	1	0	0	47	36	83	6
Ohio	4	1	3	81	3	84	10
Pacific Coast	8	0	13	260	37	297	28
Southeast	1	0	1	49	29	78	6
Western Canada Conference	7	0	6	208	0	208	22
	45	2	53	1673	485	2158	188
<u>Societies</u>							
Gulfport	1	0	0	20	0	20	4
Georgetown, Guyana	1	0	1	46	11	57	6
	47	2	54	1739	496	2235	198

Nominations

■ Vice-President

1 year term

Frederick G. Perry, Jr.
New Hampshire

I would like to continue with the duties of the Vice President to assist during this important period of changes and with the number of new projects and programs we are undertaking.

■ Recording Secretary

1 year term

Dorothy deB. Young
Massachusetts

In accepting the honor of being nominated again for the position of Recording Secretary of General Convention, I submit my qualifications:

Recording Secretary since 1984

Secretary of the Boston Society of the New Jerusalem since 1974; have served on Board of Trustees, Church Council, Sunday School teacher and co-worker with my husband on various church projects. Formerly served on SSR Board of Directors and Executive Board of Massachusetts Association.

Licensed real estate broker since 1960; executive secretary in business world (now retired); secretary in community organizations; a founder of an association for retarded citizens; a founder of a civic improvement association.

Mother of seven, grandmother of 12, great-grandmother of 3, wife of one.

Being a participant in this new age of Convention is exciting and rewarding in many ways.

■ Treasurer

1 year term

John Perry
Maine

The past year of serving as Convention's Treasurer has been a busy year of learning, but a pleasant one. Having completed making my abode on the Maine coast quite liveable, I have found the time to enjoy a beautiful location along with my Convention duties.

In addition to becoming more familiar with the details of the Treasury of the Church, I have been

deeply involved with the development of the new growth center, Temenos at Broad Run in Pennsylvania. The reorganization of the Convention structure has also been a challenge in that a more complex budget format for the 1988-1989 Fiscal Year has been required.

I am looking forward with enthusiasm to being given the opportunity of continuing to serve as the Convention Treasurer.

■ General Council

1 year term

Rev. Robert E. Bossdorf
Massachusetts

I am presently committed to the tasks of Associate Professor of Psychology and Practical Theology at the SSR. Also, as a current member on several of Convention's committees: Consultation Service Group; Temenos-at-Broad-Run Board of Managers; Council of Ministers, I am involved with some of the varying facets of Convention. In addition to these responsibilities, I extend my counseling services to the greater Boston area.

I am married, with four children and two grandchildren.

■ Layperson

1 year term

Alfred Chivers
Ontario

I have been a life-long resident of the Kitchener area and a member of the Church of the Good Shepherd since 1945. During this time I have been a member of the Church Council, Treasurer, and served for several years on the Canada Association. Since retiring in 1979 after 31 years in the Public Service of Canada, Customs and Excise, I have assisted in forming a Senior Kiwanis Club of which I am a past President. My hobbies include travelling, photography, and gardening.

■ Layperson

Howard Torpey
California

I live in the San Francisco Bay Area with my wife Linda, our two children, Annamarie (6) and Christina (3). Former President of the San Francisco Parish, I now serve on the Parish board and the Board of

Trustees for the San Francisco Society. A promoter of the Sunday School and former teacher, I have watched our program's active growth in the last few years.

Professionally, I am Assistant University Registrar of Golden Gate University; the University is one of the major centers in the western United States for professional education in management, public administration and law. I have gained expertise in all areas of administrative services which I can use to serve my church. Both through my job at the University and my work through the San Francisco Society I am familiar with the problems of budget, personnel and decision making.

As a member of the Pacific Coast Association I am encouraged by our opportunities to spread the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg to a population ever increasingly aware of the Lord's New Age.

Like you who read this, my guiding principle is love the Lord and the writings of his servant, Emanuel Swedenborg.

■ Board of Trustees, Swedenborg School of Religion

1 year term

Mary Crenshaw
Michigan

I am a member of the Detroit Church, where I have served in the past on the Board. At the national level, I have been a former member of the General Council and the Ad Hoc Committee. Currently I am a member of the Board of Managers for our seminary. I am employed by the Detroit Board of Education as a School Social Worker. I consider it a privilege to serve the church, and I wish to continue doing so.

