

The Messenger

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH

MAY 1981



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NOMINEES FOR ELECTION AT CONVENTION '81

RECONCILIATIONS

We need to make a few corrections and apologies!

In the March *Messenger*, page 49, second column, 11th line, the word "unfavourable" should have been favourable in the Peter Francuch article.

In the April *Messenger*, the following concluding paragraph was unfortunately omitted from the Francuch article on "Dreams and Visions."

"In my opinion, it would not be in accordance with the Laws of Divine Providence that only evil spirits and their falsities would be allowed to communicate with man, if he chooses so as a master of his own universe from the Lord. The Lord, in His Divine Providence, always provides continuous spiritual balance for man and, therefore, opportunities to communicate with whomever he pleases from the level of his/her spiritual degree for the sake of man's freedom of choice . . ."

Finally, on page 78 of this same article, second column, 21st line, the word should be **volition**, not **violation**.

* * * * *

Gustave Bischof's article, "Toward a Renewed Church" in the February issue has evoked a great deal of positive interest. Gus informs us that this is a reprint of a dialogue-sermon delivered over a decade ago before the New York Society. It was and is a timely commentary on the state of Convention, and paves the way for the excellent—sometimes disturbing—features on the *Vital Church* and the *Lonely Church* in this May issue.

* * * * *

We would like to draw your attention to the recent publication of "O Jerusalem—A History of the Fryeburg New Church". This informative and very interesting account of the history of the New Church in Fryeburg, Maine, written by Ola-Mae Wheaton and Margaret Briggs, is presently available from: The Fryeburg New Church, Fryeburg, Maine 04037 for \$6.95 plus \$2.00 for postage and handling.

P. Z.

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Respectfully Submitted
Jim Zehner
Nominating Committee Chairman

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Paul B. Zacharias, Editor

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A VITAL CHURCH

by Edwin G. Capon
San Francisco, CA

INTRODUCTION

"During the past decade, most established Christian denominations in the United States lost members consistently every year." So wrote James D. Anderson, an Episcopal church consultant, and Ezra Earl Jones, a Methodist denominational executive, in a book copyrighted in 1978. And this is certainly the case with the Swedenborgian denomination and most of the churches in it. This parish, however, is an exception. In 1968 our membership stood at 60; today it is 86. But is this an important fact? Does this tell us to what extent we are a vital church?

Early this past Fall and again recently we have had Sundays with very low attendance and in at least two cases fewer than 10 members in the congregation. Even taking into account the percentage of our members living more than 25 miles from the church, I find this disturbing. It is tempting to ask, "Where is your loyalty?" But it makes more sense to ask, "How vital a church are we? How fully do we carry out the task to which Christ has called his church?" Lack of church attendance may well be simply a symptom of our failure to fulfil adequately the task of a church. We may be lukewarm because the flame of our church burns low.

THE TASK OF A CHURCH

Have you ever asked the question: What is the task of a church? Such a question cannot be answered by naming the organizations found in a typical church; they may or may not be furthering its task. Such a question cannot be answered—at least not fully—by listing the activities scheduled each month; such activities may or may not be furthering its task. Even the church's worship may fail to further the church's task. Not all worship is relevant.

What is the task of the church?

Swedenborg's writings do not give a direct, comprehensive answer to this question. In fact he usually uses the term, "church", to refer to people and groups of people in whom the church is rather than to an organization. His usage serves a different purpose. But I have found an answer, which I believe makes explicit the implications of his teachings. It is stated in several different ways in a book by Anderson and Jones entitled, "The Management of Ministry".

"The primary task of the church," they write, "is to receive people as they are, enable them to submit their lives in dependence upon the ground and source of their being, and return to society renewed and strengthened for participation in other social institutions." Put more briefly, "the primary task of the church is perceived to be that of accepting people in weakness to return to the world in strength," to which they add these words, "success is measured in terms of the quality of the lives that have been renewed." Could the numbers game be misleading?

Another author, Bruce Reed, in a paper published in London has said much the same things in these words, "The test of the Christian religion is whether the worship of God enables the worshipper to come to terms with the facts of life, and to seek to establish relationships with people so that the society which results enhances human dignity and does not devalue it."

A WAY TO LOOK AT THE TASK

I would now like to look at the task of the church in terms of our different but interdependent and overlapping ministries: the ministry of celebration, the ministry of teaching, the ministry of feeding, and the ministry of healing.

1. The ministry of celebration I see as a response to the need of people to express thankfulness and joy for the way their relationship to God has enriched their lives, redeemed their lives, freed their lives. Celebration can be just another word for worship, not any kind of worship but worship that is the heart of man speaking to his God. Countless passages in Scripture are acts of celebration. "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem." "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my savior, for he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden . . . " "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people . . . " How tragic when we are not aware that we have anything to celebrate! How vital will our worship be?

2. The ministry of teaching, which might better be called the ministry of learning, arises out of the need we all have to find a meaning for our lives and a satisfying way of understanding reality. Our lives and our world are constantly asking us questions and we may need to go where others are attempting to deal with those questions and where many of us believe God has given us the makings of answers. A church can and should be a place where people, including ordained ministers, can help one another put these answers together. It should not be a place where any one person or group says, "Here is the answer; take it or leave it."
3. The ministry of feeding, symbolized in the Sacrament of the Holy Supper, I arbitrarily think of as a response to the needs of man's deepest feelings and longings. The ministry of feeding is to the will side of man what the ministry of learning is to the understanding side of us. Neither ministry is sufficient without the other. Perhaps peace, in the Biblical sense of the word, is the chief result of this ministry.
4. All of us need the ministry of healing at one time or another. Perhaps a loved one has died. Perhaps a relationship has been broken. Perhaps life has cast us down. We are hurting in ways that no spiritual aspirin will cure. We have a special need of the great physician. And we need the nurturing

environment and the nursing care of a church.

These four ministries are all ways in which a church can carry on the primary task of relating human need to Divine Grace. Churches may sometimes seem to be institutionally successful without these ministries, but should they be called churches?

I am sure we have all heard it said that it is possible to worship God on the golf course. And there is actually truth in that assertion. In like manner the various human needs which our four ministries seek to meet can be ministered to in other ways. We may pray and read Scripture in private. We may share our searching with a close friend. We may recognize God anywhere in his creation. But will that always be enough?

CONCLUSION

How vital a church are we? How many of the four ministries I have outlined do we—not just I—fulfil? In which of these ways has this church ministered to me? How has my life been affected because I have been a part of this church? Is there a ministry I am yet in need of? Is there a ministry to which I would like to contribute?

Today's sermon is not a call to action. It is a call to thought, to prayer, to evaluation and examination. It is a call to ask not so much what we can do, as to ask what we can become.

A VITAL CHURCH . . . Continued

Introduction:

In the February 1965 issue of the New Church Messenger, there appeared a symposium on the subject "Why Is The Church Losing Its Strength." The editor, the Rev. Bjorn Johannsen, prefaced the 3 short articles by saying that he was prompted to promote this discussion because a leading Canadian magazine had recently devoted an entire issue to the subject; and because many writers and media commentators had been stating categorically that the influence of the Church was waning rapidly.

In 1981 it is still interesting to read what one person advances as probable reasons for the decline of the Christian Church and the New Church in recent decades. The author is someone whose association with the New Church goes back several generations and whose family is well known in the Church.

