

DEC

# The Messenger

1980



**Editorial:****Christmas Thoughts**

One never ceases to marvel at the workings of Providence. Several months ago I asked Carolyn Judson of Royal Oak, Michigan if she would be interested in drawing a cover for the December *Messenger*. Carolyn said she would give it a try, and in due course the striking cover on this issue arrived. A bit unusual for Christmas, you say! Look again.

In the meantime Gardiner Perry and I attended a mind - blowing Conference in Toronto on the Future of Ministry in an Ambiguous World, which we have tried to share with you, beginning on the next page. Read this article, and think about it — if you will — and then let the message of the cover sink in. See how it all fits together. Unplanned. Some call it happenstance. Others serendipity. But we prefer Divine Providence.

It's a relatively small matter, of no great consequence on the vast stage of life. But these little examples of God's leading hand happen so often that after awhile it all becomes rather obvious—that the Lord's guiding spirit really does shine upon the pathway of life. And yet, for some reason, we are so reluctant to give Him full credit.

\* \* \* \* \*

This line of thought becomes especially precious during these pre - Christmas days. We reflect on the meaning of the Lord's birth into his world and the significance of the Incarnation in our lives today . . . we look around us, and within our own hearts and minds . . . and find so much that is contrary to the Lord's winsome spirit . . . and we wonder what it would be like to really open ourselves up and receive His spirit into our lives today. And we say, "Wouldn't it be grand if the Lord Jesus were with us this very moment," when of course he is as much alive and fully present in the world right now as he ever was. Every Christmas time we acknowledge all of this intellectually, we can understand how all of this is true — but it takes more than that to receive the Christ Spirit. It means becoming like a little child again—open and trusting and naive—and really believing (be-living) the fact that the Lord God Almighty bowed the heavens and visited us. In these troubled times, how very much we need to become like little children again. It takes one to know one.

"Never has there been such a quest for  
Truth,  
such a yearning for Peace,  
such a longing for Love;  
Never such a striving to understand  
and to be understood.  
Never has there been  
such a need for the Spirit  
that is Christmas."

P.Z.

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*We are deeply grateful to Carolyn Judson, Royal Oak, Michigan, for this month's cover design.*

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Paul B. Zacharias, Editor

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## CHILDREN OF APOCALYPSE

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Which of us, if given the opportunity, would not want to look through a unique pair of binoculars that were trained upon the landscape of the year 2000? Such an invitation was extended to about 200 delegates from many Christian denominations at the North American Consultation on the Future of Ministry, held October 7 - 10 in Toronto, Ontario. Standing upon the shifting ground of our own times, the group of religious leaders passed that future - focused lens from hand to hand, during which a hint of stunned silence grew to encompass all who had taken their turn. That future, *which in so many ways is already pressing hard upon us*, was characterized as an Age of Apocalypse; and we, who were attempting to discern the outline of our future's face, sensed that all of us alive today were her children.

The first session began with Dr. John C. Fletcher, Washington, D.C., presenting a summary of the report to the President of the United States known as *Global 2000*. The report's basic theme is that IF PRESENT TRENDS CONTINUE by 2000 there will be a convergence of global trends that can best be described as Apocalyptic. For example:

**Population** — There are now approximately 4.5 billion people in the world. If present trends continue there will be 6 billion by 2000, 10 billion by 2020 (which experts project is the maximum the earth can sustain), and 30 billion by 2100. Obviously this is an unthinkable, impossible situation. 80% of the world's population will be in the Southern tier—South America, Africa, Asia and India. We are accustomed to thinking in terms of East-West tensions; in the coming decades it will be North-South. By 2000 25% of the world's families will be living in absolute poverty, earning less than \$200 per year based on 1975 values. Consider the social pressures this will create!

**Cropland**—Each year on the face of planet Earth desert-like conditions claim an area the size of Maine. This is caused by erosion, poor farming methods, excessive tree cutting, drought and other factors. As much as 40% of the forests of the poorer nations will be gone by 2000. More food will be produced by 2000, but it will be much more expensive.

The list continues. Energy. Air and water pollution. Proliferation of nuclear weaponry. Increasing pressures will make war and disease more likely.

*Can we see that this kind of world projected by 2000, and the world we have right now, does not just happen by itself! It has been caused, it has been created by a great many governments and individuals making countless decisions and choices, many of which were not very good or very wise. By the same token, we can choose, we can decide to exercise better choices and build a better kind of world. Consultation delegates were forced into the feeling that if human life is to continue, present trends must not continue.*

An image emerges to describe the age we are entering. It is that of a tremendous global chasm. (Herb O'Driscoll, Dean of Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver, B.C. stated there have been three "chasms" in the last 2000 years of human history. By "chasms" he meant abrupt, radical, turn-around changes in history, lasting about 50 years each, where old ways were replaced by almost entirely new and different life-styles. One such historical "leap" took place in the 5th century, another in the 16th century, *and the third chasm began around 1950. We are now living in an apocalyptic age.*) One side, the side we are now standing upon, moves and shifts as it responds to the increasingly frequent shocks and tremors of converging economic, social and spiritual forces that are too vast to be seen by our myopic vision. In the midst of the chasm, and extending to where we are standing, is the searing beam of Apocalypse that reveals all for what it really is. There are no unlit places in which to hide. And on the other side is the barely discernible outline of a new history in a New Age, with few apparent similarities to the history of the old age.

Through that future-pointed looking glass delegates peered at the shifting outline of the 21st Century landscape. We stood on the brink of the future, feeling somewhat like the priest serving Mass in an Italian village when an earthquake struck, grasping to steady the altar and goblet while buildings tumbled all around him.

The pressing question that was asked in response to this global view was: What do we (the clergy and members of the institutional church) have to do with the reality around us . . . and that is presently taking shape on our horizon? Recognizing a tendency in the church to give simple answers to complex questions (note the rise of fundamentalism of all kinds and the stunning Reagan landslide victory on Nov. 4th), the delegates discussed the need for a "theology of the wilderness." The church with such a theology would prepare people to live meaningfully and responsibly given the degrees of uncertainty and dilemma posed by our age, in which all institutions are on crumbling ground.

"God seems to be calling his people out of the slavery of comfortable, simple answers into a new wilderness, in which reality is characterized as being: dynamic instead of static, relational rather than piecemeal, ambiguous instead of obvious, ecological rather than linear, creative instead of controlling, and oriented toward persons rather than functions."

To help people live in the wilderness, the institutional church must learn to travel light, divesting itself of some of the trappings of an institutional mentality. People serving people, as the slogan goes, is what is needed now. We must seek new definitions for our ministries, less in programs and more in relationships. As God's people we will need a faith that is adaptable to the ferment within us and the change around us. We will need a faith not of belief only, but of need; a faith not of place but of presence. As God's people we will need a theology that will help us assign meaning to our journey in the wilderness, but not, as is the tendency, to help us avoid or deny the necessity of that journey. The unborn child is reluctant to leave the womb. Nor can we see the face of the unborn child!

There was a sense toward the end of the Consultation that the delegates present wanted to rally around a banner of the "Institutional Church As It Is" in an Ecumenical hope that, if a sufficiently large number of churches banded together to carry their banner into the Age of Apocalypse, it might emerge unbattered on the other side of the chasm. Others corrected this view by saying such a form of Ecumenism is "wrong-headed." In fact, what is needed of the church is a post-Ecumenical movement largely outside the walls of the church to enter ever more deeply into dialogue with leaders in business, government, health care systems, education and communication. All sectors of

society feel the ground of history shifting beneath their once solid foundations. The sense of powerlessness and ambiguity is not a cross that the church alone bears; it is shared by virtually everyone. However, a new power and a new hope may emerge among all institutions with the growing awareness of our vulnerability and accountability.

### *Some Reflections and Impressions:*

Religion, in many varied forms and systems will continue into the foreseeable future. In a rapidly changing, paradoxical, uncertain world, people need meaning and purpose more than ever before. Good religion provides this stabilizing influence. Forms and rituals will change, but religion is an essential ingredient of the human spirit.

God has a glorious plan for his world; in him there is an abundance of hope. He has promised that a new heaven and a new earth are on the way. The entire Bible blazes forth this message. "Unto you a child is born." God works through people who care; you and me. Unto us a Son is given. The Kingdom can only come with our full cooperation.