■ Committee on Admission to the Ministry

1 year term

David Rienstra
Missouri

I am seeking a third term on the Committee on Admission to the Ministry. I am pastor of the Church of the Open Word in St. Louis, which position I have held for almost a year. Before coming to St. Louis last August I was pastor of the Fryeburg Church of the New

Jerusalem for 9 years. In my service to Convention I am presently ending my term of office on General Council, which I have served the last four years. I have been in service on CAM the past two years. In past service to Convention boards and organizations I have been president and vice president of the American New Church Sunday School Association, League chaplain for one year, vice president and secretary of the Fryeburg New Church Assembly, and president of the Maine Association for nine years. This year I have the privilege of being Convention preacher. I would like to continue on CAM for the benefit of students seeking ordination into our ministry. Continuity is important, and I believe I can well serve this committee and our beloved Church.

■ **Communications Support Unit**
1 year term
Lorene Lederer
San Francisco

I cannot cite a string of committees and boards that I served on for the Swedenborgian Church, but I can offer something that can serve as a complement to the impressive experience represented by many of the other candidates. I am brand new to the Swedenborgian Church, and I find that I have that unique enthusiasm that one often finds in newcomers. I am *excited* about what this church can offer to our world.

I feel that I can be of the most service to the Communications Support Unit. I have a bachelor's degree in fine arts from the Pratt Institute in New York. By profession, I am a marketing art director. I have much experience in graphic design and have taught at the college level in this field. More fundamentally, I am in "communications design." The skill that is most crucial to my work is the ability of being aware of the audience and sensitive to their needs. Therefore, my emphasis is in communication more than art itself. I try to put together not so much a beautiful piece as an effective one.

I have been shown the nature of the work of the Communications Support Unit, and I believe that I have particular skills that will be useful to the communications work of

the Swedenborgian Church. It would be a privilege to serve.

■ **Pastoral Ministries Support Unit**
1 year term
Patricia Zacharias
Ontario

My experience in Elmwood, Massachusetts, Portland, Oregon and Kitchener, Ontario as an active lay person over the last thirty years has led me to care very much about the pastoral ministries in our local churches. I want to support you and your efforts to develop new programs for the future.

The members of the PMSU, on which I have served this past year, are hopeful for vitality and growth in our local groups and want your involvement in our planning.

I am excited about our visions for the future and would like to continue the work we have begun to make our dreams a reality for this church which we all love.

■ **Nominating Committee**
1 year term
Norman Bestor
Ohio

Being retired, I serve the Swedenborgian Church in Cleveland in various capacities. As a distributor for the Swedenborg Foundation, I have a deep interest in making the Writings and collateral literature available outside the Church. Activity currently includes developing discussion groups, as well as advertising and distribution in the Cleveland area. I believe it essential to maintain and strengthen our Churches, Associations and General Convention not only for their own uses, but as bases for outreach, and wish to promote these objectives by serving where I can.

■ **1 year term**
Muriel Bennett
Kansas

It is an exciting time in our church now that we have a more efficient structure in operation.

I consider the Nominating Committee a most important part of that structure and if elected I will do the best I can to help select qualified people for elected positions.

I have been attending Conven-

tion for a number of years and have met and talked with a lot of people.

I have served in Western Canada as a minister's wife, Sunday School teacher and camp worker for many years. I was editor and publisher of the Western Canada Conference magazine, *Conference*, for ten years.

I now reside in Pawnee Rock, Kansas, where my husband John is the new Pastor there and we are, as it says on our cards, "Resident Aliens."

■ **Growth and Outreach Support Unit**
1 year term
Christine M. Laitner
Michigan

My name is Chris Laitner. My home is Midland, Michigan, and I am employed as the only general/vocal music teacher for thirty-nine K-6 classrooms in Gladwin, Michigan. I hold a B.A. from Olivet College, and a M. Mus. Ed. from Central Michigan University. I have been involved in church-related activities both on the local and national levels for many years. Presently I am serving a three-year term as president of the Almont New Church Assembly and Retreat Center.

I have been and, in fact, am now involved in some of the new and different areas of outreach of the church. Our church has within it people with ideas for growth and the drive to implement these ministries and outreach programs. We are fortunate as a body to have an organization to aid these ideas and programs.

It would be an honor to serve as a member of the Growth and Outreach Support Unit. I feel that I can bring to it both a willingness to be open to areas of outreach and growth, and also some expertise in the "nitty-gritty" of finances and ascertaining whether a program is actually workable and/or working.