WHY IS THE CHURCH LOSING ITS STRENGTH?

a symposium published in the New Church Messenger, February, 1965

The Influence of An Organization

I accept with regret the proposition that the Christian Church has lost influence. The irony of the Church's decline in influence is that, in part, its failure as an organization has been caused by the very fact of its organizationally oriented existence.

This is no play on words, for there is a genuine paradox here: the effectiveness of the Church's central message, its powerful concept of love, has been blunted by the method we have chosen to give it life. People formed an organization—the Church—to group together for mutual sharing and perpetuation of the great idea of Christ. This original pooling of effort was probably essential for mustering

strength and courage for survival. Gradually, however, the organizational life of the Church has come to deplete our energies and divert our minds. This phenomenon is no one's fault; it is built into the very nature of the organization. Let me explain.

The influences of any organization on its members are many. They are based on the organic, biological purpose of incorporation—that of existence, security, and continuity. Members of an organization cannot let it perish. They have invested in it; they depend on it; they are part of it. The organization's concerns such as problems threatening its continuance tend to assume top priority, becoming more important than the individual concerns of its members. The health of the commonwealth becomes a more vital issue than the contribution it makes to its constituents. The influences of a church organization on its members are equally subversive to individual growth. Specifically, we cannot deny that in our church life we are concerned with: survival; growth; numbers (attendance); finances; success.

With these concerns, it follows that in order to be successful and grow (or at least survive) we must:

- reach decisions democratically
- abide by the majority
- support the church's activities with a sense of obligation
- avoid alienating significant numbers
- have social programs
- buy and take care of a building.

The above aims and means lead us to a busy and generally comfortable focus on the various forms of church life:

The normal Sunday worship; the appointment of a minister; the delegation to the minister of the bulk of responsibility, initiative and original thinking for our spiritual development; the concentration of our religious life on Sunday; emphasis on sermons and other traditions of worship in which we feel comfortable.

As a result we are finally the captives of our own organization:

- satisfied with the act of supporting it
- comfortable in its continuity and traditions
- slothful in our acceptance of responsibility for our spiritual development
- contented enough with our ignorance, as long as we find social acceptance in the organization.

In this way churches have lost effectiveness as judged in terms of their original potential. The potential power of the concept of love is virtually unharnessed by the typical member of a church organization. We are relatively unscathed in our contact with religion via the regular church organization.

The New Church may be particularly weakened by the debilitating effects of its own organization, because it is tottering on the safety level of bare survival. Our continuance is threatened, our attention is on our ability to keep going. Naturally we throw our energies into a variety of attempts to reassure ourselves or to regain our strength: group dynamics, theological school moves, collections of "evidences" of Swedenborg's truths, book reviews that contentedly praise an author because he cites Swedenborg or inadvertently talks like a Swedenborgian. We give every appearance of the pathetically thrashing of an organization trying to hang on.

But these remarks ARE IN NO SENSE LIMITED TO THE NEW CHURCH. It is a world-wide, religion-wide problem. Most of our accomplishments in gaining an understanding of life must be judged as mediocre. And in the practice of living loving lives we are little, if any, more skilled than our forefathers. Habit, fear, and social needs drive us together into church organizations. Material comforts tend to render spiritual concerns perfunctory, while we delegate to the minister and the church the bulk of any sense of responsibility we have for our own development.

There is an answer to the problem. But it is bound to be an uncomfortable one, and it certainly will not be a response to the question of organizational survival. For that is the wrong question. As long as we are concerned with that question, we are investing energy and resources without chance for success. On the contrary, for us to survive and finally start to grow significantly in a spiritual sense we probably must:

- stop placing attention and effort on organizational survival and success
- stop all our organized "busyness"
- stop looking toward the minister for our ideas and growth
- stop quoting Swedenborg and start a critical analysis of his meaning
- accept our own personal responsibility for our own growth
- find new forms of worship

— start studying, talking, working toward an understanding of the nature of life and love.

This amounts to disbanding the old organization and replacing it with a new "flat-out" pursuit of religion by the individual.

Christ did not organize a church; we did, and it is now choking off our spiritual lives. The realization at first may appear regrettable, but this is misleading. For by having the courage to disband the old organization, we may reassume our own responsibilities. The supreme irony of the Christian Church's organizational emphasis is that as "religious" members of religious organizations we are both the cause and the product of its decline in influence.

EPILOGUE

We know that not everyone will agree with the ideas presented in the above. The other two writers in the 1965 *Messenger* symposium,

although agreeing that the influence of the Christian Church was declining, assigned their own differing reasons to the problem.

The 1965 editor commented:

"The problem cannot be solved by abolishing the organization. The sheep must have a sheepfold and a shepherd. How then is the danger to be avoided of religion's becoming altogether institutionalized? . . . The important thing is to place the Lord in the center of Church organization . . . The living church is always alive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit."

We invite your comments and reflections on this provocative article. Please limit your response to 400 words or less.

THE LONELY CHURCH

by Steve Koke
Grass Valley, CA

One evening several years ago, I was standing in a crowd of fellow Swedenborgians at a post-convention conference. Suddenly, a friend of mine, a very active and prominent member of the Church, came through the crowd and threw his arms around me. "I'm so lonely," he cried and burst into tears. We held each other for a moment. I didn't know what, specifically, lay behind that cry, but I was feeling lonely, too.

Since then, that lovely moment of sharing has become a symbol of a deep personal and collective predicament that one faces just by virtue of being a Swedenborgian. A deep loneliness lies behind our collective experience as a Church. It can also haunt us personally, making us feel un-understood, unknowable. The very thing which has so enriched our consciousness seems to make sure that we will feel unique and therefore isolated.

Our social structure almost seems designed to preserve the impression. We are a collection of a few tiny congregations (compared to the corporate giants around us) scattered across the continent. The average distance between congregations must be in the hundreds of miles.

I have long suspected that one of the reasons why we continue to hold annual conventions is that a convention is the only opportunity most of us get to enjoy a landscape which, for once, is filled horizon-to-horizon with Sweden-

borgians. It erases images of a lonely Church and enables us to feel for a few days that we are in fact something vast and powerful.

It doesn't seem to be our fault. Our loneliness seems to be imposed on us by mysterious forces. We try to advertise, publicize, maybe even evangelize, but the world doesn't budge. I once made a private poll of ministers in the old California Association, asking them why they thought the Church was so small. Each one came up with different answers, nearly all of which blamed outside factors. One idea got some common support: Swedenborg is too difficult to understand.

But difficulties in understanding Swedenborg don't explain enough. If we can appeal only to advanced intellects, we are not attracting them in noticeable numbers. The atmosphere in Convention is not intensely academic. Those of us who have made it past the mysterious barriers around the Church are intellectual enough to discourage some people, but not intellectual enough to explain why we encourage so few.

The mystery increases when we look beyond the Church at other people who have gotten involved with Swedenborg's teachings. We are fond of citing names from the long list of famous people who have been influenced by Swedenborg: Alfred Lord Tennyson, Abraham

Lincoln, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Blake, Helen Keller, William James, John Chapman, William Butler Yeats, and so on. It's an amazing list. But an examination of it shows that only a few of these people got interested in the Church. Furthermore, the rest did not as a rule say much about Swedenborg. Their Swedenborgian connection becomes evident in most cases only when one looks closely at them.

This reticence to make Swedenborg's influence more public is surely just a product of individual circumstances; or maybe they didn't want to be associated with a Church. But I don't think that the answer is so ordinary. The phenomenon fits a pattern one finds in other circumstances.