Concerning the local church. Is our local Society providing real nurturing and support for all sorts of people at all levels of life? Business people, homemakers, children, senior citizens, single people! Is our church a place where all types of people receive spiritual nourishment, caring, respect, acceptance?

The coming church, if it is to survive and serve this type of use, demands more involvement of the lay people; a sense of shared ownership where we are all active participants. The era of indifferent, lukewarm church members is fading away.

The concept of life and faith being a journey, not a static, closed system. Our Christian faith is not a fixed set of rules and regulations, but rather a growing, evolving pattern of thought, with appropriate action spilling over from those inner convictions. Not only your life and mine, but all of creation is an unfolding journey . . . and together cradled in the loving hands of God.

These are a few images, brief and broadly stroked, from the Consultation on the Future of Ministry (sub-titled: Creative Ministry in An Age of Ambiguity). This summary suggests more of the tone than the substance of the proceedings, although we have tried to reach you on both levels.

There are many challenges that our church and other denominations must face and resolve if we are to minister effectively in the Apocalyptic Age . . . and if we are to be ministered unto *by the future*. But certainly none is so great as the perpetual call to creativity in our churches, a call that is always at least faintly heard, but that now clamors for our attention.

Responding to that call moves us through darkness and death to the light and life beyond.

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**"You are Christian only so long as you look forward to a new world, so long as you constantly pose critical questions to the society**

**you live in, so long as you emphasize the need of conversion both for yourself and for the world, so long as you in no way let yourself become established in a situation of seeming calm, so long as you stay unsatisfied with the status quo and keep saying that a new world is yet to come. You are Christian only when you believe that you have a role to play in the realization of this new kingdom, and when you urge everyone you meet with a holy unrest to make haste so that the promise might soon be fulfilled. So long as you live as a Christian you keep looking for a new order, a new structure, a new life."**

From *With Open Hands*  
by Henri Nouwen

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## *William James and Swedenborgian Thought*

*by Eugene Taylor*  
*Cambridge, Mass.*

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A major four part lecture series showing Swedenborgian influences on the American philosopher-psychologist, William James, was presented during November at the Cambridge Church of the New Jerusalem under the sponsorship of the Swedenborg School of Religion and the Wesley N. Gray Fund. The lectures document such influences by examining William James' relationship to four major personalities: 1) Henry James Sr., who wrote nearly a dozen volumes interpreting Swedenborg; 2) Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Concord Transcendentalist who first introduced Henry James Sr. to Swedenborg, and who was thereafter one of William's early mentors; 3) J. J. Garth Wilkinson, eminent translator of Swedenborg's pre-theological writings, distinguished physician, and friend of both Henry James Sr. and later William; and 4) Charles Sanders Peirce, philosopher-scientist and founder of the uniquely American movement known as Pragmatism, who was an extended member of the James family.

Prior to the presentation of the lectures, however, a "Seminar on the Documents" has been presented during October to the faculty and students of the Swedenborg School of Religion in order to acquaint all those interested with the major archival sources that will be used in the series. It is the purpose of the present communication to outline the substantive themes of this historic project.

Thus said, it would be mere facile conjecture to ascribe the sum total of William James' thought to his father's Swedenborgianism, for we know that other powerful influences exerted themselves upon William's ideas, not the least of which were the works of Darwin, Fechner, Renouvier, logical positivism in the tradition of Mach, and the new experimental laboratory science of Wundt, fast then becoming the rage of the day. Yet how can it be that James himself, consciously and in writing, avowed the influence of Swedenborg, while at the same time admitting to his father in 1882 "What my debt to you is goes beyond all my power of estimating, — so early, so penetrating, and so constant has been the influence."?

We know that William had early exposure to Swedenborg, through his father's writings, through the old original editions and newest translations of Swedenborg's works that adorned the shelves of the family library, holding the most honored position of all other volumes, and through the numerous guests who poured through the James household, which was always open to Swedenborgian clergy. We get a hint here of the possibility that William's apparently paradoxical relationship to Swedenborgian ideas is bound up closely with the even more apparently paradoxical relationship he had with his father—an influence stimulated by similar cultural currents, yet characterized by the father and the son in completely different ways.



So, the hypothesis I wish to put forward is essentially this; that William James, and his famous brother Henry, the novelist, fell heir to their father's literary legacy, much of which represented a Swedenborgian interpretation entirely unique to Henry James Sr. The influence of the father while alive, however, was so close and subjective as to be nearly suffocating, so that William was left speechless each time he attempted to articulate it and did not fully succeed until twenty years after his father's death, when he finally formulated a workable theology of his own in his famous *Varieties of Religious Experience*. Henry the novelist's answer was to move, early, to England, where he remained for the rest of his life, creating the foundation for what we know today as the modern psychological novel.

In William's case, however, it is significant that he had contracted to write his *Principles of Psychology* in 1878, meaning to complete the work in two years. But due to the death of his father in 1882, a new project intervened, the publication of *The Literary Remains of Henry James Sr.*, which William completed as his own first book in 1885. The publication of his *Principles*, finally, in 1890 then achieved the literary and scientific acclaim it deserved. In the *Principles* James may have been working out the scientific implications of the family legacy, for Henry James Sr. was purely a religious philosopher, dealing as he did with the works of a Swedish thinker who was at once an accomplished scientist and revealed theologian.

After 1890, however, William turned away from scientific laboratory psychology and attempted to liberalize the larger scientific enterprise by calling attention to the validity of psychic phenomena, the unconscious, and religious experience. His *Will to Believe* in 1897 and his *Varieties* in 1902 were clearly in the same spirit as his father's religious philosophy, but now secularized and from a psychological perspective; that is, unique to William's own needs and interpretations. Henry James Sr. emphasized the importance of a non - denominational Christianity, while William focused on the universality of religious experience *per se*, independent of any one religious tradition, but at the same time considerate of the important contribution that each religious expression around the world made to the enrichment of the total person. In the end, such a philosophical perspective proved for James to be the manner in which he heeded his father's advice to avoid becoming "too narrow."

As for Emerson's influence on William, it may be that William James perceived Emerson in much the same way that he saw his father's own relationship—pervasive, subtle, and yet too close to clearly articulate. We know that Emerson led the elder James to Swedenborg and eventually to Garth Wilkinson, and had invited James Sr. to come to Boston and join the famous Saturday Club. We know also that the James and Emerson families exchanged siblings for sometimes lengthy periods, and the relationship lasted as long as the patriarchs lived, and extended into succeeding generations. Time and experience finally separated William enough from Emerson, however, so that he was able to pay just acknowledgments to the Concord sage at the Emerson Centenary in 1903, rereading Emerson entirely in order to prepare for his speech. Not coincidentally, in 1904 William posthumously published in the *Atlantic Monthly* Henry James Sr.'s assessment of Emerson, composed more than twenty years before that time.

Concerning J. J. Garth Wilkinson, we may say that his relationship to Henry James Sr. rested solely in their fraternal affection and mutual interest in Swedenborg, while Wilkinson's relation to William emphasized neither Swedenborg nor wholly religion, but rather power of mental therapeutics, specifically how each person drew from the religious sphere in fashioning techniques for self-healing. Wilkinson played the part of the religious philosopher with Henry James Sr., and with William the common bond was that they were both medical men interested in the influence of religious experience on healing. Both relationships were enriched by lifelong ties of an extended family nature, for Wilkinson and James Sr. named sons and daughters after members of each other's family, and were actually neighbors for a time in the mid-1850's, all in addition to the fact that Henry James Sr. financed Wilkinson's translations of Swedenborg early in their relationship.

Concerning Charles Sanders Peirce, it can be shown that the unorthodox educational background of both William James and C. S. Peirce derived in no small measure from the eccentric habits of their respective fathers, who were also Cambridge neighbors in the 1860's and 1870's. Their sons, William and Charles, had been classmates first in Harvard College, and then co - conspirators in launching the now famous Metaphysical Club, where Peirce first

clearly articulated his philosophy of Pragmatism early in the 1870's in his essay, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear." Indeed, evidence suggests that Peirce became something of an adopted spiritual son in the James household during this period, and was thus exposed to Henry James Sr.'s Swedenborgian ideas. References to Swedenborg in Peirce's own later writings tend to bear this out, suggesting a new dimension for scholars to consider in assessing Peirce's relation to William and the tradition of Pragmatism. It may be that Peirce succeeded in articulating the scientific dimension of Henry James Sr.'s philosophical legacy in even more fruitful ways than William, especially where we compare Swedenborg's Doctrine of Use or the power of the Word with Peirce's meaning of Pragmatism.

