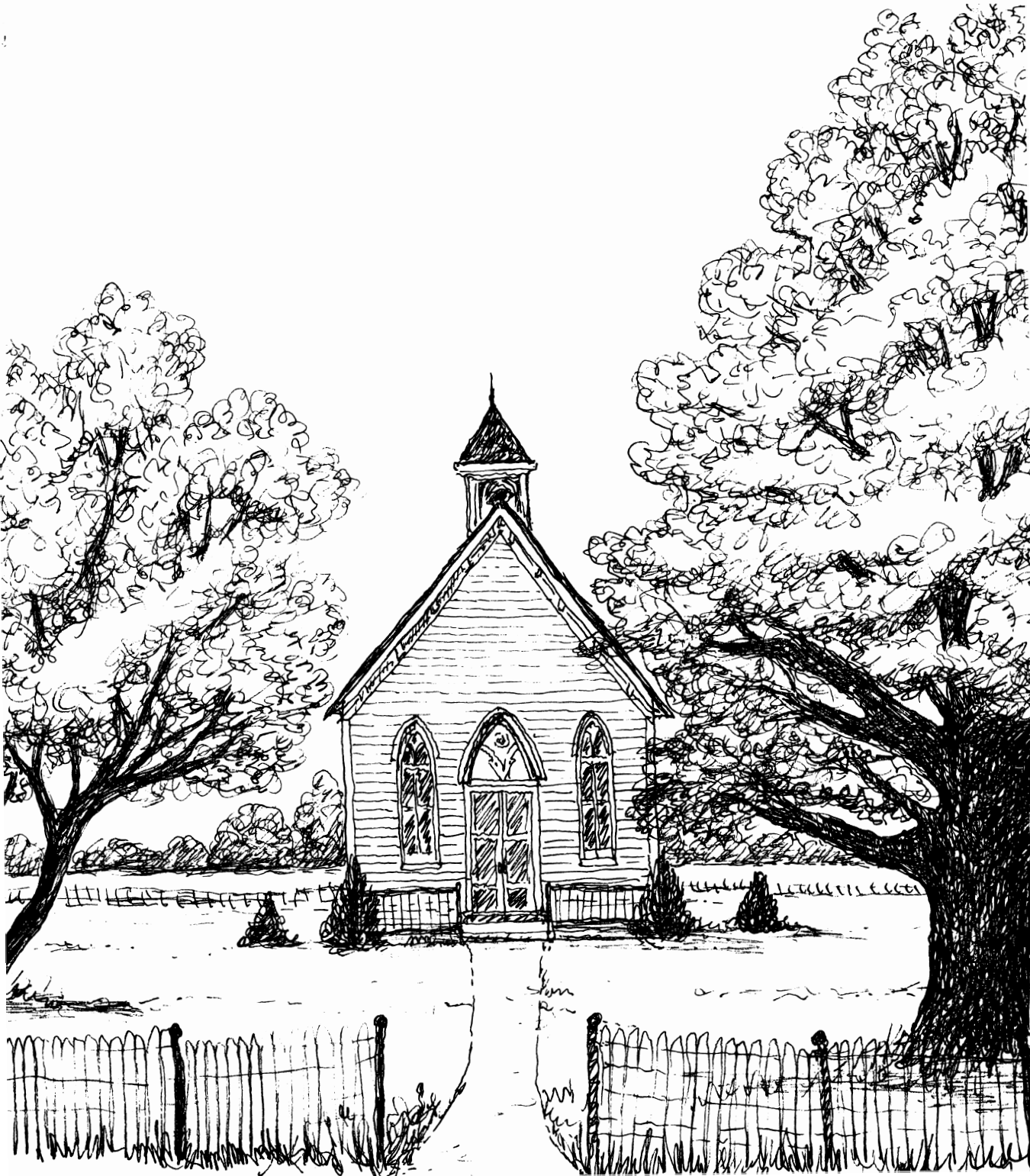


The Messenger

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH

OCTOBER 1980



EDITORIAL

A Matter of Life And Birth

An article entitled "Convinced and Convinced" in a recent Quaker *Life* caught my eye. (You may or may not be interested in the aside that if I were not a Swedenborgian, I would probably belong to the Quaker Church.) The writer was talking about the differences—and sometimes tensions—between "Birthright" Friends and "Convinced" Friends. These terms mean just what they say.

Birthright Friends are those members born into the movement; perhaps going back three or four generations. Convinced Friends have deliberately and enthusiastically joined the Church from the outside; they are new members with a clear sense of their distinctive message and what Quakerism is all about and what it should be doing.

And I began thinking of how this applies to the Swedenborgian Church. I imagine at least 75% of us are birthright Swedenborgians. We take singular pride in the fact that our parents and grandparents were New Church "worthies." We talk about how our grandparents read Swedenborg's teachings, and discussed them, by the hour. It was meat and drink for their spirits. And the Church was flourishing and strong in those days. Then we acknowledge that our parents weren't quite as staunch in their faith; still very active in Convention, but not quite the same level of commitment. And it may be that our knowledge of—and interest in—the teachings of the New Church has declined another notch or two. And in too many of our families the children have little or no understanding of the glory, the wonder of this "Good News from Heaven."

Sometimes it takes a convinced Swedenborgian, a recent convert, to reawaken in us a spark of passion, of caring, for the cause of the New Church.

Certainly the terms "birthright" and "convinced" need not be mutually exclusive! It's possible to be both. Inasmuch as we have the opportunity for being continually reborn in the spirit we can choose to deepen our Church loyalties . . . we can increase our understanding of these New Age teachings . . . we can grow in our love for the Lord and one another . . . we can demonstrate in our lives, in our daily affairs, that our New Church faith really is important to us. With the Lord's help and leading, we can consciously choose to be convinced New Age Christians.

Until we make that decision I doubt the Lord can — or will — do very much with us.

P. Z.

(Our thanks to Carolyn Judson, Royal Oak, Michigan, for the front cover sketch of *Almont Chapel*.)

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Paul B. Zacharias, Editor

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UNIQUELY VAGUELY TYPICAL

At the close of the first chapter of Mark, we read of the Lord's curing a leper. In the fifth chapter of the same Gospel, we read of the Lord's casting the legion of devils out of a man and into a herd of pigs. To the first man, the Lord said, "See thou say nothing to any man . . . But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze about the matter . . ." To the second man, the Lord said, ". . . Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel."

We could, I suppose, go over the incidents with a fine-toothed comb, and come up with some explanation of why the Lord gave such opposite commands, and why the result was the same in each case. To me, this would be an exercise in imposing our own simplistic notions of consistency on situations we know only in outline, and on a Lord whose wisdom vastly exceeds our own. It is enough, in fact it is better, simply to take this contrast as an evidence of the obvious fact that the same answer will not suit all questions. Emerson said, "that a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds."

You probably will not ask, "Why is this better?", but that is nevertheless the question I want to deal with. It is better because the Lord still says different and even opposite things in circumstances that may not seem to warrant the difference. It is better because what the Lord is doing and saying now is of more importance in our lives than what He did and said a couple of millennia ago. Is He now saying to me or to you, "Tell no man", or "Go home to thy friends and tell them?" Or again, when the Lord told the second man to go home, it was in response to that man's plea to follow Him. But to the disciples, Jesus said, "Follow me."

What is the Lord saying to me or to you now? "Go home," or "Follow me?" What does each of these commands mean? How different are they? And how important is it to know why He said one thing or another halfway around the globe almost two thousand years ago, if it does not help us hear what He is saying here and now?

A FRYEBURG LECTURE

*George Dole
Sharon, Mass.*



I'd hazard the guess that most of you, like me, would say, "As far as I can tell, the Lord isn't saying anything to me at the moment." And that's where I think we're wrong. I want this morning to demonstrate that the problem is quite different. The Lord is saying everything to us, all the time—so much and so constantly that we are quite unaware of it — as unaware as we have been, till I mention it, of our own breathing.