When I was first reading Swedenborg, I noticed that I had no desire to look for a Swedenborgian community. I was a member of the Presbyterian Church and felt no intention to be anything else than a Presbyterian with a new slant. What Swedenborg did was to make me feel more self-sufficient. I now had a newly revealed and very rich inner world. I could take that with me wherever I went. There was no new urge to find that reality anywhere outside. I could share its results, but not its original form.

I have since come across other examples of this. Several times I've encountered Swedenborgians who had had no contact with the Swedenborgian Church. They knew the Church existed, but if they were invited to El Cerrito, they didn't seem to find the idea very appealing. Or they would come up once or twice and then disappear. They had encountered Swedenborg's books outside the Church, and that seems to have directed their future course in a way which completely counters our expectations.

History seems to conspire to reinforce our aloneness; it has been almost blind to the Swedenborgian influence. Books which deal with 18th century spiritual leaders or 18th century science may not mention Swedenborg at all. If he is mentioned, he usually gets cursory treatment. Nowadays, Swedenborg's reputation may be mainly a by-product of research into better-known personalities (such as Helen Keller) who turn out to have been influenced by him.

This tendency to be overlooked began during his life. In general, Swedenborg did not get much public recognition despite nearly a lifetime of pioneering scientific work. He was greatly admired by colleagues and friends; but as far as history is concerned, the full account

of his accomplishments and abilities has had to be revealed to us by investigators who sensed an untold story and then did some specialized research.

A classic example of this is the fate of his nebular hypothesis, a theory about the origin of the solar system. He published it long before the French astronomer and mathematician Pierre Simon de Laplace published his own version of it. But Laplace was named its official author. The idea is still an important concept in astronomy, and Laplace is still given credit for it. But ironically, a prominent contemporary astronomer, Fred Hoyle, has offered a version which is much closer to Swedenborg's original formulation than it is to Laplace's formulation.¹

In general, Swedenborg was himself an independent personality who impressed people of influence without becoming a public figure himself. He lived alone and usually traveled alone. His excellent work in the Swedish Parliament and as an Assessor for the Board of Mines gave him some contact with the public, but it was not a channel for his scientific and philosophical interests. When he became a theologian, he lived in relative seclusion with his inner explorations and his writing. He never lectured or took students, and he never tried to organize his followers. In a strategy whose implications we have yet to fully come to terms with, he sent some copies of his theological books to seminaries in the hope that his ideas would work their way down into existing churches. Otherwise, he didn't try to do more than place his books in circulation. There, his ideas were left to stand or fall on their own without promotion or efforts to discuss them publically. Finally, a close friend, Rev. Arvid Ferelius, tells us that even in private company, although he would respond if someone asked him, Swedenborg never volunteered information about his ideas.²

Swedenborg was an Aquarius. Whether one accepts astrology or not, the character of Aquarius is a good illustration of the kind of ethic we are dealing with in these examples. Aquarius is typically represented by a man carrying an urn of water on his back. From a Swedenborgian point of view, he is a person who is responsible for his own truth. From a Jungian point of view, he is a person who is responsible for his own unconscious. In either case, he is self-sufficient, independent, a kind of spiritual loner, but without being lonely. Aquarius makes friends of those who can share his ideas and ideals with him; but these relation-

ships are always formed with individuals, not with groups, as individuals who are interesting and receptive happen to cross his path. The other person is honored for his own ideas, and the bond between the two becomes a bond of shared consciousness rather than a bond of shared emotion.

There is no serious attempt to launch large-scale social initiatives. Capricorn, another sign, takes care of that. Aquarius may even rebel against overt group thinking and group consciousness. Not that it doesn't have its place; but the group, he feels, is founded on strong individuals, and the individual belongs to the Universe, not to any collective movement.

This is an archetypal formula; no one embodies such a formula in its purest form. But we need to find a trend, a suggestive bias in temperament and events, which seems to play a strong role in the movement of Swedenborg's ideas. It is not that history is being conspiratorial with us, even though it is often hard to avoid that impression. If the problem can be understood at all, it is undoubtedly caused by something so general and so close to us that we normally miss seeing it.

There is something suggestive in this sense in Swedenborg's writings themselves. When I was first reading Swedenborg, I noticed something that puzzled me aside from the usual problems a beginner has. He said nothing about a value that had been emphasized over and over again in the Presbyterian church that I then belonged to—evangelism, spreading the Word, being a witness for Christ, and so on. This is a very high ethic in Protestant Churches, although it is interpreted broadly and doesn't usually result in street-corner evangelism. It is drawn from the passage in Mark 16:15 in which the Lord commissions His disciples to "go into all the world and preach the gospel." It is also heavily reinforced in the Epistles.

This is important to Protestantism because it gives the Church a social ethic and therefore a specific method of relating to the world. It is a mandate to go out and do something very concrete with the world. It is the basis for much of a church's programming. The Gospel is itself an intensely social message with practical rules for life as well as the Incarnation theme. The command in Mark gives the Church a well-balanced social and theological strategy.

But Swedenborg stops short of providing a similar strategy. He does not go into what we would call practical psychology or the kind of wisdom which tells us how to apply his inner observations to specific situations. He tells us how necessary it is to love, to do acts of charity

and to be of use, but (except in parts of *Conjugial Love*) he doesn't tell us what it would mean to do so in a typical conflict situation or in the midst of the usual worldly complications. We are given a well-argued directive but no widely applicable expertise in carrying it out.

If we now pull all of these general observations together, we end up with a consistent suggestion: The Swedenborgian spirit, reaching back to Swedenborg himself, is essentially inspirational, behind-the-scenes, a kind of "seed" movement. It is accordingly not well adapted to public exposure and does not readily apply itself to common problems.

Swedenborg's writings are a powerful magnetic force which pulls the reader deep into the inner world. There it works to dissolve barriers and free energies tied up by dark complexes. In fact, much of Swedenborg's writing constitutes a return to an original uncluttered openness to higher things. Normally, we should know these things more or less naturally. The result of this clarifying inner work is a new sense of inner freedom and a new vision of one's reality and worth as part of an extremely rich universe that lies within and beyond the world of the senses.

But what happens next? We are pointed back toward the world. An inner release has taken place, but the new energies still need to be moved into the world. Difficult translation problems face us; but we are given little help. This is where we must become our own teachers. It takes an inner world and an outer world to make a complete creation. All things must be generated from an inner starting point, for reality grows from the inside out. The inner beginning has been provided for us. But it *needs* us to complete the job and provide an original contribution.

By themselves, the writings function much as Swedenborg did. They have been a roving point of inspiration which has somehow managed to find its way to pivotal figures in our culture. But inspiration is an internal force and works best in privacy. The basic ingredient in the patterns we have looked at is the essential *privacy* of the independent Swedenborgian, the inner influence in famous figures, and Swedenborg's own method of working.

Unless something else is added to it to provide an exterior consciousness adapted primarily to the world, this inner force does not work well in corporate situations. It either forces its privacy onto the organization, pulling it inwards, or it simply fails to work well as a public theme. The inwardness of the message

pulls against the outwardness of the organization. Eventually, what results may be a compromise—an organization built along corporate lines but somehow scattered in small groups around the countryside, each group a kind of approximation to a contemplative and private individual.

When Robert Hindmarsh founded the Church in 1788, he introduced a completely new element—the public agency—to house what has been a private and covert power.³ The chemistry of that union has produced subtle problems which are hard to deal with.