In fine, the impact of Swedenborgian ideas on Twentieth Century American culture may be more than supposed, because it pervades, unnamed, in those places where we find the influence of William James. This "influence by osmosis" or "naturalization of ideas" is characteristic of Swedenborg's influence on Henry James Sr.; it is reflected in Henry James Sr.'s influence on William; and can also be found, in turn, in William and Henry's influence on American culture. How it is, in this regard, that Swedenborg could have an impact on the lives of eminent individuals who are neither Swedenborgians nor in many cases even professed Christians, but who obviously still have had a rich and certainly spiritual life, is an enigmatic and yet very creative paradox that all thoughtful New Church men and women may want to consider. For "church" as Swedenborg himself used the term in *Apocalypse Revealed*, meant not simply ecclesiastic or sectarian organization, but that sublime state of consciousness representing the conjunction of both the good and the true within each soul.

## FROM A READER —

Dear Mr. Zacharias:

Since the *Messenger* has been a part of my life for over eighty years, it seems a thank you note is long overdue. How, or whom, does one thank the many people involved in the complications of producing a magazine—from the editor down to the delivery of the final result by the postman?

That line of thought takes one wandering a long way—but finally leads to the Creator

(Cont'd on page 271)

## THE GENERATION GAPS

by Gwynne Dresser Mack

For centuries the so-called civilized world has enthusiastically shared an annual festival intended to be religious but celebrated by non-religious people as well. It is remarkable that so many who are not interested in God nevertheless enter exuberantly into the festivities of December twenty - fifth.

In these hundreds of yearly repetitions wouldn't you think that the meaning of the holiday would have wrought wonders among all mankind: "Peace on earth; good will to men"? Celebrating anniversaries is for reminding, for keeping in touch with something or someone important. Exactly what is it that all kinds of people are persistently (though maybe unawares) trying to keep in touch with? Or is it that something or someone is trying to keep in touch with us?

Consider what is going on in our world as we approach the two thousandth year since the birth of Jesus Christ. In the beginning of this century children looked forward to "when I'm grown up" — when girls could pin up their hair and wear long skirts, and boys would be allowed to have full-length trousers. Today young folks (not all, but a great many) do not seem to know that they have to grow up. It is enough, for them, just to be here, and they exist in a continuous *Now* with concerns outlined by such expressions as "I want", "I don't like", "I dunno", "I gotta be me". Obeying, remembering correctly, being dependable, respecting private property, are not their way of life nor are the gestures of courtesy.

When anthropologist Margaret Mead said that primitive people had no juvenile delinquency, she was observing that in each tribe the children were brought up alike, under the same strict tribal laws and customs. There were no deviations because there were no choices. In Africa children were not considered to be "people" until they had become fully grown.

In America, how are children being brought up now? Certainly not all alike; and many are not brought up at all, but simply brought into existence. Throughout this half - century children have taken over, and the resulting chaos is called "the generation gap". It is blamed for every sort of problem in homes, schools, and all types of communities. But what is to blame for the generation gap itself?

(Cont'd on page 265)

# BUT MARY KEPT ALL THESE THINGS...

by *Ned McCann*  
*Redwood City, Cal.*

One day during this past Christmas season I was listening to the record, "Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme" by Simon and Garfunkel, on which they sing "Silent Night". As one listens to the music, one is aware of the voice of a newscaster slowly becoming louder in the background, and over the words, "silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright", the newscaster's voice is reporting a murder, news of conflict, and other events in the news which exemplify man's inhumanity to man.

As I listened I was remembering many Christmases when the Christmas message of peace and goodwill seemed to be in sharp contrast to the messages in the news. Certainly this past Christmas was no exception, as we concerned ourselves with the plight of the hostages in Iran and with our hopes and fears in reference to that situation as well as with other problems of human suffering throughout the world.

There are those who suggest that although Christianity has been with us for almost two thousand years, the peoples of the world will not live together in love and understanding until the message of Christianity has been spread to all corners of the world and accepted by all people.

This missionary spirit has long been a concern of Christian organizations. It is, in fact, exemplified in the Christmas story, in the actions of the shepherds after they had seen the Christ-child. We are told that they then "made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them." (Luke 2: 17 & 18)

The example of the shepherds making known the message of Christmas is important, however I suggest that the key to the acceptance of the Christmas message is not to be found in this role of the shepherds, but rather in the portion of the Christmas story which tells us of Mary's response to these events. Luke 2: 19 states: "But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart."

It is significant that the Word does not simply state that Mary pondered these things, but rather it states that Mary pondered these things in her heart. In *Arcana* 3313, Swedenborg writes: "In the Word, that is said to be in the heart which is interior, and proceeds from good . . ." Swedenborg's

concept of ruling love further suggests that the understanding of those values and ideals which one feels are most important, those values and ideals which one has internalized, is the key to self understanding.

The outer world then becomes for each of us a manifestation of our inner values. It follows that the world can become a place of peace and goodwill only when attitudes of peace and goodwill become important enough to become internalized within the hearts of mankind. Almost two thousand years after the birth of Christ, current events would seem to indicate that this has not yet happened to any great degree.

To have a personal concern that the Christmas message be taken to heart leads us to question how each of us in our individual ways may accomplish this. Here again Mary's response to the events surrounding the birth of Jesus points the way, for in the verse already quoted, we are told that Mary "pondered" these things.

According to my dictionary, to ponder means; "To consider something deeply and thoroughly; meditate". Those who practice meditation know that this is a process quite different from merely thinking about something in the usual manner, for it involves physical relaxation, and a tendency toward the closing down of one's conscious thought processes rather than intensifying them.

I think of this process in reference to the metaphor used by the Apostle Paul when he compared the coming of the days of the Lord to the coming of a thief in the night (Thessalonians 5: 2). "In the night" is the time which we normally give to sleep, and the sleep process involves the shutting down of our conscious thought processes, it involves physical relaxation, and to do this we put aside, at least temporarily, our concerns, cares, and the problems of the day.

This is not to suggest that we have only to go to sleep to facilitate the coming of the Lord in our hearts, contrary to the inclinations of those who may sympathize with the man who, knowing his tendency to sleep through the church service, described himself as "one of the 'pillows' of the church". The significance of likening the coming of the days of the Lord to





Marion Priestnal, Editor

## "THINK ON THESE THINGS"

Woman's Alliance Meditation  
Carole Reinstra, Chaplain

"This is my commandment, that ye love one another even as I have loved you." John 15:12

What a wonderful thing it is for our sister churches abroad to open their doors and get to know one another. In this hectic world, where we run instead of walk and computers give us numbers instead of names, we need an open door . . . an extended hand . . . a smiling face . . . and someone, who has the *time* to want to know us.

We had a chance this summer to see once again that wonderful musical *THE KING AND I*. I am reminded of the beautiful scene where Anna dances among the children, singing, "Getting To Know You." She radiates these lovely words, "Suddenly I'm bright and breezy. Because of all the beautiful and new things I'm learning about you, day by day." Getting to know new people, or even taking the time to *really* know old friends or acquaintances does that to us. Makes us feel "bright and breezy" and opens a whole new world for us. Because, as always, when we do what the Lord commands we feel better, we *FEEL* the presence of the Lord with us. "The presence of the Lord is according to the state of love to the neighbor and of faith in which a man is." (A.C. 904)

As this Christmas season approaches and we count our blessings, let us add to our list — *FRIENDS* — old, new and those we have yet to meet. Let us also rededicate ourselves to opening our doors, and *really* welcoming them into our churches, our homes and our lives. Then, and only then, can we be friends with the Lord. "Ye are my friends if ye do the things which I command you."