I need only one sentence from the writings to support this notion. It's short, but it's loaded. It comes from paragraph 14 of *Soul-Body Interaction*, and it's difficult to translate, but it goes roughly like this, "God alone acts. People just let themselves be activated, though from a more inward perspective, even this is from God."

Sometimes, I think, Swedenborg indulges in hyperbole, and in such cases it would be a mistake to take him too literally; but this I am sure is not one of those instances. There are too many confirming statements elsewhere about the Lord being the creator of all, and existence being constant creation, for example, or about the Lord being the life even of people in the deepest hells.

This has major implications for our notion of revelation. For anything that the Lord does must in some way bear the mark of His nature. This means that everything in this world and the next is, strictly speaking, a revelation.

Part of the reason this may be hard to swallow is that our notion of revelation is often limited to "God telling us the truth." It would be more precise and helpful to think of revelation as God trying to tone the truth down far enough for us to grasp it.

In Swedenborgian terms, that is, we are able to understand only appearances of truth, and revelation always involves a process of accommodation to our own states. Divine Truth itself would blow every fuse in our minds. Revelation—which means "a pulling back the veil" — may be how it looks to us: from the Lord's point of view, it is a veiling.

So the writings have no problem with passages in the Word that describe the Lord as angry, jealous, even ruthless. These are appearances of truth necessary to us in some states.

But even descriptions of the Lord as loving and wise are appearances of truth as well, for there is no way we can encounter the full reality to which these words point. We talk quite readily about Divine Love and Wisdom — it is a little like talking about eight hundred billion volts of electricity — it's easy to say, and does convey something, but any actual experience of the reality would annihilate us.

Now again, the writings make it quite clear that there are different degrees of appearances of truth. There is a difference between seeing God as mercilessly angry and seeing Him as loving. The latter, unless we have an awfully distorted idea of love, is more accurate.

The problem is, sometimes we *do* have an awfully distorted idea of love. There are ideas that are sadistic, masochistic, possessive, or hopelessly romantic. Take the statement that God is love, for example, and put it together with the very widely accepted statement that love is blind. The latter statement is a defensible way of conveying a truth. It just happens to make utter nonsense out of the former.

The essence of the Lord's message is always the same. The best I can do with it at the moment is a kind of triangle whose three parts are "Follow me," "Let me in," and "Come home." But in each case, the command raises questions. To follow Him, we must know where we are in relation to Him. To let Him in, we must know which door to open. To come home, we must know where our true home is.

So the Lord focuses His providence on giving each of us much more specific indications. I may need to become more critical, you more tolerant, or *vice versa*. Or to use another image, some of us went to the mountains on Thursday. The first move we made was out the driveway, which is just about the opposite direction from the mountains themselves. And in fact, the consequences of heading straight for the mountains are strictly for the birds.

At any rate, sometimes the Lord says, "Keep it quiet," and sometimes, "Go tell your friends." Sometimes He says, "Follow me," sometimes, "Go home." How can we tell?

This is where the Word in general, and the Gospels in particular, have their distinctive use. They are not unique, I would insist, because they come from the Lord. To believe this is to deny that you and I come from the Lord. They are unique because they exhibit in incredibly compact form the typical ways in which the Lord speaks.

Think of it — the Lord is the speaker within every word that has been spoken, the author

within every book ever written, the composer within every song, the artist within every painting. He has showed us good things in the hope that we might be drawn toward them, evil things in the hope that we might shun them, mixtures in the hope that we might sort them out, happiness for us to share, misery for us to alleviate. He has said so much, so specifically, to each individual, in so many different modes, that it seems impossible to discover any central meaning.

But in the Word, we have gathered together, out of all human experience, the archetypes of His dealings with us. And in His Incarnation — more specifically, in the Gospel narratives — He has put all this in terms of a single Human life.

The Lord's life on earth is not unique because it comes from the Divine, from the Father. To believe this is again to deny our own source of being. It is unique because it condenses the Divine acts of millennia into a single lifetime, because it isolates the very essence of everything the Lord does for and says to every individual, past, present, and future.

Every once in a while, you meet a person who doesn't seem to make sense. I think in my own experience of a classmate who seemed to be radical one day and reactionary the next. It finally dawned on me that he was just as consistent as I. Both of us were, so to speak, searching for the truth. My way was rather cautious — weigh things, see both sides, and eventually perhaps take some imperceptible but apparently secure step. His way was to try things out whole-heartedly — to be one position or another, and see what happened. With him, you knew exactly where he was at any given moment, but you didn't know where he'd be tomorrow. With me, you might not know quite where I was, but you'd find me in the same neighborhood any old time. And both of us, in retrospect, had an appreciable measure of honesty.

I'm sure the years have helped me oversimplify the contrast, but maybe it makes a better parable that way. The point is that the Lord seems to be saying such different things to different people — or to the same person at different times. It begins to make sense only as we gain a sense of the person behind the words and deeds. Then and only then do we begin to respond adequately. Lacking this sense of a person's central purpose and style, we respond to the form of the message rather than to its intent, and often as not find ourselves at cross purposes.

The Word in general, and the Gospels in particular, acquaint us with the Lord's basic purpose and style. There is no point to this acquaintance unless He is present now. He is not an old classmate whom I may never see again. He is my Creator, the ruler of my present and my future worlds. He is active now, or none of us would be here.

It might help to draw on one of the simplest and most basic correspondences. The Lord is the true light (John 1:9). Has anyone ever seen light? We see the effects of light, mediated by our atmosphere, reflected in various ways from different objects. Scientifically, we are not quite sure what light is — it has some properties of waves and some properties of particles. But we are learning more and more about light, and the more we learn about "light itself," the better we understand all the phenomena we see. We can sort out more precisely what aspects are characteristics of light, and what aspects are characteristic of the objects the light may strike.

To be quite specific, the Lord speaks to us through "evils and falsities" as well as through "goods and truths." Both occur in His Word. One of my favorite examples is the thirteenth chapter of Second Samuel, which recounts an instance of incestuous rape, followed by vengeance in the form of the member of the rapist — after they got him drunk. This is the stuff of tabloids, and it is in "the Lord's most holy Word." There is a celestial sense to this episode that tells us of something that happened in the course of the Lord's glorification. There is — heaven forbid — a spiritual sense that tells us of something that has happened or must happen within us.

By the crude and brutal use of correspondence, we could doubtless interpret this passage to describe interactions of good and truth so abstract as to be quite meaningless, and therefore innocent, and therefore perhaps holy. I strongly suspect that this would, in military terms, be evasive action, or even strategic withdrawal.

To me, the Divine presence in the sense of the letter of II Samuel 13 is the candor with which the story is told. There is no softly romantic, indirect lighting — nor is there a harsh, clinical spotlight. It is not cast in heroic or romantic mold or in dry documentary fashion. We are not told how to respond.

But then, when the Pharisees meet Jesus, we are told how to respond. For the most part, the Pharisees only ask questions — "Why doth

this man thus speak blasphemies?" "How is it that he eateth with publicans and sinners?" "Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?" "Why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?"

These are all *good* questions, but there is no room left to doubt the evil motives behind them.

I can think of several possible conclusions to this lecture, but all of them are ruled out by the fact that they are conclusions, and what I'm trying to talk about doesn't have any.

(We are very pleased to present this stimulating address by the Rev. Dr. George Dole, sent us through the courtesy of Virginia Branston, an ardent Fryeburg Camp supporter. In her accompanying letter, Virginia urges that we give our New Church Camps more and better publicity . . . "Fryeburg is a lovely place, inexpensive, particularly for families, and the classes are excellent." In making your plans for next summer, consider attending one of our fine New Church Camps. For further information write: Nancy Perry, 48 Sargent St., Newton, Mass. 02158.)