Furthermore, the corporate forms which now characterize the organized New Church are drawn from precedents which were originally created to express an older Christianity. We did not wait to see how the New Age might have wanted to express itself and to generate its own forms. Like the Apostles who waited for Pentecost, we should have waited for further movements in heaven.

The result has been conflict between what we are and what we think we ought to be. We are a people traditionally oriented to an inspirational revelation of a deeply internal reality. We think we *ought* to be the dominant outer movement of the New Age. We have become used to being something less, but we have had to think with lowered expectations without knowing why. It is not just an intellectual problem. The Church's sense of identity has been weakened by the conflict between its inner self and its outer wishes and expectations.

We have three basic choices. Any others may be only variations on them.

The first choice is to decide that we are, after all, a power behind the worldly scene, just as Swedenborg's ideas have been a covert influence in the public work of great creative personalities. Instead of wishing for larger congregations and a much stronger public image of our own, we should embrace this role and try to be the best there is at aiding the work of Divine Providence behind the scenes. We will remain small, but we will accept that because it goes with the territory.

The second choice is to develop the additional expertise that would bring our theology into healing contact with worldly conditions. The addition of a public agency to a private and covert power creates problems only if we do not create ways to expand this power outwards and downwards so that the energy it frees can be channeled into the world. This requires original work with our teachings and some borrowing from the healing arts. We

might produce a detailed and truly practical Swedenborgian psychology with a set of allied techniques which can be used in therapeutic and counseling situations. Another development might be a social philosophy which would generate social projects and commentary.

We might suspect that Swedenborg's position at the very beginning of the New Age would tell us something about the nature of his work and would have further implications about anything downstream from it. At the beginning of new life is the seed, the original point of inspiration. There is a primal, self-contained quality about a portentous beginning, a completeness which evokes a pure fascination with it. But nothing is supposed to stop there. As time goes on, the seed must sprout and its mass must be allowed to dramatically increase.

The New Age is a *process*, not merely a time in which original truths are to be spread through time and space. It must grow from its childhood on into other states. There is an evolution of substance and meaning involved here as well as an increase in proliferation.

Yet preservation and proliferation are important. There is a need to make sure that original principles are not compromised by careless experimentation. Someone, it seems, must stand guard over the original inspiration so that it can be clearly distinguished from the offspring of any current application. At the same time, it must be spread to many different places so that as many people as possible can benefit from it as it is. This brings us to the third choice.

The third choice is obviously the best. It is to find some way to manage both of the other alternatives. In fact, they appear to be complementary. But each must be approached with a full understanding of what it is designed to do and what must be left to a different kind of philosophy.

Footnotes

1. There is a very readable comparison of Swedenborg's and Laplace's theories in George Trobridge's 1907 biography, *Swedenborg, Life and Teaching* (pub. by The Swedenborg Foundation), Chapter XV. Compare these two theories to a modern version by Fred Hoyle in his *Astronomy* (pub. by Crescent Books, Inc.), pp. 270 - 3.
2. Quoted in *The Swedenborg Epic* by Cyriel O. Sigstedt, pub. by Bookman Associates, New York, N.Y., 1952; p. 381.
3. It was described as a "Society for promoting the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Jerusalem." (*The Swedenborg Epic*), p. 439.

CYCLES

by Ted Klein
Urbana, Ohio

In nature there are constant cycles and cycles within cycles. With the changes in seasons there is a movement to warmth and more light followed by a movement to cold and less light. Within the seasonal changes there are times of color and abundance and times of desolation. There is a period of "dying back" which eventually gives way to the growth of new life. Within a twenty four hour period there are also cycles: a movement from night to dawn and through the day to night again.

These cycles, which we experience in nature, correspond with cycles that take place in our "inner" or "spiritual" lives. As there are periods of abundance and desolation in nature, so are there periods of abundance and desolation within us. As there are periods in nature when new life grows, so there are periods of spiritual birth and rebirth in us.

Just as cycles are a necessary part of nature, so are cycles a necessary part of our spiritual life. Experience would not be possible without changes and contrasts. Different parts of a cycle each make their contribution, each being necessary for overall growth. The "dying back" of life in nature is a necessary stage as is the coming forth of new life that we experience in spring. Necessary for our spiritual life are both periods of spiritual "dying back" and periods of spiritual "rebirth."

"... these are alternations of things spiritual and celestial, both in general and particular, which are compared to changes of days and of years. The changes of days are from morning to mid - day, and the changes of years are similar, being from spring to summer, thence to autumn, and through winter to spring. Hence come the alterations of heat and light, and also of the productions of the earth. Life without such alterations and varieties would be uniform, consequently no life at all; nor would good and truth be discerned or distinguished, much less perceived."

(*Arcana Coelestia*, No. 37)

With us the cycles in our spiritual lives are necessary for our freedom of choice. Without the contrasting experiences we could not choose a spiritual direction. Through our responses to contrasting states we gravitate in a direction, accepting certain patterns and moving away from others.

Spiritual cycles are not only a necessary part of this life, but are described by Swedenborg as continuing to eternity in heaven. Angels are described as going through a cyclical range of states from "intense love" on one extreme to an experience of being "in shade and cold" on the other (*Heaven and Hell*, No. 155). These stages contribute to the continuing growth of persons in heaven as they can contribute to our continuing growth in this life.

Cycles are general and pervasive in nature and in spiritual life. Yet cycles are also individualized, for each person has his or her own patterns of changes and cycles. Each stage of moment is different from all others. Each person's ongoing process is unique and different from that of all other persons.

"it is worthy of admiration that to eternity one stage is never exactly like another, and also that one spirit and angel does not pass through the like changes of state as another, for the reason that one is not exactly like another in respect to good and truth; just as neither is one exactly like another in the face. Nevertheless out of these varieties the Lord makes a one."

(*Arcana Coelestia*, No. 5962:3)

Both in this life and after death there is a different cyclical pattern for each person.

A very important part of the cycles we experience are extreme contrasts. It is natural for us to experience a series of contrasting states ranging from moments of peace to moments of despair. Both of these contrasting extremes have an important place in our overall spiritual life process.

Moments of desolation or despair, as part of a spiritual cycle, are not moments to be avoided or moments which indicate anything "abnormal" or "psychologically wrong" about a person. These moments have a natural function as spiritual turning points. Swedenborg describes this kind of despair as a spiritual "famine," caused by a sense of truth being removed (*Arcana Coelestia*, No. 5279). Out of such moments can come a turning to God and a willingness to be open to God's leading.

Swedenborg states that with those who are willing to be reborn or regenerated

"The despair is about spiritual life, consequently is about the privation of truth and good, because when these persons are deprived of truth and good they despair of spiritual life; hence they have delight and bliss when they come out of the despair."

(*Arcana Coelestia*, No. 5279)

Despair, as part of a cycle, thus is necessary for a person to realize where changes are needed for spiritual rebirth. When persons come out of a state of despair

"They are like those who have been condemned to death and are set free from prison. Moreover by means of desolations and temptations, states contrary to heavenly life are felt, the result of which is an implantation of a sense and perception of the satisfaction and happiness of heavenly life; for a sense and perception of what is satisfying and happy is impossible without comparison with its opposite."