## SURVEY RESPONSES

*Last spring we sent to the secretaries of eight women's groups a set of questions, asking for a composite reply from their organizations. In the September issue of the Alliance Bulletin we published responses from Riverside, California and Detroit, Michigan. We continue here with several replies. The questions asked were: a) Which teaching of the New Church have you found most helpful in your day-to-day life; b) What new activities has your group sponsored? c) What are your plans for the celebration of the Helen Keller Centennial? d) What kind of material do you think would be especially helpful in the Alliance Bulletin?*

*In several instances an individual replied, not for a group but to express a personal view. Jean Gilchrist in Edmonton wrote:*

"Yes, I like to see study courses in the Alliance pages. I think the questions dealt with should be relevant to our daily lives and problems."

"I find our Church teachings on death and the life hereafter the most comforting teaching there is. All of us lose loved ones at some time and knowing we will see them again and that they are all right helps us bear the terrible pain of parting. Swedenborg tells us how they are awakened into their new world and how they find the home and work they were created for. It is all so positive that when we get over our first grief we just wouldn't bring them back to their old miseries, even though we would dearly love to see them again."

(What new activities has your group sponsored?) "We had a dress sale. A wholesaler came to the Church with racks of women's clothes and we invited friends. The

clothes, all new, were brand names and sold for less than in the stores. All we provided were fruitcake and coffee. There was a small admission fee which we kept and we were given a commission on all articles sold. We made more at that one sale than at the last couple of bazaars put together. I recommend this as an easy and all around pleasing way to raise funds."

Best wishes,  
Jean

Dear Marion:

Alice Dullea, President, has asked me to tell you something of the Massachusetts Women's Alliance and its activities.

Our membership is made up of the women of five churches, namely, Boston, Cambridge, Bridgewater, Brockton and Elmwood. Boston and Cambridge are somewhat removed from the other three. We meet once a year at each of the churches and twice in Boston. Our average attendance is 20.

Our oldest member, Mrs. Philip (Dorothy) Carter is aged 92 or 93. She has served on the Friendship Committee for many years and has faithfully sent frequent messages and greetings by mail to any known ill member, those in nursing homes or those unable to attend meetings because of age, as well as many others. Mrs. Carter has been a cheerful and enthusiastic member, but has now asked to be relieved of her task.

During the year we have had a varied program which included a speaker on "Women's Role in the Conjugal," and the spiritual interpretation of Parables. There was a Christmas program which featured instrumental music followed by group singing. We have had a slide presentation of Convention 1979, and will have another slide presentation of New Church camps.

We have held two Food sales and hold a White Elephant sale at each meeting.

Louise Woofenden, our Chaplin, has done an excellent job in presenting spiritual interpretations of Bible passages.

Election of officers is held in June.

Anna M. Buck  
Correspondence Sec'y.  
71 Rockland Street  
North Easton, MA. 02356

## MASSACHUSETTS WOMEN'S ALLIANCE FROM WASHINGTON D.C.

The Women's Alliance of the Washington Society held a luncheon meeting on April 17 to celebrate the 100th birthday of Helen Keller. Each member was asked to participate in the program by presenting what they knew about Miss Keller. In this article we wish to share some of the highlights that were given.

"In view of Helen Keller's profound and thorough understanding of the theology of Swedenborg it is not surprising to find in her book, *My Religion*, a clear statement of his teachings with respect to human handicaps. Experiencing as she did a greater degree of deprivation than any of us, we can readily appreciate her belief in the good which under Divine Providence can result from a handicapped life. She taught the blind to be courageous and to make their lives rich and productive."

*Inscribed on the fly leaf of a priceless first edition of My Religion, published in London, 1927, in Miss Keller's own hand is the following: "To Mr. Paul Sperry whose Faith lighted this candle in the world. May it burn clear and steady making visible to men the Divine Love and Wisdom of the Lord. With Christmas Greetings — Helen Keller, 1927."*

From a letter, a selected extract. In 1920 or 1921, following World War I, the Veterans Administration had established a rehabilitation center for blinded Veterans at a big country house in the Green Spring Valley, north of Baltimore. Helen Keller was volunteering her services teaching the Veterans how to get back to social contact, eating, meeting strangers, teaching internal adjustment to the stupid questions and lack of sensitivity that all newly blinded find it hardest to bear.

A brief story was told. A child had asked Helen Keller at one time was she ever afraid of the dark? Her answer was, "the Lord has given my soul so much light that I am never in the dark."

*"For twenty years I have missed the warm handclasp of my Pflegevater (foster-father), Mr. Hitz. His footfall is death-muted, but other Swedenborgian friends walk with me, Mr. Paul Sperry, Mr. Clarence Lathbury, Mr. C. W. Barron and Mr. George Warren of Boston. There are radiant moments when I feel the beams of the*

*spiritual kinship that occasionally shine upon the yearning soul. I had this experience last May when I spoke at the Convention of the New Jerusalem Church in Washington. I shall always be deeply moved when I recall how beautifully they welcomed me."*

In an article appearing in the April 13 issue of the *Washington Post Philatelic News* there was a picture of Helen Keller and her teacher Anne Sullivan who are featured on the new commemorative stamp. This stamp was issued on June 27, and once again they shared what has been called the most extraordinary accomplishment in the history of education for the handicapped.

"When I first saw Helen Keller I was impressed by her beautiful expression and by her blue, blue eyes, the bluest I have ever seen. Her voice was like none other — a real achievement in perseverance on the part of herself and her dedicated teacher Anne Sullivan Macy." In 1938 at the Atlantic City Convention of the American Association of School Administrators, Helen Keller and her teacher, at that time Polly Thomson, demonstrated how Helen learned to speak. Placing her hand in this position, thumb on throat, the first finger on lips and the second on nose, enabled her to feel the guttural sounds. With her first finger on the lips, she gets the labial sounds, the "b" and "p" and every word that Helen learned to speak was accomplished in just that way, letter by letter, syllable by syllable."

Pictures of Helen Keller's birthplace in Tuscumbia, Alabama, were shown. They were of her home and the famous well where Anne Sullivan taught her the word water, using the manual alphabet and running water over her hand.

"Alexander Graham Bell was a life-long friend of Helen Keller's. She visited Bell in Washington many times and met his Secretary, John Hitz. Mr. Hitz was a member of the Washington Society and was helpful in providing Helen with Swedenborg's books in braille.

*On her fourteenth birthday, Mr. Hitz gave her a watch with raised hands that enabled her to "feel" the time. There were gold points indicating the hours around the rim. This watch had belonged to a German Ambassador who had had to tell time without consulting it openly. For this he had the watch specially constructed. It worked so well for Helen Keller that later the American Foundation for the Blind adopted a policy of presenting a similar watch to every man blinded in the war who returned for treatment. It had been discovered that as soon as men could tell the*

*time they began to adjust themselves to a sightless existence."*

One of our members attended the Memorial Service for Helen Keller which was held at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. on June 5, 1968. Miss Keller who had died on June 1, at the age of 87, was cremated and her ashes were placed in the Cathedral Columbarium next to those of her friend and teacher Anne Sullivan Macy. The choir of the Perkins Institute for the Blind, Watertown, Massachusetts sang a Mozart and Brahms anthem. Miss Keller was trained at the Institute before attending Radcliffe College from which she graduated cum laude. The eulogy was given by Senator Lister Hill of Alabama. He spoke movingly of a remarkable and gentle lady — with energy and stamina that were almost limitless. She dedicated her life to others.

Dorothea E. Abbott  
505 N. Garfield St.  
Arlington, VA 22201

## WAS SWEDENBORG A MYSTIC?

by Charles A. Hall, F.R. M.S.  
(Adapted by Marion Priestnal)

When we are asked why New Church people accept Swedenborg as a unique authority, we assure our questioners that our emphasis is not on Swedenborg, but upon the truth given through him. What has been given to the world through Swedenborg should not be blindly accepted simply because a man of high repute uttered it, but because it appeals to reason. That Swedenborg had mystical experiences we have no doubt for he mentions ineffable things beyond description; yet our study had led us to the conclusion that he cannot be classed with mystics in general. The experiences of those who are classed as mystics are subjective; [whereas] Swedenborg's experiences were objective. Swedenborg is much more correctly described as a scientific observer, a seer, a philosopher and theologian.