For Your Information

In the July-August *Messenger* we designated the source of the article "The Magic of Being in Touch" as Author Unknown. The Rev. Forster Freeman, Concord, MA kindly informs us this sensitive article was written by Dr. Smiley Blanton and first published in *Guideposts*, August, 1965.

* * * *

And we apologize for the gremlin who crept into the printing press last month and reversed the picture of the Elmwood MA delegation at Convention '80.

* * * *

Around September 1st Convention President Eric Zacharias sustained some injuries when he fell from a ladder, including two compressed vertebrae near the base of his spine. After five days in hospital he returned home and is mending nicely. To our President we extend best wishes for a speedy and complete recovery.

A SERMON

LIFE BEFORE DEATH

by Paul Zacharias
Kitchener, Ontario

"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations." Psalm 90:1

In this sermon we are trying to make some order, some sense, out of the recent "untimely" deaths in our church family. Our good friend Joe Ruddy was only 51 when he died. And Shelley McKenzie was the first child I baptized in this church in the fall of '63, and now, at the age of 16, in the flower of youth, she was struck by a car and killed. And we need to have some answers, even if those answers are incomplete. And so this sermon is for Helen, Pat and George, and for all of us who wonder about the mysteries and meanings of life.

As I said at the resurrection service on Thursday, it is *never* God's will or intention that a child should die. It is God's intended will that everyone should live to a ripe old age of 80 or 90, then die peacefully and carry on in the spiritual world. This is God's ideal will for all of his children. But we are free agents, and because we insist on building guns and planes and cars; and because we don't always take very good care of our body; and because we have created a world filled with pollution and stress; and because we are all more or less ignorant and self-centered—because of these and related factors we don't always fulfill God's ideal plan or will for us. We get in the way; we hinder God's perfect plan. And when this happens, God falls back on a secondary plan, which in a sense is a compromise because we are imperfect people living in an imperfect world. So it is that God sometimes permits hard things to happen to us, even as good parents at times permit their children to face and deal with difficult situations. When this happens the child thinks his parents are being quite unfair and unreasonable, but at that particular time this permission is in the child's best interests—even though it doesn't seem so on the surface. Obviously God would rather not employ such drastic measures, but he is looking at the total picture—the past, the present and the future, and for some reasons that we cannot fully understand now, tragedies are sometimes allowed to happen.

Raising a lot of questions is not especially helpful, simply because there are few satisfying, logical answers. Ultimately one simply has to fall back on a childlike trust in God—believing that there is some larger divine purpose here—that something positive can be gleaned from this tragedy. *Everything*, large and small, happens for some reason. No event, no experience is ever a total waste, unless we fail to find the potential positive features hidden within. Dreadful things sometimes happen—this is the way life is—and nothing is gained by feeling sorry for ourselves and crying out at the seeming unfairness of life. Something terrible has happened—this is a fact of life—terrible things happen to us all eventually. What do we do about them? This is the question being asked of us by God and by life.

I find some help in the following thought, although you may not agree with it, and it does contain some problems. Swedenborg says that, given imperfect people living in an imperfect world, everyone dies at the moment that best serves the spiritual interests and uses of that person . . . the effects on the other people in that individual's world are considered . . . and also conditions in this world and in the spiritual world are involved. A lot of different factors are involved here, and when all of these factors converge at one point, then we are going to leave this physical plane of existence, regardless of what we do or say or think. And this holds true for all four billion people on this earth, which is a mind-boggling thought. When our particular time is ripe, whether we are 9 years old or 90, then God is going to call us to our eternal spiritual home. And we tend to get very angry and bitter and upset by all of this—which is perfectly natural and even necessary, *for awhile*. Hopefully, in time, we can begin to put things in their proper perspective, and gradually accept everything and once again find meaning in life. Tragedy can be conducive to spiritual growth in our lives. I am not saying that this is easy. It isn't. But it is possible, and this is one of the reasons God permits heartache and suffering.

Every time there is a death, especially if the person has not lived a full, long life, I am reminded very forcefully of some extremely hard questions. It makes me wonder whether I am making the best possible use of *my* life. Every day God gives us so many opportunities to do worthwhile things for other people; to bring someone else a bit of joy and comfort; to make the world the better place it could be. I'm not talking here about big, spectacular things — but just little ordinary acts of kindness and caring. We pass through this world but once. Are we making the best possible use of this daily gift of life from God? Perhaps there is a broken friendship, a quarrel over something quite trivial, and both sides are unwilling to give in, and then one of them dies, and the other person says, "If only I hadn't been so stubborn; now it's too late." Why do we wait so long?

And in the presence of death I think of my own mortality, which raises all sorts of questions and wonderments. Many years ago after a funeral, I was walking to the open grave in front of the six pallbearers carrying the casket, and one of the men said quietly, "Every one of us will make this journey one of these days." This is a very obvious, almost trite statement, but when you think about it seriously, it becomes extremely profound and full of personal meaning. What this man said is only too true; we know it up here, intellectually. But have we ever entered into the feeling part of this fact of life?

This morning's sermon is called **LIFE BEFORE DEATH**. We all know there is life after death; there is absolutely no question or doubt about that. The Bible, our church teachings, and now people like Kubler - Ross and Moody all say the same thing. When our material body dies, the spiritual part of us awakens immediately. We are still very much ourselves. We are greeted by loved ones who have died previously, and *life* in the best sense of the word continues. This is the way it is.

From God's point of view, the far more important question is: *Are we alive now?* Are we really and fully alive, or are we just going through the motions? We're talking now about life *before* death. When Jesus Christ spoke about eternal life, he wasn't just talking about pie in the sky! He was talking about more abundant living here and now, on this physical plane. Are we really aware, *conscious of being alive, as persons, right not?*

When I was a boy, back in Herbert, Sask., there was a fascinating mirror in my parents'

bedroom. It was a regular mirror, but there were two folding mirrors attached to the sides, and you could look into that mirror and by bending the side mirrors back and forth you could see dozens of reflections. And after doing this for some minutes I would have some very strange perceptions of my own existence. Or I would look directly into the mirror for quite a long time, and after awhile all sorts of weird and strange impressions and sensations passed through my mind. At times I would almost lose track of my own identity, and dozens of questions came to mind. Why should I exist? What was I doing here? Why was I born now, and not back in the 15th century? Why should things be the way they are and not some other way? In theory, if you had enough mirrors, would those faces go on forever! Maybe I had discovered infinity! Wow! And what was behind those eyes in the mirror? I was fascinated at the fact that I was a person; that I was alive; that I was conscious of myself. At the age of ten these sorts of questions bothered me, and I still haven't found very many answers. It may be that some people don't think about these matters very much. Some people are like primitive natives living beside a great river — they have never bothered to explore its source or where it goes — they just watch it flowing by year after year. The river comes and it goes. They watch it and wonder. Such is the mystery of life. I suppose this is all right for some folks, though I prefer to explore the headwaters and the ocean into which the river empties.

I'm trying to make one main point — that we need to reflect on the meaning of our lives. What do you think and feel God expects of you right now? How can we best share the blessings, the gifts that God has given to us? Do we have reasonably healthy, helpful concepts of life itself? Are our expectations realistic and fair? Or do we somehow expect to pass through life without any hard knocks! We need to accept the fact that life, by its very nature, is ambiguous and uncertain; life is fragile and transitory. We must learn to live with these facts of life. Job said, "Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble." Well, this is true, but it's only part of the picture. There is also a great deal of pleasure and delight and joy in life, and Job had his share of these good things. But he too discovered that roses, which are very sweet and lovely, also have thorns. In this world there is such a mixture of light and shadow, *of laughter and sadness, of good and evil. And we simply do not know what tomorrow may bring. We do know that everything comes to us freighted*

with potential meaning and purposes; meaning is there, and our task in life is to find it and turn it in a positive direction.