(*Arcana Coelestia*, No. 6144)

What is important is *moving through* this despair. Despair, as part of a cycle, gives way to contrasting states and contributes to spiritual growth. This kind of despair is necessary and "good." However, despair becomes "bad" when a person becomes "stuck" in it and does not "move through" it. Despair in that situation becomes a kind of obstacle or trap that blocks spiritual growth.

Peace, which is the contrasting state to despair, is also naturally part of a process. Peace is not naturally withdrawal or removal from conflict or change; it is not an escaping from the natural cycles of spiritual life. Instead moments of peace have their place in a person's overall spiritual cycle.

Peace, as a state in heaven and a state which at times can exist with us, is described by Swedenborg.

"That peace is like the morn or dawn in springtime, when, once the night is done, all things of earth begin to live anew from the rising of the sun; the scent of leaves is wafted here and there, awakened by the dew that falls from heaven; the gentle warmth of spring makes fertile the soil and grants as well a joy to human minds."

(*Heaven and Hell*, No. 289)

This description is not only beautiful in itself but clearly indicates that peace is part of a cyclical process. From dawn the day moves on, and spring gives way to summer. Similarly from moments of peace persons move on to other experiences.

Involved in peace is a trust in God and acceptance of one's overall life process.

"... they who are in the perception of the Lord's presence are in the perception that each and all things which befall them tend to their good; and that evils do not reach them; hence they are in tranquility."

(*Arcana Coelestia*, No. 5963)

Such a tranquility can center one's energies for "moving out" and "moving on" in one's activities.

Just as there is a danger in being "stuck" in despair, there is a danger of being "stuck" in an effort to recapture moments of intense peace and happiness. One then fails to recognize peace as a part of a cycle and as leading to a "moving out" rather than a withdrawal. What we need to do is accept *all* of the stages of our cycles as stages or parts that we move through in our overall life process.

There is a significant difference between cycles in nature and spiritual cycles. Cycles in nature could be described as "circular," while spiritual cycles could be described as "spiral." With spiritual cycles there is an "upward" or a "downward" movement. God seeks always an "upward" movement, but persons may fail to move "upward" and instead move "downward."

Spiritual cycles are intended by God to be part of a person's rebirth or regeneration. However, through a person's choices he or she either accepts or does not accept God's effort. If a person resists rebirth, that person's pattern could be described as a "downward spiral." However, if a person begins to be reborn, that person moves into a spiral that bends "upward." (Cf. *Divine Love and Wisdom*, No. 263)

A person does not become "reborn" at a single moment. Actually the rebirth process continues to eternity; static perfection is never reached. Cycles are life; if a person is being reborn there are continual cycles in the rebirth process. Through the rebirth process, in its innumerable occurrences, God is constantly moving. The changes are:

"... perpetual from one's infancy to the last hours of one's life in the world, and afterward even to eternity; and yet one can never be so regenerated that one can in any way be perfect; for there are things to be regenerated that are innumerable, nay, illimitable in number, and every one of them has shoots illimitable . . . A person knows nothing of all this, but the Lord knows all things and every single thing and provides for them every moment."

(*Arcana Coelestia*, No. 5122:3)

(Dr. Ted Klein is a faculty member at Urbana College.)

THE FRIENDSHIP QUILT

Some months ago the Alliance of New Church Women asked you to sign and then embroider your name on a piece of material. After these signatures were collected, Betty Zacharias lovingly and beautifully assembled them into a handsome quilt which is known as "The Friendship Quilt." In a few short years this quilt will become a priceless heirloom.

Wouldn't you like to own this treasure which is so full of meaning? You may buy a book of six tickets for \$5.00 or a single ticket for \$1.00.

Why not appoint someone in your church to handle these tickets? Or why don't you volunteer for the job? They may be obtained by writing to: Mrs. Robert W. Tafel, 115 Treaty Road, Drexel Hill, PA 19026. When the books are sold please send your check, made payable to "Alliance of New Church Women," together with the stubs to Mrs. Tafel.

We wouldn't want anyone to miss the chance to own The Friendship Quilt so write today.

MY MOTHER

by Helen Keller

"I cannot recall what happened during the first months after my illness. I only know that I sat in my mother's lap or clung to her dress as she went about her household duties. My hands felt every object and observed every motion, and in this way I learned to know many things. Soon I felt the need of some communication with others and began to make crude signs. A shake of the head meant "No" and a nod, "Yes," a pull meant "Come" and a push, "Go". Was it bread that I wanted? Then I would imitate the acts of cutting the slices and buttering them. If I wanted my mother to make ice cream for dinner I made the sign for working the freezer and shivered, indicating cold. My mother, moreover, succeeded in making me understand a good deal. I always knew when she wanted me to bring her something, and I would run upstairs or anywhere else she indicated. Indeed, I owe to her loving wisdom all that was bright and good in my long night."

Urbana College

Celebrates Swedenborg's Birthday

On April 8, Urbana College celebrated Swedenborg's birthday on its main campus in Urbana.

The Rev. F. Gardiner Perry, pastor of The Church of the Holy City (Swedenborgian) was the guest speaker during the day-long activities.

The birthday celebration began at 11 a.m. in the CCC Lounge, at which time Rev. Perry spoke on the "Spiritual Side of Sports." Following his talk, a birthday reception was held in the Lounge with cake, coffee, etc. served.

Rev. Perry is a 1971 graduate of Dartmouth College, where he was a member of their varsity ski team. He is a 1979 graduate of the Swedenborg School of Religion, and has been pastor of The Church of the Holy City in Royal Oak, Michigan, since 1979.

His sports background includes the following activities: co-director of the Wildcat Academy Ski Racing Team; assistant tennis instructor at "Tennis 128" and the "Pilgrim Club" in Boston; coach of Boston University's women's ski team.

His current interest is in "exploring the inner experience of tennis . . . understanding the 'inner game'."

In addition to his talk on the "Spiritual Side of Sports," Rev. Perry was available throughout the day to talk with anyone interested in sports or in the Swedenborgian religion.

Urbana College, founded in 1850 by members of the Swedenborgian Church, has a continuing affiliation with the General Convention of the Swedenborg Church.

Emanuel Swedenborg, the son of a Lutheran Bishop, was born in Stockholm in 1688. A leading scientist, he published on such diverse topics as mathematics, geology, chemistry, physics, mineralogy, astronomy, and anatomy, predicting a number of revolutionary discoveries and theories that have occurred in our own age.

Swedenborg's consuming scientific and religious curiosity led him to examine the relationship between the soul and the body, and to attempt to scientifically understand the nature of spiritual being. Recording and interpreting his own dreams, using a method of suspended breathing similar to yoga, he became increasingly sensitive to his own inner processes.