In a wide survey of the writings of mystics, we have never found a clear description of the spiritual world in which man as an immortal being is to spend eternity. But in Swedenborg's writings, for example in *Heaven and Hell*, we find a realistic picture of the conditions of life after death. That picture appeals to us not because Swedenborg has given it, but because it commends itself to our rational judgment as a

true picture, true to human nature, an outline of what we should reasonably expect, seeing that man is what he is.

Swedenborg's observations of life in the spiritual world are unique: never before in the history of mankind and probably never since have such clear observations been made. Father R. Hever Newton (a noted Episcopalian) said: "The first really new concept of immortality given to the world for eighteen centuries came through the great savant, philosopher and theologian of Sweden — Emanuel Swedenborg."

[Another point:] In the writings of mystics we can discover vague indications of the realization that there is a spiritual sense in the Scriptures; that the Word is capable of more than a merely literal interpretation. Through Swedenborg however we are given a *definite* doctrine that Scripture has an added meaning, in which there is a true psychology of the human spirit and its relationship to the Divine. In the teaching concerning correspondences and symbols we have the key which gives us access to this inner sense. We accept the teaching given through Swedenborg on this matter not because he gave it, but because we find it works and introduces us into a wealth of truth which is of eternal value to the human soul.

AGAIN WE EMPHASIZE THAT WE ACCEPT WHAT SWEDENBORG TEACHES NOT BECAUSE HE TEACHES IT, BUT BECAUSE IT APPEALS TO OUR RATIONALITY AND IS SEEN BY US, LIKE ALL GENUINE TRUTH, TO BE A GIFT FROM THE LORD.

Thus in conclusion we reiterate the earlier statement: study has led us to the conclusion that although Swedenborg had mystical experiences, he cannot correctly be classed with mystics in general.

— New Church Messenger, Sept. 13, 1947

Edwin Paxton Hood in his biography of Swedenborg writes:

"Was Swedenborg a mystic? What is a mystic? . . . A mystic is one who moves in an orbit larger than his neighbor's . . . Usually he communicates no light; he travels in his own orb but he does not illuminate other orbs and this is the difference between a mystic and an apostle. The mystic *solitarily* absorbs all things within himself . . . Idle contemplation is the charm of the mystic's life. The apostle is never

idle; . . . the fire burns, impelling him to action and energy."

"The mystic, therefore, from his intense egotism leaves no light behind him and has but a few followers, perhaps none. The apostle prepares a road for his successors, strews it with rich and new ideas and erects at many a doubtful turning a truthful finger - post."

"In a word, the life of the mystic is in speculation; *the life of the apostle is in use*. We shall number Swedenborg not with the mystics but with the apostles. He broke new ground; he disseminated new ideas. He has never been without a band of followers; all his studies and writings were directed to the useful. His energy was immense; his activity, mental and bodily, was indomitable. He was an apostle!"

\* \* \* \*

We hope this brief discourse on the question of whether Swedenborg could correctly be thought of as a mystic will arouse some response from our readers. How do you feel about it? Do you agree or disagree with the two writers whose conclusions are given here? Write whatever you wish but send us something. Perhaps it's worth discussing in the study group you attend; if so, one member could report whatever consensus was reached. Even if you think the subject isn't worth pursuing, tell us that!

M.P.

#### END OF ALLIANCE BULLETIN

**BUT MARY KEPT ALL THESE THINGS** (cont'd from page 260)

the time when we are asleep, suggests to me that, given the motivation to be receptive of God's guidance, we may be most receptive under conditions of physical and mental relaxation — conditions which are also characteristic of the meditation process. Meditation has been likened to a form of prayer in which, rather than talking to God, we listen for God's answers. The Psalmist states this idea succinctly: "Be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10)

"Peace on earth, goodwill toward men" will become evident throughout the world only after peace and goodwill become evident within the hearts of each of us. Perhaps this can only come about when each of us will set aside the time to purposefully and regularly become receptive to the true spirit of the Christmas message—when we, like Mary, keep these things and ponder them in our hearts.

## THE GENERATION GAPS (cont'd from page 259)

What precisely is this gap? As a separation between adults and teen-agers it is thought to be a conflict of interests; actually it is a conflict of wills. A very successful and much admired principal of a junior-high school was asked, at a town conference on educational problems, how he achieved the order and high morale for which his school had become notable. He replied: "We try not to make many rules, but those which we have *must be obeyed*. Our most important rule is that pupils are not allowed to do what they are not yet able to do."

The generation gap is a conflict between what youngsters want to do and what their elders want or do not want them to do. This gap gathered its momentum during World War II when the "permissive attitude" suddenly took over, blossoming among new parents who—with no plans for home or family—had hastily married because of impending war. The ensuing bumper crop of babies had then to compete with a rush of women into jobs at defense-factories, and children were left with anyone who would take care of their physical needs. Deprived of close parental guidance, many of this new generation grew up doing whatever they wished without learning the basic rule for human behaviour: obedience to authority.

Those who did learn were confused by contact with others who did not (and who later became parents producing the teen-agers roaming across the land, a law unto themselves, while mothers have continued going out to work). Teachers and parents now blame each other for pupils' actions which so often are not only unruly but violent. And of course the young teachers themselves may have grown up permissively. The primary fact is that children's attitudes and habits, good and bad, *begin* in the home. These days too many homes are no more than shelters from the weather, without supervision and training but equipped with television's ceaseless demonstrations of disorderly human affairs.

Surveys have announced that the population of the United States expanded by two million during the past year, and one-half of the births are occurring among *un*-married teen-agers. There has been an 80% increase of single-parented households. In a small-town high school recently a group of girls petitioned the Board of Education for a special course in sex-education, because so many pregnancies were happening among the students. Meanwhile the teen-age suicide-rate has increased in the past

thirty years by 200%; and half the automobile fatalities in the nation involve teen-age drivers. Arrests of minors, not only for misdemeanors but also for major crimes, have become so numerous that the courts cannot handle them promptly, and the summonses pile up while offenders escape by crossing state lines.

This is the record of an appalling generation gap; but it is not confined to teen-agers. There is another gap, too, which has developed between *small* children and their parents. Grown-ups who have never themselves learned obedience and self-control cannot teach it to their children and cannot cope with aggravation and frustration. Accustomed to doing only what and when they wish, men and women produce unplanned-for babies who inevitably bother and hamper them. Then, like irritated animals, these parents attack their children.

So now we have "the battered child syndrome" spreading through our society which, in a desperate endeavor to end it, is organizing groups for counseling young mothers and fathers who beat, cripple, even torture their offspring. In a televised interview with such a group, one parent after another admitted that "I did it in anger"; others said they were drunk or on drugs. It has been pointed out that high schools are devoting more and more attention to drivers' education, but nothing is done to teach parenthood. A statement has been made by an official in social services that child-abuse in the United States of America "*has become epidemic*".

This picture of distorted family life leads into yet another generation gap involving the elderly. As the life-span of an exploding population extends itself rapidly toward the century mark, modern society finds it difficult to deal with the needs of a slowed-down section in its midst. Gone are the days when families lived together consecutively, the old folks remaining where they were born and married and had children who, in turn, added rooms for their children. Families accepted circumstances and adapted, because they needed one another and each contributed to maintaining the home. Nowadays few live in the houses where they began; young folks can't wait to get into places of their own; the middle-aged, perhaps having moved a number of times, end up with no space for grandparents—and often neither age-range wants to live with the other, anyway!



## A ROSTER OF DISTINGUISHED NEW CHURCH WOMEN

The history made by women has often gone unrecorded, for until recently "history" has been considered to consist of activities dominated by men. Few women have run governments, led armies, composed music, or made inventions, and thus history books tend to feature men. The raw materials of history—letters, documents, pictures, organizational records, gathered in libraries and archives—are also likely to concentrate on men. A visit to the archives at the Swedenborg School of Religion shows that they, like most other collections of original materials, feature people who have been chairmen and presidents, ministers and authors—mostly men. Thus when students of the history of the New Church or biographers visit the archives, they find more information about men than about women.

In fact, women have played an important role in the preservation and extension of the Church. Some have written music and plays for performance in churches, others have run Sunday schools and summer camps, while others have been teachers and writers. Some Swedenborgian women have made noteworthy contributions outside of the Church as artists, educators, doctors, philanthropists, etc.