We are all aware that life is transitory. On this earth we have no continuing, lasting city. One thinks about these things while browsing through the old ruins in Europe, where, over 1000 years ago, people very much like ourselves worked and loved and played; they too were full of dreams and aspirations and life; and their bones have long since turned to dust. One hundred years from now there will be a completely new cast of characters in the drama of life, and we will be doing our thing in the spiritual world.

The Psalmist knows that life is transitory and short; that it is full of both joy and trouble. But his fundamental conviction is that human life has its roots in eternity; that life comes from and depends upon the Lord our God. There is a sovereign divine power who loves and cares, who redeems and provides for all our needs. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Having this kind of faith does not always ease the pain; Christians still have problems and troubles. We still die, regardless

of how much faith we have. But there is a big difference when we believe that all of life is God-centered, not man-centered. The believing, growing Christian really knows that life is essentially good; it comes to us from God. He knows that sufficient strength and help and guidance is available. He trusts that God's presence is around and within all of creation. He knows that even when we have sinned and fallen short of the mark — there is always hope and forgiveness with a merciful and loving God.

Ordinarily we don't think about these things very much. For the most part we go about our daily work. We eat and sleep and visit and go shopping, and we do the best we can. But once in awhile, in the midst of our busy routine, something clicks, and we pause for a moment. And just for that moment we catch a glimpse of the deeper meaning of life and death and the overpowering love of God pours over us, and we are caught up in the rapture. Then we know beyond the shadow of a doubt that everything is going to be all right because God is holding us up in the palm of His hand. Whether we live or whether we die we are with the Lord, and that is the only thing that really matters.

SSR GRADUATION ADDRESS

*by Susan Turley-Moore
June 26, 1980*

I Made It!

It's been a long, hard road and I feel happy and proud to be here. I could not have done it without the love and support of many people.

I came to the Swedenborg School of Religion with an anti-intellectual attitude which was based on fear and self doubt. The faculty has played a special role in helping me to turn on to my intellect. Today I am very excited about my ability to think creatively. I am enthusiastic about the possibilities for academia in my ministry. George Dole can look at me as one of his "success stories!" I am grateful for his patience and caring.

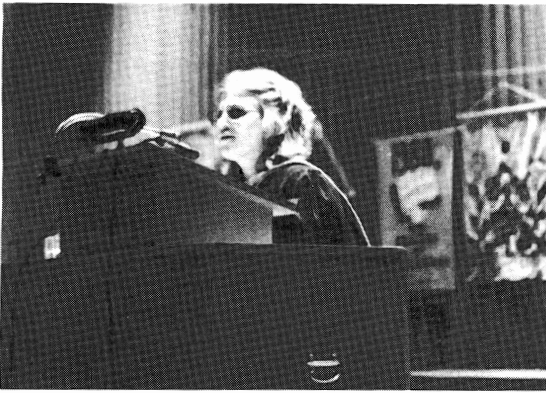
My folks have been wonderful through all these years of tears and struggle. They have given me new insight that regenerated a weary spirit and have cared enough to offer that "creative confrontation" when I've strayed from the truth. My husband Clifford has been a constant source of love and encouragement. Our son Keith, the joy of my life, has kept me on a nurturance level with his daily gifts and

hugs. It is with the help and loving support of my friends and family that I can be here today.

Here I am standing in front of people that I have known all my life and I am supposed to introduce myself to you. I feel a bit peculiar, but I am also aware that many of you do not know me.

I believe the best way I can introduce myself is by sharing one of my favorite childhood experiences.

It happened when I was about eleven years old. I was walking down that gravel path, after Sunday church, as I did so many times, on my way home. I was thinking about God and I was feeling angry with God. I remember looking up to the sky — out of the corner of my eye — saying, "OK God, I know a lot of people believe you're real, but I don't. How can you exist? I never see you, you don't talk to me. I don't really believe you're real. Besides, if you did exist then why would there be all this pain and suffering, why would people hate each other so much. I don't believe in you." I



"I MADE IT."
Susan Turley - Moore

walked on down the path feeling bitter and mean. Then I looked up again and said, "OK, God I'll make a deal with you. If you really exist then . . ." I paused to think of something that meant a lot to me, that God could do right now. "OK, if you exist then show me — a flock of birds — right now." And sure enough out of nowhere a beautiful flock of birds flew over my head. I was stunned. I was amazed. I was happy! And ever since that I've been a believer!

Since then I have been busy growing up, going to school, and more school, and more school. I've always been dedicated to social concerns as early as I can remember and continuing to burn in my heart is a flame that carries me in that direction.

Here it is 1980, the beginning of a new decade and I'm feeling optimistic.

We Swedenborgians at the 156th Convention of the New Jerusalem voted "YES" in support of the ERA and "YES" in favor of three women for *ordination*. I think this is great. I am happy and proud to be a Swedenborgian, a minister of this Convention.

Today women entering the clergy is a phenomenon, not a conspiracy. The act of ordaining women, correspondentially, is an act that acknowledges and receives with open arms, our God the Mother; the life giver and taker, the nurturer who guides with truth and perseverance. With this acknowledgement God our Father becomes whole, is wonderfully feminine and wonderfully masculine, is Yin-Yang, is All in All.

The ordination of women symbolizes the ability to know God and be with God in a more whole relationship. The Divine qualities of sun and moon, earth and sky, Father and Mother, masculine and feminine, are good and truth.

Evolution not only takes place on the physical plane, it takes place in our spirits. Our relationships evolve as does our earth. Our love for God moves to greater levels as our minds move to greater awarenesses.

God is always with us. The Lord is with us in times of struggle and in times of joy. God's love is everlasting, ever-revealing. This we need to keep in the forefront. Right now our church is in a state of desolation. We need to call upon the Divine even more. We need to know, see, and hear God's vision clearer so that we may receive direction from the Almighty; that we may receive God's great wisdom.

Our church has accomplished great deeds. It is this act of serving humanity that makes our church come alive. If we do not actively become involved with the world then we are responsible for the death of our church. We must become directly involved with improving the quality of life for all human beings for this is truly the mission of the New Jerusalem.

In times of happiness and grief God is helping us — sharing and comforting us. God's healing love helps us to know the way so that we can save and use what is true and what is good to better our lives. Always in the midst of conflict or death there is birth, there is potential for greater happiness. We need to help ourselves and help each other nurture this church back to health. I would like to start this decade off in this spirit by reminding us of what Effie Chow (our Ministers/Wives group leader) said, "We need 4 hugs a day to survive, 8 to maintain, and 11 to be on a nurturing level." Have you had your 11 hugs today? I doubt it — so let's all stand and in the spirit of God's everlasting presence, and in the spirit of healing love let's enjoy giving and receiving a great big 1980 New Jerusalem Hug.

Thank you and God Bless You All.

SWEDENBORG'S PRAYER

O Lord Jesus Christ,
Send thine angels to lead me,
to teach me,
to inspire what I shall think,
what I shall say,
and what I shall do.

Amen.

(Our thanks to Mrs. C. Hartley Grattan of Austin, Texas for sending us this prayer.)

SSR GRADUATION ADDRESS

by Gladys Wheaton,
June 26, 1980

Dr. Kirven, members of the Faculty, my companions in study both here and in the audience, my family, friends, members of General Convention and other guests:

PRAISE THE LORD!!!

I made it, and this is truly an exciting moment for me.

PRAISE THE LORD!

I want to thank all of you for being here, both those who are present in the flesh and those present in the spirit, to share this moment especially those who have been closest by my side during this long journey. I am acutely aware, right this minute, that I could not be here now without all of you. And I want to thank the Lord for all of you.

From the moment of my Baptism by Rev. William Fairfax, at 7 years of age in the Harlem New Church, when I experienced a moment of decision for the Lord as the water was spreading gently over the top of my head to the time of my call to ministry at 37 years of age, the Lord has been very alive, very real and very near to me.