In 1745, Swedenborg experienced a call from the Lord which resulted in a special state of sensitivity, enabling him to "converse with spirits and angels." From this time until his death in 1772, he recorded his spiritual experiences and explored their significance as he

(cont'd on pg. 109)

“TEN COMMANDMENTS” FOR OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH PERSONS WITH HANDICAPS

- I. I am God, Your Creator: I have brought you out of bondage. Liberation is a sign of the life I give you.
- II. Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it Holy; you shall be wholly before Me—the entire congregation, excluding no one because of disability or handicap. I am God, to whom *ALL* shall have access: You may place no barriers before Me.
- III. I name you My children: Therefore, let no one else define My sons and daughters. Call no one “crippled” or “disabled”. They are persons: Persons *WITH* disabilities—individuals *WITH* handicaps.
- IV. Fear not one another: I know the confusion of your embarrassment—your fears—your anxieties. Your brother’s handicap—your sister’s disability confronts you: You, too, are vulnerable. You are both in My care. You are one in My sight.
- V. Know that I your God have placed good in all of you: you shall not look down upon or patronize the person with a handicap. Recognize that the vast areas of personhood shared in common are far greater than the few differences that disability creates between those you call handicapped and the rest of you.
- VI. Your cup runs over with the fullness of life I give you. In your human way you define that abundant life to include education, employment, a place to live, transportation, meaningful activity, cultural expression, and civic responsibility. From these opportunities you may not exclude those you call disabled. Your rights are their rights.
- VII. I place within you, varied gifts, abilities, strengths. Do not forget these same abilities, insights and knowledge are in those you call handicapped, crying out for expression.
- VIII. Be grateful for the inspiring quality of life within persons with handicaps, which in turn engender within all of you perseverance, humor, coping abilities, patience, and creative victory.

IX. Recognize in that commonality you all share there is also frustration, anger, anxiety and despair, reminding you all of your common frailty and your common need for salvation, and calling you to mission, to provide succor and justice for all.

X. Give ear to My eternal promise, set forth in Scripture, that underneath are the everlasting arms: Hold fast to My assurance to all humankind, that goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life, and you will dwell in My house forever.

Amen.

Harold Wilke

FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND

One night I had a dream. I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord and across the sky flashed scenes from my life.

For each scene I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand, one belonging to me, the other to the Lord. When the last scene of my life flashed before us, I looked back at the footprints in the sand. I noticed that many times along the path of my life, there was only one set of footprints. I also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in my life. This really bothered me and I questioned the Lord about it. “Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you would walk with me all the way, but I have noticed during the most troublesome times in my life there is only one set of footprints. I don’t understand why, in times I needed you most, you would leave me.”

The Lord replied, “My precious, precious child, I love you and I would never leave you during your times of trials and suffering. Where you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.”

Urbana College Celebrates Swedenborg’s Birthday . . . cont’d from page 108

came to understand the life of Christ . . . the universe . . . human life within the universe . . . and the Bible . . . as revelations of God.

Swedenborg believed that “the church is within man, and not without him,” and Swedenborgians today seek to realize their own individual “internal church” by living authentically different, purposeful lives, and by encouraging others to do the same.

— Urbana College Release



Spring Snow

In this part of the country, it's not uncommon to get one last snowfall after winter coats have been stored away and spring seems firmly established. It happened this past April, just as the fruits of my husband's labors were beginning to be seen in our garden.

One of his major avocations is horticulture. I won't say "gardening" because he does so much more than plant a few flowers or vegetables. He moves earth. He constructs walls out of big rocks. He builds arbors. He studies organicfarming methods. Then he plants a few flowers. A few of every variety he can squeeze into our tiny yard.

Some people collect stamps; he collects trees!

He was once overheard to say something like, "If those crocuses don't bloom, I'll kill myself!" (I'm not sure he was kidding!)

There have been times when I've felt jealous of the time he puts into the garden. (But I've never been reluctant to enjoy the beautiful flowers!) On a pretty Saturday we may see him only when he pauses from his labors for a drink or a meal.

But the day it snowed, I was the one who was worried about the garden. One day spring was everywhere. The next morning we awoke to a bizarre version of what I always yearn for at Christmas.

It looked like Springtime a 'la mode. There were frozen flowers. One could barely find the blossoms on the snow-laden peach tree. My husband's beloved crocuses had been completely swallowed. Overnight, the world had become cold and gray, covered with a blanket of heavy, wet snow over six inches thick. And the blizzard continued.

I was home from work that day with my 9 month old baby. As I watched him explore the wonders of the world from all fours, I worried about all the things that he could do that might hurt him. . .

"What if he eats that dirt?"

"What if the cat scratches him?"

As he continued his explorations I continued my daily game of "What if. . .?" all the way through falling out of trees, up to the day he asks for the car keys!

My son and I watched together all morning as the snow continued to swirl around. The weight of it soon seemed as though it would destroy every growing thing in our garden. I worried about the flowers just beginning to bloom and the birds in the nests in our evergreen trees.

As soon as Adam lay down for his nap, I pulled out my recently abandoned winter coat. Bundled up and armed with a broom, I set out to rescue Springtime from Old Man Winter.

I worked first at trying to free the evergreens. Their branches were so heavy with snow that they looked more like giant scoops of ice cream than spruce trees. I had planned to go inside when I finished that, but as I looked around my husband's "Garden of Eden", I felt compelled to rescue every plant from the eight inch thick blanket that was crushing it.

As I removed snow from the young trees he'd been carefully nurturing in pots, I felt an incredible closeness to my husband that was unique from everything else I've ever felt. It was as though I was giving him the most complete support of his uses that I could give. I could feel my actions were really coming from my heart. I really felt myself as one with him and with the Lord.

Invigorated with this feeling, I continued to work my way around the yard, freeing buried plants and scraping snow from dangerously full limbs.

I came to a very large spirea bush. Its branches are extremely delicate and the flower buds and leaves were just emerging. It normally stands about five feet high, but the weight of the snow had flattened it almost completely. As I worked on it I felt an almost maternal concern for its struggle.

It reminded me of the worrisome game of "What if. . .?" that I had focused on my son earlier. I freed its branches and, though they stood again, they were still somewhat bent. But I had done all I could. Now, it was up to God and the plant to straighten things out.

Working my way around the garden, I began to think of the plants as children. I did what I could to help them, concerned about what would happen to them, but with a serenity that let me know that whatever the outcome, it was really out of my hands.

It was then that it hit me that this applied to my relationship with my son as well.

As a first-time mother, only nine months into the adventure, I have spent a lot of time being terrified of new phases of his development. But as I tunneled through the snow to free the smaller azaleas, I reflected on the fact that he had survived my first clumsy diaper changes. I've never drowned him, even though I had no idea how to bathe a baby when I started all this. We've survived teething and weaning and the first collision with the coffee table.

Though my track record was short, I began to see that he was doing fine in spite of me. And all the energy I had expended worrying hadn't changed things one bit.

I've never before known the extraordinary peace I felt during the time I spent in the garden that day. I felt in my heart what I had known in my head. That I must care very much, do the best job I can, and beyond that, trust in Divine Providence.

When I came inside, my hands and feet were numb, my hair wet and I had snow down my back. I've never felt warmer.

No sooner did I change and dry out than I heard Adam announce that he was awake and ready to play again.

But one game I haven't played since that day is my daily game of "What if. . .?"

Reprinted, with permission, from Volume 2, Number 2 of What News from the Earth? © September, 1980, by New Jerusalem Productions, Inc., P.O. Box 8816, St. Louis, MO 63102. This article is taken from a column, "Speaking From The Heart", that appears regularly in this quarterly magazine. A limited number of copies of this issue are still available, as well as Volume 2, Number 3 (The Winter '81/Holiday Issue). They can be obtained for \$1.50 each from the address above.

URBANA COLLEGE UPDATE

The Urbana College Board of Trustees recently held its full board meeting on UC's main campus. The full board meets three times each year, and the recent winter session included various committee meetings, a special dinner-meeting with UC's Alumni Board members, and board participation in Honors Day '81.

One of the major topics considered during this three - day meeting was the College's proposed 1981 - 82 budget. After careful deliberations, the board approved the '81 - 82 budget which calls for expanding faculty to meet the needs of increased enrollment and for trimming administrative expenses.