ADVANCE CONVENTION REGISTRATION

Convention, 1988, Newton, Massachusetts

Lasell Junior College

June 25 - July 3, 1988

(Convention Sessions: June 29—July 3 1988)

NAME _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE/PROV _____ ZIP _____

ACCOMPANIED BY: _____

  CHILDREN: NAME AND AGE:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

NCYL MEMBERS BETWEEN AGES 13 AND 18 PLEASE FILL THIS IN:

_____ My parent/s will be at Convention. They are _____


_____ My guardian at Convention (if no parents present) is _____

REGISTRATION FEE

_____ I have enclosed a check for \$35.00 (due to costs this year, no discount—*sorry!*) made out to GENERAL CONVENTION '88, to cover registration. Everyone 12 years of age and over must pay this fee. Registration is PER PERSON and covers some Convention costs and special events. **Mail this form and your fee to Central Office, 48 Sargent St., Newton, MA 02158.**




TRANSPORT

(PLEASE FILL IN THOROUGHLY)

_____  I will arrive at **Logan Airport** on: Date & time _____

Airline & Flight _____

_____  I am driving to Convention on: Date _____

My first meal will be _____  breakfast _____  lunch _____  dinner on: _____

_____  I am a passenger in the car of: _____

Arriving at Convention on: date _____ time: _____

_____  I need directions to Boston _____

_____ OTHER MODE OF TRANSPORT _____

Arrival date & time: _____

HOUSING

_____ I would like a single room.

_____ I would like a double room, sharing with _____

(If you don't have a roommate yet, be sure to answer the following:)

_____ I would like to have a roommate assigned to share my room.

_____ I/We would like (if possible) to have a room near _____

Please also complete the reverse side!

SPECIAL NEEDS

Note: Lasell Jr. College does not have easy access for wheelchairs in most buildings.

- ☐ I am a vegetarian, with no other restrictions.
- ☐ I have these dietary restrictions: _____
- ☐ I am not able to climb stairs or hills
- ☐ & I need wheelchair access
- ☐ I am not able to walk very far without discomfort
- ☐ I have these medical requirements: _____
- ☐ I am _____ diabetic; _____ a heart patient; _____ other: _____
- ☐ Other physical/special/dietary needs: _____
- _____

(If you don't let us know, we may not be aware of your needs!)

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN

(Children's programs will run during Pre-Convention days beginning Sunday, and continue through the week until after worship on July 3)

- ☐ My child/children will be participating in the Children's Program for ages 5 to 12 beginning on: date _____
- ☐ My child/children will need the Child Care program for age 2 and under beginning on: date _____
- _____
- ☐ My child/children will need the Children's Program for ages 3 to 5 beginning on: date _____
- ☐ My child's/children's special needs are: _____
- ☐ My child has _____ has not _____ attended a pre-school program

OTHER PROGRAMS

I wish to co-register for the following programs:

- ☐ New Church Youth League Officers (June 25-June 29; officers only)
- ☐ Council of Ministers (June 25-June 29; ministers & SSR students)
- ☐ Ministers' Spouses (June 25-June 29; ministers' spouses only)
- ☐ *Day at the Beach at Blairhaven on June 28.
- ☐ Women's Alliance Luncheon on Friday, July 1.
- ☐ *Post-Convention Conference (July 3-6 at Fryeburg New Church Assembly, Fryeburg, ME)

NOTE: ASTERISK (*) DENOTES ADDITIONAL FEE REQUIRED.
(We will be in touch with you to give you more information on your choice.)

Rates for 1988 Convention Room and Board

Dormitory

- Adult Single: \$35. — daily; \$280. — 8 days; \$140. — 4 days.
- Teen (11 - 19 years): \$25. — daily; \$200. — 8 days; \$100. — 4 days.
- Youth (4 - 10 years): Double: \$15. — daily; \$120. — 8 days; \$60. — 4 days.
- Child (3 and under): No charge if occupying same room as parents, and no charge for food when fed from parent's plate.

For financial assistance for Convention attendance for young people and children please write to: Susan Weiss,
P.O. Box 305, Somers Point, NJ. 08244

MESSAGES TO CENTRAL OFFICE? IDEAS? HERE'S SOME SPACE!

COMMENCEMENTS

Baptisms

Packard—Alicyn Dawn and Kristen Leigh Packard, children of Dave and Pat Packard, were baptized into the Christian faith on April 17, 1988 at the Elmwood New Church, the Rev. Kenneth Turley officiating.

Whyte—Cody Trevor Whyte was baptized into the Christian faith on April 10, 1988 at the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

Confirmation

Van Rooijen—Jodie Van Rooijen was confirmed into the life of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches on April 3, 1988 at the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, the Rev. Henry Korsten officiating.