I praise Him for the New Church education that I received even before I was aware of and active in the Swedenborgian Church.

Through the Christian Science Church I learned about the omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence of God, of the Father-Mother aspects of God, and the personal healing power of God; and I learned that the Bible had depths of meaning way beyond the literal sense. I learned that caring about each other's spiritual growth and sharing what God was doing in our lives was a central part of loving one's neighbor.

But I had to leave them because I couldn't accept the negation of the material world. I *believe that* it was the sphere of my New Church Baptism that protected me from that. So I left them. During this time I was also learning about meditation and the soul and the soul's relationship to the body through the Rosicrucians.

In the Episcopal Church I made my public witness to being a Christian — I was confirmed by them at 17 years of age.



"Praise the Lord!"

Gladys Wheaton

Through them the Lord taught me a deeper respect for the literal sense of the Bible, the life of piety and an appreciation of the *Sacrament* of the Holy Supper and the living use of the liturgical form of worship, but there was a depth that I missed and I had to leave them. Periodically throughout this period my mother would take me to different traditional black churches to join in worship there. It was here that I learned what it was to worship the Lord in joy and exuberance and with a totality of involvement that I have not experienced anywhere else. Praise the Lord! But it was when my grandfather Rev. Samuel Weems sent me a copy of *Heaven and Hell* and Spaulding's *Introduction to Swedenborg's Religious Thought* that all of these experiences came together.

On every page of *Heaven and Hell*, I read something that spoke to things I had already experienced. My reaction was Yes! Yes! Yes!

I knew that I had found the way for me of understanding my God, my world, and myself.

But it took finding the Cambridge Church to which my mother directed me and joining the study group there to know I had come home; to know that it was in this religious life and thought that I wanted to raise my children and in this context that I wanted to work out my salvation.

And so it was in the course of daily life that I received my call "to declare the immediate presence of the Lord Jesus Christ." And this call brought me to SSR and this moment. Praise the Lord — Thank You.

THE PIPELINE

by **Brian Kingslake**
Bath, England

Here is a story I used to tell my theological students in Africa, about a village that was supplied with water through a pipeline.

Imagine the village for a moment: mud huts thatched with banana leaves; women singing as they pound mealies in a wooden pestle; naked babies playing in the sun; hens clucking, goats bleating; men smoking raw tobacco as they sit around a fire; the good smell of wood - smoke and food cooking . . .

In former times this village had suffered a serious water shortage, and the girls used to walk several miles every day with their water - pots on their heads to fetch water from the river: up over the hill, along the forest track, and down through the swamp. The journey was not only long and tedious, but also dangerous, because of snakes and wild animals; and there were bad men living in the forest who molested the girls as they passed. Recently, too, the trail was muddy from the rains, and the women tended to slip with their heavy load.

At last the King of the River decided that a permanent solution to the problem must be worked out. He met with the Chief of the village, and they arranged that a pipeline should be laid down, all the way from the river to the village. Many lengths of pipe were procured, and during a period of some thirty years these were fitted together, under the direction of the King of the River, by a woman named Mary. The pipeline came through the swamp and the forest, past the outlying huts, right to the village green. Here, on a little hill, a post was set up, looking rather like a cross, with a tap fixed to it. Meanwhile the King of the River had erected a pump on the river bank, which pumped water into the pipeline. For nearly three days there was a hissing and a trembling, until suddenly — out came the water from the tap! At first it was only a trickle, as the pump at the river had not been finally adjusted; but, after another fifty days, the living water gushed out in ever increasing quantities, with the sound of a rushing mighty wind.

The village chief gathered the people around and pointed to the flowing water. "No more going to the river!" he declared. "The river has come to us! From now onwards, no one will get water from the river except through this tap. He that has seen the tap has seen the river! He that comes to the tap comes to the river! The

tap and the river are ONE!" The girls were so delighted they danced and sang, praising and glorifying the King of the River who had had mercy on them, and praising Mary for having done what she did with the pipeline.

The village elders, however, wanted to take the matter further. They sat in council under the fig - tree. "We must get some cement," said one, "and build a huge cistern, with the cross at one end, and fill the cistern with water as a reservoir."

"Yes," said another, "and small pipes must lead the water from the cistern to every hut in the village, so that all can enjoy the sweet water in their very homes."

"Fathers," said a third who had been to the mission school, "Let us call our water - works the CHURCH!"

And so it came about. On celebration days, they would all gather around the cistern, to dance and sing and hear the ancient wisdom of the tribe; but afterward they would return to their homes. And because of the "Church" there was not one of them that did not have his or her own water supply, for cooking, drinking and washing.

Things continued like this for many years. In course of time, however, the cistern became clogged with mud. One night, some bad men from the forest crept in and deliberately befouled it with filth. Moreover, the pipes to the huts were rusting up, and the water was ceasing to flow. People were having to depend on rainwater for their daily needs.

The elders of the village met again under the fig-tree to discuss the matter. The pipeline itself had been kept in perfect repair by the King of the River, and the water was flowing freely as far as the cistern. It was the water - works in the village that was impeding the flow.

"Fathers," said the chief. "We need a NEW CHURCH!"

And that, for the time being, is where my story must end.

(The Rev. Brian Kingslake, who has served Convention societies in Philadelphia, Washington D.C. and Cleveland, now resides in England. Though retired he is still active in British Conference affairs. The above is a chapter from a new book to be published in 1981.)

A Christian Alternative

by *Eric Allison*
LaPorte, Ind.

Since Americans were first held hostage in Iran it has been mentioned many times that Iran is an Islamic republic. The Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini is recognized as a religious leader even though his actions are not consistent with the Koran and often seem bizarre to us. The U.S. is generally referred to as a Christian nation and has as its leader a man who has been called "a deeply religious man" and "a born again Christian." Have the actions of the U.S. been consistent with the Christian faith?

While many in Washington have been "speed reading the Koran", what has been conspicuously absent from the mouths of politicians, news commentators, journalists, and U.S. citizens is a quoting from or acting according to our Christian scriptures. Those of us who are whole-hearted or half-hearted Christians have shamefully ignored Christian values and ethics in this situation. We have allowed ourselves to be sucked into believing that Christian values and ethics are not effective in the arena of world politics.

Even our born-again President has put national pride above the values of love, truth, honesty and forgiveness. Hasn't it ever occurred to our peace making President, who brought Arabs and Jews together in peace, that the way to approach Iran is with religious

values — not with bombs, bullets, or blockades? The actions of the U.S. in this crisis have not only been ineffective but are incapable of working.

In the light of this I propose what I consider to be a Christian Alternative. A good place to start would be with the President publicly and internationally admitting that the U.S. is guilty of using the C.I.A. to put the Shah in power. The President should also admit that the U.S. is guilty of turning the other way while the Shah murdered, tortured and oppressed his own people. The President should ask the forgiveness of Iran, Khomeini, and the world.

The Christian values of love, truth, honesty, and forgiveness are virtually untried in our international relations. We have as a nation not practiced what we preach and now are reaping the harvest of the bad seeds we have sown. Our government has consistently supported dictators across the globe who are corrupt and who oppress their own people. We have not stood strong as a Christian nation with Christian values; and so many now mistrust us.

If President Carter's rescue attempt had "succeeded", many innocent people would have been killed as in the case in all raids of this type. Is this turning the other cheek, or is this the act of a failing President trying to salvage the superficial pride of a declining nation? Our pride in our nation should not be in our ability to take a specialized military unit into the heart of a foreign city, but pride in our efforts for world peace — pride in truth and justice as the American Way.

AMERICAN QUAKERS VISIT BRZEZINSKI AND VASEV

This June seven Quakers, deeply concerned about the growing distrust and hostility between United States and the Soviet Union, visited Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Advisor to President Carter, and Minister-Consul Vladilen Vasev, second-ranking member of the Soviet Embassy in the United States. Many other top-ranking American officials were also interviewed. In the July-August *Quaker Life* Barbara Hollingsworth gives her impressions of these meetings.