Urbana College enrollment has grown a total of 22% during the past two years.

Urbana College President Dr. Lawson A. Pendleton stated: "Reduction in administrative expenses is the only sound way to keep from facing the stalemate of increasing educational costs to students merely in an effort to keep even with inflationary increases in expenses."

In addition to authorizing the appointment of two new full-time faculty members, the board's Education Committee discussed a Faculty Development Program, directed by UC's Dr. Clara May Frederick, which will bring visiting professors to the Urbana campus during up - coming quarters.

August A. Ebel, Chairman of the Finance and Budget Committee, presided as chairman *pro tem.* during the full board session which received the budget recommendation from Acting Treasurer Bert Herron. The College proposal shows a balanced budget with \$3,316,543 in projected income and equivalent projected expenses, which include a 5% unallocated contingency.

* * * *

Ohio Association of the Swedenborgian Church Scholarship Fund

The Ohio Association of the Swedenborgian Church Scholarship Fund is for Swedenborgian students in good standing attending Urbana College.

The recipients of this year's award are: Deborah Winter, 125 N. Russell St., Urbana; Beverly Titus, 2982 Pisgah Rd., Urbana; Skulli Thorhallsson, 125 N. Russel St. Urbana.

* * * *

The Carolyn Allison Blackmer Scholarship Fund, which was established in memory of Mrs. Franklin Blackmer, an alumna of Urbana University, is maintained by members of the Swedenborgian Church and alumni friends. Mrs. Blackmer taught at Urbana College, was a member of its Board of Trustees and a former Academic Dean at the institution. Criteria for selection for this scholarship include that the student receiving these funds must be an upper-class student and must be preparing for a career in education.

This year's recipient is:

Brenda Hodge, RT #1, Box 162, DeGraff.

* * * *

COLLEGE PRESIDENT RESIGNS

Dr. Lawson A. Pendleton has resigned as president of Urbana College, effective March 20, 1981. Dr. Pendleton wishes to return to the teaching profession, but will continue fund raising for the College on a temporary basis.

In submitting his resignation, he stated: "It is my opinion that it is important to provide for the continuing leadership of the College on a timely basis. We are all aware, through historical precedent, that lame duck presidencies are ineffective."

Appointed president in June, 1979, Dr. Pendleton came to Urbana from California, where he was an independent management consultant.

Until a new president is appointed, and effective March 20, 1981, Dr. A. Perry Whitmore, Dean of the College at Urbana, will serve as Chief Administrative Officer.

Dr. Whitmore states: "During this interim period, and continuing until the Board of

(Cont'd on page 114)

"DECLARE WAR ON TABOOS"

by F. Robert Tafel

GOOD LIFE/GOOD DEATH: A Doctor's Case for Euthanasia and Suicide. By Dr. Christiaan Barnard. Prentice - Hall. 146 pp. \$7.95.

For the present, . . . there is no question that each of us is mortal and that death is an essential part of life. It is thus the duty of society to create an environment in which every individual will be able to live a good life—and to die a good death.

With these words, the world-famous heart transplant surgeon concludes his case for the acceptance of euthanasia and suicide. A good life and a good death are of universal concern. Painful, prolonged terminal illness might, unhappily, be on the horizon for any of us. Such events are never planned. Open, careful discussion of how to approach such a situation is Dr. Barnard's aim.

Two separate but related events led me to purchase Dr. Barnard's book. First, at the last Convention at Wellesley College, with other ministers and ministers' spouses, I saw a videotape prepared by Jo Roman of herself and her family prior to her "rational suicide." And, second, I recently read a very biased and quite negative review of Jo Roman's book, *Exit House* (the review having appeared in the February 19, 1981 *Boston Globe*).

Reading Dr. Barnard's book—in the light of a very negative review of another book on a similar subject, and, in the light of my experience of the videotape last June—has helped me to understand better a very complex, and very emotional issue.

My own reaction to last June's videotape presentation on "Rational Suicide" was one of mixed feelings. It was a new subject to me; I was curious, but a little skeptical. Yet, another much deeper feeling was haunting me, disturbing me.

Looking back, I believe the greatest source of my discomfort has been that these subjects—euthanasia and suicide—run smack into one of human society's oldest and strongest taboos. Society, generally, and, most religions, condemn the practice of euthanasia and suicide. Thus, as I try to weigh the pros and cons of what circumstances might lead me to

consider euthanasia and suicide, either for a loved one or myself, I find myself up against a veritable tidal wave of "don'ts" and "shall nots." The application of a new age ethics to long-standing and complicated situations requires not merely the effort and anguish of deciding, choosing, but also the added possibilities of rejection and stigma. Quite possibly, I may even find my fellow Swedeborgians attacking and condemning me as well!

The difficulty is that life and death matters, especially in the context of euthanasia and suicide, are not simple. We've been given a heart as well as a mind. It is to both that Dr. Barnard addresses his case. A compassionate and understanding person is daily presented with a moral dilemma. The dilemma presents itself to doctors, patients and the rest of us on the sidelines once one begins to define life as more than the mere presence of brain wave activity supported by respiration and heart beat:

After all, the goal of medicine is to improve the quality of life or arrest the deterioration in quality where this has been set in motion by the disease process.

As long as the disease responds to medical or surgical treatment, there is no problem. The moral dilemma arises when, in spite of all treatment, the quality of life falls and there is an increase in physical suffering. (P. 49)

The dilemma is more acute for the medical practitioner who must advise patients and/or their relatives about courses of action or non-action to take. One case in point concerns the administration of drugs to alleviate pain. Shall enough be given when this will jeopardize recovery? There are many other issues which involve active euthanasia (*taking* action which hastens the process of dying) as well as inactive, or passive, euthanasia (*withholding* action which hastens the process of dying). He cites Dr. Joseph Fletcher (a professor of medical ethics at the University of Virginia who delivered a paper at a Euthanasia Conference in New York in 1974) as one authority who has carefully distinguished active euthanasia from passive euthanasia. These distinctions may have some use, inasmuch as there is now nearly

universal (if silent) approval of passive, or inactive, euthanasia. Yet, he argues, compassion requires carrying the case further:

It seems clear to me that a deliberate act of omission, when death is the goal or purpose sought, is morally indistinguishable from a deliberate act of commission. Procedurally, there is a difference between direct and indirect euthanasia, but ethically they are the same. (P. 69)

Oh, yes. Questions will arise as to whether a doctor has the right to play God. But the answer to that objection defies answer: "When we glibly bracket talk of terminating life with mention of the Deity, what in fact do we know of God's interpretation of life (P. 70)?"

As one follows the experiences and reflections of this noted surgeon, it becomes obvious that he has explored the nuances of this human dilemma in many forums on medical ethics. One gets a picture of an astute observer of human behavior who has been probing the meaning of life for a long time: from the days of youth growing up in the family of a Protestant missionary in South Africa, beyond medical school in practice in the early days of pre-antibiotic medicine, and, through the heart transplants which catapulted him and his colleagues to the forefront of modern medicine.

Dr. Barnard's logic is not the cold steel of a surgeon's scalpel. Compassionately yet firmly he steadily advances his case for options and for guidelines for the practice of active euthanasia:

I have never practiced active euthanasia, for one reason only—it is illegal. But I have often stood at the bedside of a dying patient and realized the need for this service.