At Convention last June, the group gathered for the mini - course on women's history listed a few women of the recent past whose accomplishments have been significant. (Note: Some of these women lived and worked in a number of different places, although only one is listed). Carolyn Blackmer of Urbana, Amelia Cutler of St. Paul, Anita Dole of Bath, Elizabeth Jacobson of St. Paul, Alice James of Urbana, Florence Murdoch of Cincinnati, "Grandma" Perry of Berkeley, Dora Pfister of Almont, Annie Roper of Gulfport, Elizabeth Schellenberg of Palos Verdes, Maud Sewall of Washington. Each reader will think of others who should be on any list of women who have made distinctive contributions, both within the Church and in secular activities. We invite you to share in creating a roster of distinguished New Church women by sending nominations, as outlined on the form following this article.

Our plan is to prepare a list of distinguished New Church women, past and present, who should be represented in the archives at the Swedenborg School of Religion (SSR). Once such a list has been compiled, the next step will be to gather information for the archives. The accompanying article by Marian Kirven describes the possibility of a Collection on New

Church Women in the Convention archives housed at the SSR library. The archives will seek information about noteworthy women in the form of letters, manuscripts, documents, photographs, newspaper articles, etc., and make it available for historians, biographers, and students of Swedenborg's influence on Americans. The biographical material now stored in people's memories, photograph albums, and attics will be sought in order to provide a comprehensive picture of the lives of these distinguished women. Once gathered, archival material about New Church women will be a treasure trove for those who want to know about their influence on the Church and the world, and Swedenborg's influence on them.

The value of archives is becoming clear as Roger Paulson and I search for biographical information about Alice Archer Sewall James, artist, poet, playwright, and author of doctrinal studies, who lived from 1870 - 1955. Gathering the facts about her numerous portraits and paintings, not to mention the dates and places where she worked, proves to be a challenging task. Fortunately, many people are collaborating in the search for letters, family records, and data about her life, so it should be possible to piece together much of the story of the life of this energetic and creative New Church woman.

Alice Skinner  
Concord, Mass.

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## CONVENTION CALENDAR

Dec. 3 - 4	Conv. Planning Comm. Urbana, Ohio
Jan. 13 - 15	Bd. of Missions, Newton, MA.
Jan. 22 - 24	General Council, Waltham, MA.
Feb. 12 - 14	Bd. of Ed., Newton, MA.
Feb. 19 - 21	College Board, Urbana, O.
March 26 - 28	Dept. of Publications, Washington, D.C.
April 6 - 8	Comm. on Adm. to Ministry, Newton, MA.
April 9 - 10	Regional Peer Supervision Meetings.

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# NOMINATIONS FOR THE ROSTER OF DISTINGUISHED NEW CHURCH WOMEN

Instructions: Provide as much of the requested information as possible. Send nominations to Alice B. Skinner, 368 Strawberry Hill Road, Concord, Ma. 01742.

Name of Nominee:

Biographical information: Place and date of birth; Place(s) of residence and dates; Place and date of death.

Date of marriage and name of spouse; Names and birthdates of her children; Dates of marriage of children and names of their spouses.

Education: institutions attended and dates.

Occupation(s): Places of work and dates.

Church affiliation(s): Place(s) and dates. What did the New Church mean to her? Who were the Church people who influenced her?

Outstanding contributions within and outside of the New Church.

Sources of additional information: names and addresses of others who can provide information about the nominee.

Name and address of nominator.

## ***ON ESTABLISHING AN ARCHIVE ON NEW CHURCH WOMEN***

A Collection of New Church Women could be established and housed in the Convention archives at the Swedenborg School of Religion library, which is above ground and has fire-proof walls. The items in the collection could be listed in the SSR library catalogue and thus be made available to all users of the library including the distant correspondents who ask the librarian to do research for them.

The archives at SSR house Convention records and school records which include committee reports, minutes, letters, sermons, and manuscripts of all sorts. In these collections are items by and about New Church women such as, Lydia M. Child, Alice A. S. James, Helen Keller, Cornelia Hotson, Anita Dole, Alice S. Sechrist, Jane D. Mills, Jill

Kingslake and Carolyn Blackmer. This library also has a complete collection of New Church periodicals. Anyone doing research on the life of someone known to have been involved with the New Church refers to these periodicals, seeking articles by, or information about the person.

As current librarian at SSR, I believe that a Collection on New Church Women would be a fine addition to the SSR archives. From what I have read about New Church women, I find them to be courageous, creative and free-thinking. Many of them seem to have led adventurous and unusually interesting lives.

Material to be contributed to this collection may be sent to:

Marion Kirven, Librarian  
Swedenborg School of Religion  
48 Sargent St.,  
Newton, Mass. 02158

## ***"DOWN UNDER" TWICE VISITED***

*by Wm. R. Woofenden*

Thomas Browne once wrote, "To keep our eyes open longer were but to act our antipodes." That's about the way I felt a year ago, on Wednesday, July 11, when I arrived in Sydney, Australia, at 10:00 a.m. local time. I had left my home in Sharon, Massachusetts, a little after 8:00 a.m. on Monday, July 9, to begin the long journey half way around the world. With time changes totaling 14 hours, it was actually 8:00 p.m. Tuesday at home when I

arrived; but still 36 hours had elapsed during which I might have slept a total of 3 - 4 hours.

The purpose of my visit was to give lectures on Swedenborgian thought to several groups in Australian universities, under the sponsorship of the trustees of a special fund held by the Sydney Society of the New Church. On this my first visit I was to stay a full three weeks, arriving home on August 2, just in time to open the Fryeburg New Church Assembly on August 4.

As it turned out, some of the final arrangements for university talks did not work out, so I ended up giving only three such

lectures, two at Sydney University (one to the Education department, one to the History and Philosophy of Science Department) and one down the coast a ways at Wollongong University, to the Philosophy of Science Department. (These three talks: "Some Thoughts on Swedenborg's Impact on Educational Theories and Practices," "Emanuel Swedenborg, Baconian Scientist and Seer," and "Does Man Control Science, or Does Science Control Man?" — along with other lectures given this year — will shortly be published by the Sydney Society in a small paperback book.)

The New Church in Australia, however, quite made up for the dearth of university lectures by setting up for me a very full schedule of activities, including the recording of a number of 15 - minute radio talks, preaching each Sunday of course, addressing the Women's league, and giving several talks to young people's groups and home meetings (study groups), as well as co - leading a 3-day family retreat.

Most of my travels were within the state of New South Wales, including trips up and down the Pacific coast for 200 — 300 kilometres, inland to the beautiful Blue Mountains, down to the lovely preplanned city of Canberra, the national capital, and out for a cruise across Sydney Harbor. Included was a closeup look at the incredible Opera House, pride of Sydney's three million inhabitants, and later attending a symphony concert there. Later my old friend George French (who had spent three weeks with us back in our New York City days) took me to see the hit musical "Annie." Old friendships made in London in 1970 with Bill and Isabel Hall were renewed, and they—along with many other Church members — went out of their way to entertain me royally during my whole visit.

During my third week there I flew down to Melbourne (about 700 km or 450 miles) for a three - day visit. Among my side trips was a visit to the impressive church camp Woori Yallock, a site of several acres with many modern facilities, and also to Merricks, which had already been selected as the site for the 1981 Convocation. The Melbourne church is of recent construction and modern design and is located in an attractive suburb. I was very well entertained by the Rev. John Teed and his wife Mary, who live in a manse adjoining the church.

During the greater part of my 1979 visit I was the house guest of the Rev. Ian Arnold and his wife Margaret. Ian, a native of Melbourne,

studied for the ministry at the Conference College in England. It was there that he met and married his wife. Their natural vivacity, coupled with that of their four sons, made for a very lively household. I loved every minute of it! Ian and I spent a good deal of time together, driving here and there, walking to many places in and around Sydney. He is several inches taller than I am, and a good many years younger. I soon learned it was a sort of endurance test to try to keep up with him. Once I stopped him and asked, "Do you have any idea what the tail of a comet feels like?" It slowed him up for about two blocks.

We talked theology for hours on end; Ian was full of questions about the state of the church in America, the curriculum of the theological school, etc., etc. Two of the radio talks I had recorded at a local radio station were aired while I was there. It was a strange feeling to sit at my host's home and listen to myself talk (in what one lady described as "my charming American accent")! My first reaction, I remember, had been to counter that *Americans* don't have accents—but held my tongue just in time.