1. It is possible to draw officials of the U.S. and U.S.S.R. into meaningful dialogue on critical and controversial issues.

2. Both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. governments realize the worldwide devastation inherent in even "limited" use of nuclear weapons and do

not see their use as an option for settling differences.

3. Both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. are solidly behind the Salt II as a necessary step to nuclear arms control. Neither wants ratification of Salt II linked to any international situation, including the Afghanistan crisis.

4. Much communication between the U.S. and Soviet governments is blocked by an attitude of distrust on the part of both nations. Dialogue, however, continues at many levels.

5. The U.S. Administration, Senators and Congressmen need to hear from citizens who do not view an increase in military strength as necessary or even beneficial to world security.

6. It is the responsibility of the individual to research issues and to write or visit political leaders at local, state and national levels. Letters *do* count.

While Dr. Brzezinski spoke of commitment to Salt II and increasing arms control, the nation is faced with the reality of increasing military budgets. The Carter administration has proposed spending more than \$1 trillion for military purposes over the next five years. This appropriation will include a \$30 billion MX missile system, 3,400 air-launched cruise missiles for \$4 billion, fund research of \$1 billion for death ray laser beam weapons, and the creation of a rapid deployment strike force.

Where will the government get this \$1 trillion? The money will come from you and me through increased taxes and from cutbacks in programs already existing to meet human needs.

A *Wall Street Journal* commentary, "Burning Up \$1 Trillion," states, "Government spending of any kind tends to be more inflationary than private spending. Defense spending, in this sense, is the worst kind of government outlay, since it eats up materials and other resources that otherwise could be used to produce consumer goods."

The scope of the economic and political problems inherent in the arms race is overwhelming. The lack of communication is overwhelming. Citizens, however, do have access to Senators and Congressmen who will listen. I

offer what I intend to do as a possibility for those who share a concern for a United States which shows strength from a deeper level than that of force: 1) become informed on the issues; 2) witness to my concerns; 3) write Senators and Congressmen; 4) contact local and state officials and maintain a continuing dialogue; and 5) not to give up.

I believe that peace is possible—in the Hollingsworth home, on the school playground, within the national administration, on Capitol Hill, and within the world arena. Peace in any setting involves deep commitment to the fact that each person is a child of God. Communication itself takes patience and real effort.

When I feel inadequate to solve conflicts, I must remember that I *am* inadequate. Meister Eckhart writes that, "There is nothing else a man can do that is so beneficial as to put complete trust in God." This certainly applies in the area of reconciliation.

My first and continued effort for peace, then, will be to pray that God's will be done in my life. When I am tempted to be discouraged about progress toward peace at home or abroad, I will remember, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matt. 19:26)

What Is The National Council of Churches of Christ?

Even though it has been thirty years since the founding of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., there are questions about who we are. We will try here to deal with some of these basic questions.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE NCCC?

The Council is the largest ecumenical organization in the United States, although it is not the whole movement. We are the denominations working together to act as the Church in a broken world. We are a *council* of churches. We are not organized to be nor are we trying to be a super church.

Relying on the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, the Council works to bring churches into a lifegiving fellowship and into common witness, study and action to the glory of God and in service to all creation.

WHEN WAS THE NCCC FORMED?

The National Council was a merger of fourteen previously formed interdenominational organizations, and was established by

elected representatives of Protestant and Orthodox bodies in 1950 in Cleveland, Ohio.

WHO MAKES THE POLICIES FOR THE NCCC?

The policies of the National Council are made by the Governing Board, which meets twice a year. It is composed of 250 official representatives chosen by the churches themselves to represent all segments of their denomination. The size of the delegation is determined by the size of the denomination.

WHEN THE COUNCIL TAKES A POSITION, FOR WHOM DOES IT SPEAK?

Council positions represent the thinking of the members of the Governing Board and program units. We do not attempt to speak for the denominations or their members, but rather *with* them and *to* them. It is a place where the leaders and representatives of the churches have the opportunity to make a common witness on issues.

WHAT DOES THE NCCC DO?

The work of your Council is more wide-ranging and inclusive than you may have imagined. The following provides a few examples of that work:

- We have provided over five billion pounds of food, clothing and health supplies in emergency situations around the world.
- We develop the Uniform Series Outlines used by over 40 denominations in church schools.
- We provide materials for stewardship campaigns in local churches.
- We have developed a policy on the ethical implications of energy production and use that is being studied in local congregations.
- We have projects in twenty urban and rural communities around the country seeking to solve specific problems about child and family justice.
- We work with the major networks in producing religious programs for radio and television.
- We prepare and edit the *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*.
- We bring together persons for biblical scholarship, and in the mid - 1980s we expect there will be a new edition of the Revised Standard Version Bible.
- We work in more than 50 countries around the world to enable local and regional groups to use various media in evangelism, adult education, human liberation, and development.
- We provide support and communications links with local and regional councils of churches.
- We provide, through Friendship Press and other means, study materials for local churches.
- We are working to improve relations with Jewish, Muslim and other faith groups.
- We safeguard the First Amendment rights to which churches and religious groups are entitled.
- We are building relationships between the black churches and the community, the white churches and the ecumenical movement.
- We have coordinated the placement of over 300,000 refugees in U.S. communities.
- We are doing things together that we could not do separately.

A CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR CHILDREN

Here's an inexpensive and different way to remember your young friends — your children, grandchildren, godchildren, any children. Each month from September through June the New Church SUNDAY SCHOOL PAPER brings stories, poems, mazes, puzzles, craft ideas based on the Bible and New Church teachings. There is always a nice letter from "Auntie Bim" with suggestions about caring and sharing, about the beauty of the world, about God's love for us. There is a story on correspondences for older children, by Aunt Lill Bates. There are pictures, letters and poems sent in by readers. A good gift especially for children who are not able to attend a New Church Sunday School.

A gift announcement will be sent to each child.

For a 1 - year subscription send \$2.00 to:

Thomas B. Zehner
439 E. Burgess Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15242

(2 — 5 copies to the same address: \$1.25 each. 6 or more copies to the same address: \$1.00 each)

SMILES

At the start of a holiday weekend the service station was crowded. Finally the attendant hustled up to the priest who had been waiting in line for some time. "I'm sorry about the delay, Father," he said. "Everyone waits until the last moment to get ready for a trip they knew they were going to make." The priest smiled. "I know what you mean," he said. "I have the same problem in my business."

— *The Anglican Digest*

Johnny was gazing at his baby brother who was crying long and loud. Then he asked, "Mother, did he come from heaven?" "Yes, dear," she replied. "Well," Johnny mused, "I can see why they put him out."

— *Pulpit Digest*

Bulletin bloopers: "The outreach committee has enlisted twenty - five visitors to make calls on people who are not afflicted with any church."

— *The Lutheran*

ALLIANCE REPORT

The Alliance of New Church Women held its Annual Meeting in the Faculty Dining Room at Wellesley College on Saturday, June 28, 1980.

The tables were attractively decorated with seasonal flowers provided by the women of the Massachusetts Alliance, who had also made favors for each person present — crocheted hats which contained spools of thread, crocheted baskets containing candy, Boston baked beans, and felt and paper bookmarks with quotations on them.

At the business meeting, corsages were presented to the President of the Alliance and to a guest from Australia, Ms. Zillah May.