Deaths

Janes—Verna M. Janes, 81, member and Trustee of the La Porte New Church, Indiana, entered the spiritual world March 23, 1988. A private service was held Friday, March 25, 1988, the Rev. Ted Le Van officiating.

Sechrist—Alice Spiers Sechrist, longtime member of the Riverside, California Swedenborgian Church, entered the spiritual world on the eve of Easter, April 2, 1988. A memorial service was held in April at the Riverside church during the regular Sunday morning worship service, the Rev. Dr. Ivan Franklin officiating. Mrs. Sechrist was the author of numerous articles on Swedenborgian

theology and particularly on Swedenborg's influence upon Henry James, Sr. An outstanding Latinist, she revised and edited translations of Swedenborg's *Apocalypse Revealed* and *The Four Doctrines*. Her best known contribution to the Swedenborgian movement was her lengthy *Dictionary of Bible Imagery*, a work giving succinct Swedenborgian aids in understanding the correspondences of the Bible.

Walters—Anna May Walters, 96, longtime member of the New Jerusalem Church of Pretty Prairie, Kansas, passed into the spiritual world on April 17, 1988. A memorial service was held at the Lone Star Cemetery in Pretty Prairie, the Rev. Eric J. Zacharias officiating.

Woofenden—Emily Ann (Pem) Woofenden passed into the spiritual world on February 8, 1988. During the regular morning worship service on the opening Sunday of the Almont (Michigan) Summer Camp session, July 24, 1988, there will be a special time of Remembrance, led by her son, the Rev. Dr. William R. Woofenden. Friends and relatives of Pem present at the service will be invited to share briefly fond memories they hold of this dear person.

In Addition

In the March *Messenger* it was reported that the Rev. Eric Allison and Cathy Gregory were united in marriage in a ceremony conducted by the Rev. Paul Zacharias. The Rev. Gardiner Perry of Detroit also officiated at this wedding ceremony.

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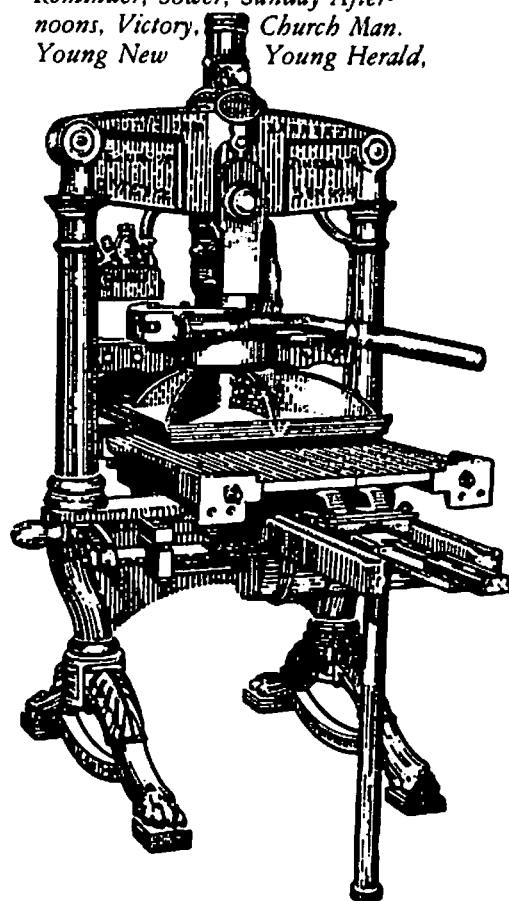
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Some Endangered New Church Periodicals:

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The Adventure, The Age, Children's New Church Magazine, Christian Standard, Crisis, Dawn, Echo, Halcyon Luminary, Heat and Light, Hierophant, Intellectual Repository, Little Truth Teller, New Christian Life, New Christianity, New Church League Journal, New Church Messenger, New Church Repository, New Church Standard, New Church Weekly, New Church Young People's Magazine, New Philosophy, Olive Leaf, Our Sunday School Visitor, Precursor, Recipient, Reminder, Sower, Sunday Afternoons, Victory, Church Man, Young New, Young Herald,



New Address

The Revs. Rachel and Jim Lawrence
8 Elm Street
Fryeburg, Maine 04037

Convention '88 Notice

On Wednesday, June 29, at 1:30 pm there will be a reception for isolated members (those living too far from a Swedenborg Center to enjoy regular

fellowship). The topics of discussion will include:

- Exploring what it means to be an isolated member:
- The possibility of forming a network

Following reception and discussion there will be a short and very informal worship experience.

General Convention of the New Jerusalem
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