As the three weeks drew to a close, the sponsoring committee and I had a long and serious evaluation session, assessing to the best of our ability the positive (and negative) values of the visit. I was encouraged to make constructive suggestions for future such lecture tours. Mine, I should mention, was the second one; the first being the previous year with the Rev. Michael Stanley, head of the British New Church College, being the lecturer. Without trying to go into detail, the conclusion was that the visit was more than worth the time, expense, and energy it involved. I returned home feeling greatly blessed and privileged for having had what I then thought would be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. But this presumption did not prove to be correct. During the ensuing months Ian Arnold and I kept in touch regularly with airmail letters. At my suggestion a colleague was extended an invitation to deliver the 1980 lectures. But personal commitments prevented his accepting. Meanwhile plans had moved forward to the extent that a lecture tour was definitely anticipated.

To make a long story a bit shorter, I was asked if I would like a return engagement — and I accepted immediately (before they had time to change their minds). This time the visit was to be for a full month, and with at least seven lectures definitely scheduled.

*(To be continued)*

## MOVIE REVIEW

*Ordinary People*, the excellent finely crafted first novel by Judith Guest, has been faithfully brought to the screen by director Robert Redford and an outstanding cast. Very seldom does the screen version of a story equal that of the printed page, but that is the case here. The acting, the photography, the music, blend together to make this a most absorbing film.

On the surface level the story is relatively straightforward. The wealthy Jarrett family, consisting of father, mother and son, live in an exclusive mid-western suburb. It's a tormented and tormenting family. Some two years earlier the eldest son died in a sailing accident; Conrad, the younger brother, watched helplessly as his mother's favored son slipped into the churning waters. The grief-stricken, guilt-laden Conrad suffers through recurring nightmares, he withdraws into a shell, and finally a suicide attempt fails. His parents provide little or no support. The mother, portrayed by Mary Tyler Moore, had smothered her first-born with affection and it is as if all of her feelings were drowned with her son. While the chasm between mother and son widens, the father, played by Donald Sutherland, stands by and watches his world collapse around him. Conrad eventually finds a measure of support and relief from a sensitive

Jewish psychoanalyst, and the movie ends on an upbeat note when father and son are drawn closer together. A lot of problems still plague the Jarrett family, but one senses all have learned a bit more about life and one another.

The movie is a searing indictment of affluent living in North America; a world in which money, success and "good appearances" are worshipped above all else. As the movie unfolds you cringe as the family structure disintegrates before your eyes. Once there was love between the Jarretts, but it wasn't nurtured and cared for, and it gradually turns into an idolatrous, brittle kind of self-love—or more properly, self-hate.

"Ordinary People" moves us because we are all ordinary people and it touches our secret fears and obsessions. It so nakedly reveals the props and facades we use to shore up our dignity and self-respect. Anyone who sits through this movie without squirming uncomfortably at least several times is probably quite unaware of his/her inner world.

Some viewers may be shocked by the earthy language, but, unfortunately, that too is the way life is today. You hardly "enjoy" this kind of movie, nevertheless you can learn a great deal about yourself in this extraordinary story.

*Ordinary People* author Judith Guest has roots in the Detroit New Church Society.

P. Z.

## BOOK REVIEW

by Wm. R. Woofenden

*A HISTORY OF THE NEW CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA*, by I. A. Robinson, published by The New Church in Australia, 1980, pp. 204, paper. Available in North America from the Swedenborg Library, 79 Newbury Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02116.

This impressive new book, truly a labor of love by Ivan Robinson of the Melbourne Society of the New Church, was prepared specifically to be part of the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of The New Church in Australia (popularly known as the Association) which is to take place at Merricks, Victoria (outside Melbourne) in January 1981.

Although the Association was not incorporated until 1881, the book traces the beginnings of Swedenborgianism in Australia back to 1832, when Thomas Morse of Cheltenham, England—the first known New Churchman in Australia—emigrated to Sydney. The book begins, however, with an account of the acceptance of New Church

doctrines by Isaac Pitman and his older brother Jacob, and the emigration of the latter to Adelaide, where he became in time the founder and first minister of the Adelaide Society. There were truly pioneers in those days: the sea voyage of Pitman, his wife and two children took five and a half months!

Compared to Britain, and even America, the New Church in Australia is comparatively young. The first of the present five societies was founded in 1844, but the last, Perth in Western Australia not till 1928. The other Association Societies are Melbourne, Brisbane in Queensland, Sydney in New South Wales; there is also an informal group in Canberra, the national capital. There is also one General Church congregation in Australia, the Hurstville Society, in a suburb of Sydney. Moves toward its formation began in 1905, but formal organization did not come till 1913.

It seems to this writer that there is a certain irony in the fact that the public introduction of General Church views in Australia is attributed to the Rev. Percy Billings, minister of the British Conference and father of the Rev. Rollo Billings of Convention, now retired, but

identified by some as the originator of the liberal "community church" movement in Convention. Percy, according to Robinson, did begin theological studies at the Academy, but for reasons unknown did not complete the course. Then, in 1890, he was ordained by the Convention, but shortly thereafter returned to his native England and in 1899 was enrolled as a minister of the British Conference. In 1901 he took up the pastorate at Adelaide, but was obliged to resign five years later because of his "General Church leanings." His later pastorates were all in America.

Looking now briefly at the book as a whole, it stands forth for me as a remarkably cogent study of organized Swedenborgianism. With an incredible wealth of detail, the author has given us a half dozen in-depth portraits of the life-cycle to date of as many New Church societies, and in doing so holds before us an essentially undistorted mirror image of any number of our own societies in North America. The author states in part in his preface: "I have tried to avoid the over-emphasis of some experiences . . . but I have taken the view that History must embrace both sides of the coin, and must reveal

the weaknesses as well as the strengths of those who have made it . . . I have tried to treat more fully of events that seemed to have been most significant, either as indicating the climate and divergence of the thought of the times, or as having had an identifiable effect upon the future."

The net result of this self-imposed standard of the author is a book that radiates an unmistakable aura of authenticity; it is History of a high order, to be read with pleasure and pondered at length.

It has been my privilege to have personal contact with the author, albeit briefly, both in 1979 and again this year, on the two occasions that I have visited Melbourne. When I first met him last year, at a "home meeting" of the Melbourne Society at which I was the guest speaker, I was struck by Ivan's perceptive knowledge of New Church teachings. Now, after my second meeting with him, which included receiving an autographed copy of his History, I am greatly impressed by his literary talents (especially considering that he is not a professional writer) as I am by his good New Churchmanship.

## BONHOEFFER ON THE TRINITY

"The significance of the doctrine of the Trinity is prodigiously simple so that a child can understand it: There is in reality only one God but this God is total love and, as such, he is Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost. The doctrine of the Trinity is nothing but man's feeble praise of the torrential force of God's love in which God glorifies himself and in which he enfolds the whole world; the doctrine is a call to prayer, to reverence, to a love that submerges itself in God.

That it is the one God, the father and creator of the world, who loved us in Jesus Christ until death, who in the Holy Spirit opens up our heart for him that we may love him; that there are not three Gods, but that there is only one, who created, embraced and redeemed the world from the beginning to the end, and that he still is always God as the creator and the father, as Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. *"This is the depth of his divinity which we adore and comprehend as a mystery."*

(The above quotations, expressing so beautifully the essence of the New Church faith, are found in a hitherto unpublished sermon by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, delivered in London, England, where he was then pastor of a German church, on May 27, 1934.)

## FROM CHURCH RECORDS

### BAPTISM

**COSTELLO** — Caitlin Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Donald Costello, granddaughter of Rafael and Betty Guiu, was baptized into the Christian faith on September 28, 1980, the Rev. William Woofenden officiating.

### CONFIRMATIONS

**JOSEPH, KUTA, TURLEY** — Robin Joseph, Petaluma, Cal., Fulton Kuta, Oceanside, Cal., and Matthew Turley, Shelton, Wash., were confirmed into the faith of the New Church during the S.N.A.P. session in California in August 1980, the Rev. Eric Allison officiating.

**ELLIS** — Steven Ellis was confirmed into the faith of the New Church during the Convention session in Wellesley, Mass. on June 27, 1980, the Rev. Gudmund Boolsen officiating.