Officers elected at the meeting were:

President: Mrs. Alan W. (Dorothy) Farnham
1st Vice - President:

Mrs. Donald (Mareta) Saul

2nd Vice - President:

Mrs. Douglas (Jean) Gilchrist

Secretary: Mrs. Daniel F. (Alice) Dullea

Treasurer: Mrs. Robert W. (Doris) Tafel

Mite Box Chairman:

Mrs. Cassius (Margaret) Ball

Religious Chairman:

Mrs. David (Carole) Rienstra

Round Robin Chairman:

Mrs. Forrest (Katherine) Swiger

Publications Chairman:

Mrs. Clayton S. (Marion) Priestnal

Nominating Committee:

Mrs. Lee (Margaret) Kraus

Donations were made as usual to: Church Women United, the *MESSENGER*, Urbana College, Church World Service for 12 blankets, Hunger CROP, Convention President's Wife for Travel, and the various New Church camps.

It was decided to have a raffle of the beautiful friendship quilt made by Betty Zacharias, tickets to cost \$1. each, and no drawing will be held until at least \$500. has been collected. The quilt was on display at Convention, and pictures of it will be published in the *Messenger* so that everyone can see what it looks like.

\$730. was collected for the Interfaith Center at Urbana, and the room should be ready for use in the fall. More money for this purpose is expected, too.

The total of the Mite Box collection for use by our church in Guyana was \$1600. This is the largest amount given for a number of years.

Dorothy Farnham

Addresses of Alliance officers:

Mrs. Alan W. Farnham
318 W. Palmetto Ave.
DeLand, Florida 32720

Mrs. Donald Saul
1560 Placentia, B - 4
Newport Beach, CA 92663

Mrs. Douglas Gilchrist
12010 60th Street
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5W 3Z5

Mrs. Daniel F. Dullea
101 Huntington St.
Brockton, MA 02401

Mrs. Robert W. Tafel
115 Treaty Road
Drexel Hill, PA 19026

Mrs. Cassius Ball
648 Via Cielito
Ventura, CA 93003

Mrs. David Rienstra
8 Elm Street
Fryeburg, ME 04037

Mrs. Forrest Swiger
RD 1, Box 30
W. Alexander, PA 15376

Mrs. Clayton S. Priestnal
112 East 35th Street
New York, NY 10016

Mrs. Lee Kraus
Pretty Prairie, KS 67570

We've Never Had It So Bad?

In 1848 Lord Shaftesbury said, "Nothing can save British Empire from shipwreck." A year later, Disraeli said, "In industry, commerce and agriculture there is no hope." In the early years of the 19th century Wilberforce said, "I dare not marry — the future is so uncertain."

William Pitt said, "There is scarcely anything around us but ruin and despair."

And in 1851 the dying Duke of Wellington said, "I thank God I shall be spared from seeing the consummation of ruin that is gathering around us."

— from British Con. *Lifeline*

Fryeburg New Church Assembly August 2 — 24, 1980

by Nancy Perry

The 1980 Fryeburg, Maine New Church Assembly session has just ended with the usual goodbyes until next year and the Flames (teen - agers) promising to be "in touch".

The first week's theme this year was the *Life of the Lord* with emphasis on the Gospel of Mark. The Rev. Dr's. George Dole, Robert Kirven, William Woofenden, and Rev. David Rienstra were the lecturers, as well as Christian Mania, SSR second year student. Christian spoke on *The Shift from the Natural to the Spiritual State*. All three weeks the teenagers enjoyed their discussion groups under the guidance of Martha Richardson and Bill Woofenden, while others conducted the usual one hour instructional period for the younger ones attending the Assembly and living in town.

A high - light of the first week was a clam/ lobster bake masterminded by Colgate Searle, Cecilia Guiu's husband. With a professional background, he guided helpers into the intricacies of building a wooden crib to heat the rocks hours in advance of the actual cooking, digging the pit for the rocks and rockweed to steam the clams, potatoes, haddock, sausage, carrots, onions and lobster. The young people helped in many ways in an endeavor that took great preparation and proved an unmitigated success of gourmet dining. Everyone chipped in to make it possible financially, and we have "seed money" for a repeat performance next year.

The theme for the second week was *Back to Basics* as found in *True Christian Religion*. Dr. Stephen Larsen joined the staff, lecturing on the concept of the Grand Man as found historically in eastern religions. His talk was illustrated with slides of mandalas and temples taken on his trip to India. During an informal evening, Steve showed slides of his travels to remote monasteries in Tibet. Stephen's wife, Dr. Robin Larsen, shared another evening devoted to her definitive study of mandalas and held a workshop the next afternoon for those wishing to create their own.

Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey lectured the third week when the theme was *The Minor Prophets*. Hosea, Joel, Zechariah, Haggai, Daniel and Malachi were all subjects of the lecture series.

In addition, four Sunday services were held in the Fryeburg New Church. The congregation generously donated the offering to the Assembly. Outing days were spent mountain

climbing, canoeing and sightseeing. Trevor Woofenden led the Sparks and Flames in new games that were lots of fun for them and even the adults enjoyed an afternoon under his creative direction. There were also two evenings of square dancing, and an interesting question and answer period one afternoon with Dr. Lucy Swanton Clark on "Homeopathy". Our cooks did a fine job of meal preparation and everyone helped ensure a well run Camp.

The Assembly would like to thank General Convention, and various Associations and individuals for their generous contributions toward support of the Camp which help keep our rates as low as possible.

Plan now to include the Fryeburg New Church Assembly in your 1981 summer schedule.

(We hope to have some Fryeburg Assembly pictures in the November *Messenger*.)

ALMONT CAMP REPORT

In attempting to capture the spirit of this summer's Almont Assembly, the words, "We are family" come to mind. Almont is a family encounter of a New Church kind: children, grandparents, teens, parents, young adults gather for learning, playing, growing and working together. Each morning we gather around the flagpole to sing, ". . . Under thy folds with heads uncovered, we take each other by the hand . . ." and a new day of adventure begins.

Johnny Appleseed came to Almont this summer to help celebrate his special Weekend which included an "App - Olympics," a pig roast, a Christmas party, and a much enjoyed skit on the life of "Ole Johnny Appleseed himself."

This year's lecture theme was "Issues in Today's World — Our Teachings Speak." We discussed health, prayer, the future shape(s) of society, marriage, and parenting. Now we take these thoughts back to our families and jobs where they can take root in life. For it is in our application of religion to life that we begin our regeneration in the New Church. If you have never been to Almont, you have a standing invitation to join the family!

Almont officers elected at the annual meeting are: President, Marjorie Shelley; Vice - President, Tom Neuenfeldt; Treasurer, Helen Keith; Secretary, Chris Laitner; Superintendent, Rev. Ron Brugler; members at

large, David Fekete, Elinor Johnson and B. J. Neuenfeldt. Ruth Brandau is the Business Manager.

Several articles in the Almont Assembly Constitution were also amended this summer, as follows:

Article II now reads:

"The purpose of this organization shall be study and instruction in the Lord's Word and the doctrines of the New Church as revealed in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. This Assembly recognizes its historical affiliation with the General Convention of the New Jerusalem, but shall be open to anyone sympathetic to our purposes as stated above."

Article VI now reads:

"The officers of this Assembly shall be a President, Vice - President, Superintendent, Secretary, Treasurer, and three Trustees, who do not hold other offices."

New Article VII:

There shall be an Executive Committee consisting of the officers names in Article VI. The Superintendent shall have the power to appoint assistant superintendents who may serve as members of the Executive Committee."

FROM CHURCH RECORDS

BAPTISMS

HANSON — Rick Lynn Hanson, Eureka, Kansas, was baptized into the Christian faith on August 10, 1980, the Rev. Eric Zacharias officiating.

ANDERSON — Tera - Lee Patricia, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Anderson, was baptized into the Christian faith on September 13, 1980, in Kitchener, Ontario, the Rev. Paul Zacharias officiating.

WEDDING

LOEWEN — RENNEBOHM — Garry Dale Loewen and Patricia Diane Rennebohm were married in the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, Alberta on Saturday, July 5, 1980, the Rev. Erwin D. Reddekopp, uncle of the groom, officiating.