### MARRIAGES

**AURAT — BRAUN** — Mr. Wayne Aurat and Miss Darlene Braun were married in Saskatoon, Sask., on October 11, 1980, the Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiating.

**MILLIGAN — DePRATO** — Philip Gordon Milligan and Nella Catherine DePrato were married in the Church of the Holy City,



Edmonton, Alberta, October 4, 1980, the Rev. Erwin D. Reddekopp officiating.

**REDDEKOPP — GALLAGHER** — Brian Frederick Reddekopp and Fawn Marea Gallagher were married at the home of the groom in Ferndale, Michigan, September 14, 1980, the Rev. Erwin D. Reddekopp, father of the groom, officiating.

## DEATHS

**ACTON** — Stephen Acton, a member of the DeLand, Florida Society, died suddenly on September 24th. The memorial service was held at Swedenborg House, the Rev. Ernest Frederick officiating.

**BESTELAND** — Mary Besteland, an active member of the New Church in Vancouver, B.C. for many years, passed away October 4, 1980.

**GREENE** — Marion Greene, 92, a prominent Boston artist and member of the Cambridge New Church, died October 5 in Haverhill, Mass.

**KENNEDY** — Miss Janet S. Kennedy of Cambridge, Massachusetts, died on September 30, 1980.

## PACIFIC COAST CAMP

The Pacific Coast Association Family Camp met joyfully this summer on September 1, 2, and 3. Attending were four family groups, including an eleven month old girl and an "elderly lady dog." Our days were spent in relaxed activities, both group and individual, set in the beautiful Mt. Pinos wilderness area, 8,000 feet above sea level. A breathtaking paradise of Jeffrey Pine and brilliant blue sky.

Our study began in the Convention Book of Worship and led us into a wonderful discussion of the meaning of the New Age and many related subjects.

We have had no permanent campsite until now, but we are all so pleased with the Mt. Pinos area that we plan to meet there again next year and hope to have a minister join us. Shall we see *you* as well?! For further information write:

Karen N. Conger  
8512 Remmet Ave.  
Canoga Park, Ca. 91304.

(Karen informs us that Split Mt. Camp was not held this summer, as reported in the September *Messenger*.)

## THE GENERATION GAPS (cont'd from page 265)

Steadily increasing numbers of the elderly now live alone, in ancient houses or apartments or in communities with varying services for senior citizens only. Many can not afford such independence and must rely upon relatives (who may not be cordial about it). The later years can be lonely and frightening if there is no one standing by or attending to needs. Not long ago North Carolina was the first state in the union to initiate a plan for providing protection of "the neglected elderly" who are left helpless by themselves.

And still there is one more gap, the most basic in human relationships. It is the *regeneration gap*, the chasm that separates those who live in the effort to become regenerate (spiritually mature) and those who stagnate within selfish motives. Between these two groups there is no bridge; they are facing in different directions and do not stand on the same level. In communities, schools, and in the money-making world the intelligent and the stupid people, the good and the bad, are not sorted out but continually mill around together, thus creating a never-ending tension and conflict which is an immense gap underlying all the others.

The great and strengthening promise given through Swedenborg is that in the life to come we *are* sorted out, and regenerate persons then live in the peaceful joy of being fully among their own kind.

The poet Tennyson wrote, in the past century: "When shall all men's good be each man's rule, and universal peace lie like a shaft of light across the land?"

When regeneration is understood by a majority of the earth's population, *and desired*, then will the tragic gaps now cutting across it dwindle, as the effort grows for all people of every age to become united in development of intelligence and goodness. Then will God's purpose for a human race on earth be clearly and firmly achieved.

It was for this that Jesus Christ was born.

## FROM A READER (cont'd from page 259)

Himself—"Praise the Lord for His Goodness and Wonderful Works to the children of men."

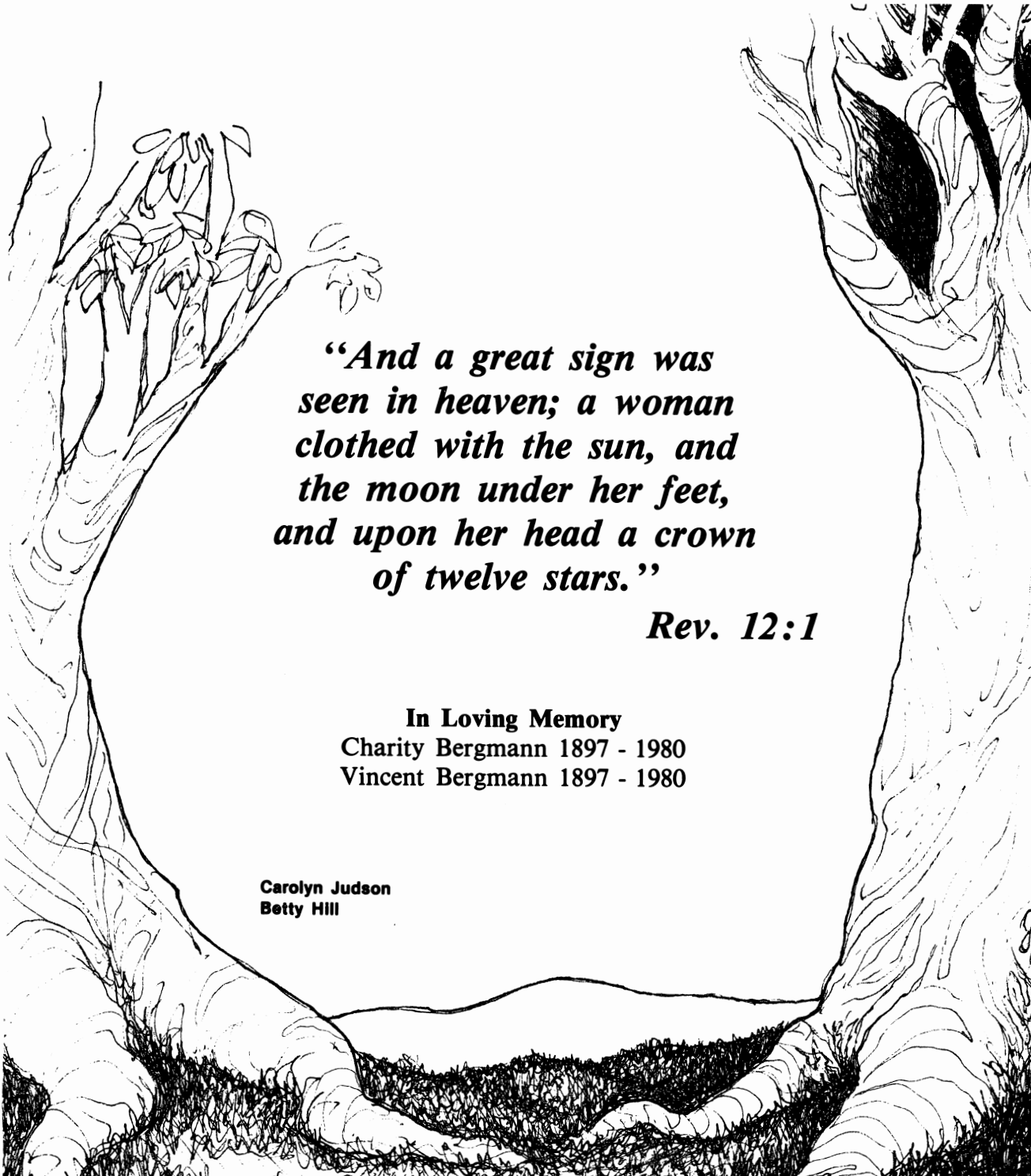
Enclosed check is my contribution for the *Messenger*. Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,  
Esther Fisher,  
formerly a member of Sheridan Rd.  
Church in Chicago, now transplanted  
to the Los Angeles group.

**THE MESSENGER**

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*“And a great sign was  
seen in heaven; a woman  
clothed with the sun, and  
the moon under her feet,  
and upon her head a crown  
of twelve stars.”*

*Rev. 12:1*

**In Loving Memory**

Charity Bergmann 1897 - 1980

Vincent Bergmann 1897 - 1980

Carolyn Judson  
Betty Hill