DEATH

RIST — Mrs. Hanna Rist, 56, died on July 23, 1980. The resurrection service was held at the Garden Chapel, Calgary, Alberta, on July 26, the Rev. Erwin D. Reddekopp officiating.

WE GET LETTERS

(We are happy to print the following three letters.)

Dear Mrs. Rice:

On behalf of the Trustees and students of Perkins School for the Blind, please extend our thanks to the members of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem Churches for the donation of \$1,000.00 in memory of Helen Keller.

As requested, this gift will be used to help in the education of blind children enrolled at Perkins School for the Blind.

Again, many thanks for this generous contribution.

Sincerely,

Henry F. Colt, Jr.
Director of Development

(This letter came to us from Mary McCormick, President of the Riverside New Church "Busy Bees". Earlier the Riverside Alliance had sent two Convention banners to the New Church in South Africa, and this is the Rev. Obed Mooki's response.)

Dearest Friends:

In the excitement caused by the lovely banners that you sent us just about Christmas time last year, we misplaced your lovely letter, which had been passed from person to person among our Sunday scholars here at Orlando.

It was passed from scholar to scholar, as more and more wanted to copy down the correspondences which you had listed. And now, after such a long time, the letter has come to the surface again!

Thank you ever so much for these banners, Riverside, and may the Lord richly bless you.

Please convey our love to all our dear friends of the Riverside Society.

Very Sincerely,
Obed Mooki

Dear Rev. Eric Zacharias:

On behalf of the Urbana College students, faculty and staff I want to express our sincerest thanks and appreciation for the generosity and special thoughts accompanying your donations 4 May 1980.

A generous check was presented to me 7 June 1980 before the full meeting of the Board of Trustees. The grand total of \$1625.58 is a remarkable sum of money to be collected in one

day for the specific purpose of purchasing library/media resources.

I had my "wish" list of selected titles ready and completed the purchase orders by the end of the next week 13 June 1980. My orders include a special publication needed by the accounting classes, educational materials purchased at a special discount, two documentary films from the U.S. Government National Audiovisual Center and 61 titles for the reference and circulating collections. The small remaining fund still left by the end of September will be used to purchase back issues of magazines to fill in gaps in our periodicals collection.

The first shipment of materials has been received and is now being processed. They will be ready for students and faculty use by the beginning of our new academic year, Fall Quarter 1980. Bookplates will be placed in each title in recognition of the Swedenborgian contribution.

Again many, many thanks and I wish each of you could enjoy and use the materials that are now part of our library/media collection.

Cordially,
Connie Salyers
College Librarian

ADDRESS CHANGE

(effective Nov. 1, 1980)

Rev. and Mrs. Paul Zacharias
281 Lakeside Drive
Kitchener, Ontario N2M 4C7
Ph: (519) 744 - 6785

PLEASE NOTE

The *Messenger* address remains the same:

The Messenger
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A NOTED AUTHOR AND HISTORIAN DIES

C. Hartley Grattan, author, teacher, historian and an authority on Australia passed into the higher life on June 25 in Austin, Texas.

He graduated from Clark College in 1923, which later awarded him an honorary degree, Doctor of Literature, and served as head of the English Department at Urbana Junior College from 1923 to 1925. In 1939 he married Marjorie Campbell of our Philadelphia Church.

As a free lance writer, he wrote for *American Mercury*, *Scribners*, *Harpers* and other national magazines, including *New York Times Book Review*. His many books include *Bitter Bierca*, *Why We Fought*, *The Three Jameses* and *In Quest Of Knowledge*.

But it was as an authority on Australia that he was best known. He was considered the American most broadly knowledgeable about 20th Century Australia, and was cited in the early 1970's as "the only important foreign observer of Australia" by Geoffrey Searle, Australian scholar. He lectured at the Melbourne University and the Australian National University, being awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws by the latter in 1977. By this time he had been writing about Australia for a span of fifty years. Over this period he assembled the Grattan Collection of Southwest Pacificana which he placed in the University of Texas' Humanities Research Center in 1964 when he joined its History Department faculty. Later he was made Professor and in 1974, on his retirement, became Emeritus Professor.

The Grattan Collection, which he served as curator, is considered the most comprehensive of its kind in the United States. Its emphasis is on Australia, but it also covers New Zealand, the Pacific islands and Antarctica.

He was author of a definitive two - volume study, *The Southwest Pacific To 1900* and *The Southwest Pacific Since 1900*. Among his other works on Australia are *Australian Literature*, *Australia* (U. N. Series) and *The United States And The Southwest Pacific*.

He is survived by his wife Marjorie C. Grattan, three daughters, one son and six grandchildren.

Richard H. Tafel

THE UNHURTING FLAME

Leon LeVan
St. Petersburg, Fla.

The third chapter of *Daniel* tells us that King Nebuchadnezzar made an "image of gold" and set it up on the Plain of Dura near Babylon. He signed an imperial decree that all peoples, nations, and languages should come and bow before that image, which image was a representative of the king's own self.

An image of self!

When we view the gilded image in that light it takes on meanings for our spiritual lives.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the three Hebrew captives, refused to bow before that image. The emperor had them brought before him and said in effect: "Bow to my image. If not, I will have you thrown into the flaming brick - kiln, the burning fiery furnace." They answered: "If God will save us well; but if not we will not bow." In rage Nebuchadnezzar had them thrown into the fiery inferno heated seven times more than its wont.

Before the captives were thrown into the flames their hands and feet were bound with cords or ropes; but when they presently emerged unharmed they were unbound and free.

That remarkable detail tells us spiritually that before our self - life is consumed in the fires of suffering and temptation we are bound to the "law of retaliation" for injuries received.

In that state our judgments are not free, but are "bound." If a person does us injury, we believe we must injure him in self - defense. We feel it necessary to react in accordance with the injurious actions done to us. We cannot see other than that a blow against us requires a blow in return. That is to be "bound with cords" — bound to the "law of retaliation."

But in the fiery furnace that law is turned around. There we are with the Lord Himself who is the fourth Figure in the "furnace;" and by His presence in our temptations we come out as new and living creatures. Our "cords" have disappeared. We are no longer tied to the "law of retaliation" (which is the first law of Hell) but are in laws of freedom and mercy.

In that new condition we are able to return good for evil, truth for falsity, light for darkness, mercy and kindness for slander and injury. That is to be free of Nebuchadnezzar's "cords" and that is to be free to use our judgments in mercy and kindness for the wrong - doer's Salvation.

The Lord does indeed speak to men and women today by the story of the Fiery Furnace. We must reject the worship and exaltation of self and accept the trials of humility and renunciation in which our self - life dies and the flames of the furnace are rendered harmless.

Only then do we find life and freedom; and only then shall we be sustained by the presence of the Lord the Savior (whom we discover there in the "furnace" with us) and who is said to look like an angel, "like a son of God."

Specifically, the mysterious Figure with the three Israelites in the midst of the "burning fiery furnace" is the presence and reality of the Lord's Divine Providence in the midst of our spiritual trials. At first the Figure may be unknown. He may be dim. We do not understand. We see the furnace and the flames engulfing us. We are conscious only of the fiery trial and there seems no redemption possible.

But then behold the Figure! Suddenly He is there. "One like unto a Son of God." The Lord's Presence is there in the "furnace" with us. What a holy and heavenly comfort. Our hurts and sufferings are no longer loss but gain. The Divine Providence leads us. The Divine Mercy upholds us. We are being regenerated. We are being "born of God." But before all these our self - life must be consumed; and that is done in the midst of the "furnace of fire."

This is the spiritual truth and this the revealing from the "fiery furnace" for men and women today (yes, and for young people too); and may there indeed be no "smell of smoke on our garments" when we emerge purified and lowly-hearted from the Lord's redemptive "fire."

The flame shall not hurt thee I only design
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.

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