Those who claim that one can always alleviate the suffering of the dying has either not had enough exposure to the problems or is lacking in a simple quality—compassion. (P. 77)

The knee-jerk denunciation of direct, active euthanasia seems hard for Dr. Barnard to accept. In fact, he sees hypocrisy in the denunciation, when life-taking is accepted in so many other circumstances: military action, the high military budgets, abortion, capital punishment (always being sure the death is quick and clean), and in passive, or indirect, euthanasia. Why must so many patients, and many of them children, endure a long, slow, painful process of dying? One answer, he notes, are the issues raised by the insurance industry. Who wants to compound the problems for one's survivors

who may already be faced with a mountain of medical bills by forfeiting insurance benefits to the "suicide" clause?

This book is a must for any who would discuss the issues intelligently. It is a caring and highly sophisticated discussion by an experienced surgeon who faces life as it is and seeks to shed light on a vexing and perplexing problem. To expand and develop our humanity, he invites us to declare war on taboos of every sort:

... if we are to turn our faces from primitive ritual and belief, we must replace such social supports with others of at least equal power.

One way of doing this is by declaring open season on taboo subjects, such as euthanasia and suicide, by full and frank discussion, at least sketching out the problem and possible ways of approaching it. (P. 11)

Swedenborgians—who affirm the tenet advanced over two hundred years ago by Emmanuel Swedenborg; that, "now it is permitted to enter intellectually into the matters of faith"—should be among the first to applaud this sentiment of Dr. Barnard. Yes, the time is *now* to declare war on taboos, taboos which cause discomfiture when presented with new behaviors such as rational suicide. In *Good Life/Good Death*, Dr. Barnard has initiated this war by sketching out the problem and suggesting options.

Urbana College (cont'd from page 112)

Trustees appoints a successor to Dr. Pendleton, I will serve as Chief Administrative Officer of the College. In this capacity, I will carry out the duties of President as described in the By-Laws of the Board.

"During this transition period, I am asking that each member of the college community—students, faculty, administrators and staff—along with our many community friends and supporters, work together to build upon, to expand, and to bring to full fruition the new spirit and hope that began so well with Dr. Pendleton's administration.

"Urbana College has been, and is, a remarkably enduring college. Let us all work together to make it a triumphant success!"

S.N.A.P

FINAL REGISTRATION FOR SUMMER WORKSHOPS

HOLISTIC HEALTH AND HEALING: An Intensive Interpersonal Workshop

2 PROGRAMS: Fryeburg, Maine, July 10 - 19 at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly, Holy City, Calif., August 14 - 23 at the land donated by Dr. Esther Perry

The Swedenborgian New Age Pioneers are sponsoring 2 intensive interpersonal workshops on the theme of Holistic Health and Healing. Both workshops are open to applicants of all ages and religious backgrounds who wish to explore the physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions of Holistic Health and Healing from a Swedenborgian perspective.

The workshops will both be largely experiential, involving deep personal exploration and sharing. Dreams, guided meditation, prayer, worship, music, movement, and interpersonal communication will be utilized. A spiritual community will be formed in which participants can delve into themselves, their relationships with each other and with God, to discover resources for developing healthier, happier, more loving lives. The leadership will be provided by Swedenborgian ministers, SSR students, and laypeople trained in humanistic and transpersonal psychology.

The facility in Fryeburg is a peaceful retreat on the banks of the Saco River overlooking the majestic White Mountains. This civilized camp has the comfort and convenience of modern kitchen and bath facilities, soft beds and large comfortable meeting rooms. The Holy City campsite is a short walk up a steep trail through the redwoods. The living conditions are primitive; sleeping bags rolled out on the forest floor, an outdoor kitchen and no running water. Participants in both workshops will share responsibility for cooking, cleaning, etc.

The fee for each workshop is \$75.00. There is scholarship money available for those who need it. We also hope to sponsor a work week in Holy City from Aug. 9 - 14. This provides an opportunity for participants to work on improving the campsite in exchange for a \$50.00 scholarship to the workshop.

All inquiries and applications for either workshop should be addressed to Rachel or Paul Martin, Swedenborg School of Religion, 48 Sargent St., Newton, Mass. 02158. There is a limit of 20 participants per workshop and priority will be given to early applicants, so **Send Yours In Soon!**

APPLICATION FOR HOLISTIC HEALTH AND HEALING WORKSHOPS

Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper. Please put some thought into your answers. Your application will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

1. What experience, if any, have you had in the areas of healing, holistic health, spiritual growth, group process, etc.?
2. Why do you want to participate in this workshop?
3. What are you especially interested in exploring during the workshop?
4. Are you now, or have you recently been, under medical or psychiatric care? If so please explain (type of problem, medication, etc.).
5. Which workshop(s) do you wish to attend? (Holy City workshop, work week, Fryeburg workshop).
6. Please list your name, address, phone number and date of birth.

CONVENTION SUMMER CAMPS

**ENJOY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
 RECREATION
 RELAXATION**

**FEATURING GOOD FOOD
 GOOD FRIENDS
 AND ESPECIALLY
 MOTHER NATURE**

GO TO CAMP THIS SUMMER!!!!

WHERE? SEE BELOW!!!!

1. Paulhaven Camp
 Dates: July 19—26
 Ages: Youth 10 years and older
 Reg. Contact: Rev. Gertrude Tremblay
 P.O. Box 2448
 St. Paul, Alberta, Canada
 T0A 3A0
2. Kemper Road Center Camps
 A. "Beside The Point"
 Dates: July 12—17 for Ages: 13—18
 July 19—24 for Ages: 9—12
 B. Day Camp at Kemper Road Center
 Dates: July 26—31
 Ages: 4—8
 Time: 9—12 A.M.
 Reg. Contact: Kemper Road Center
 9035 Kemper Road
 Montgomery, Ohio 45242
 (513) 489 - 9572
3. Blairhaven Camp
 Dates: June 28—July 11
 Ages: 8—11
 Dates: July 12—25
 Ages: 12—13
 Reg. Contact:
 Blairhaven Committee
 C/O Swedenborgian Library
 79 Newbury St.
 Boston, Mass. 02116
4. Split Mountain Camp
 Dates: August 1981
 Ages: Youth 14 and older
 Place: Santa Cruz Mtns.
 Reg. Contact: Rev. Horand Gutfeldt
 579 Vincente Ave.
 Berkeley, Calif. 94707
 (415) 525 - 1462
5. Pacific Coast Assn. Family Camp
 Dates: Late August 1981
 Ages: Families of all ages
 Reg. Contact: Marjorie Ball
 648 Via Cielito
 Ventura, Calif. 93003
6. Fryeburg New Church Assembly
 Dates: August 1—23
 Ages: All Ages: 13 or younger must be
 accompanied by an adult
 Various Accommodations
 Reg. Contact: Louise Woofenden
 48 Highland St.
 Sharon, Mass. 02067
7. Almont New Church Assembly
 Dates: July 25—August 9
 Ages: All Ages: those under 16 not ac-
 companied by family or parent must
 have an adult sponsor attending
 camp
 Reg. Contact: Thomas B. Zehner
 439 E. Burgess St.
 Pittsburgh, Pa. 15214
 (412) 231 - 2658
8. Kansas Camp
 Dates: Mid-Summer 1981
 Reg. Contact: Rev. Galen Unruh
 P.O. Box 188
 Pawnee Rock, Kansas
 67567

**PLAN NOW TO ATTEND
THE NEW CHURCH CAMP
OF YOUR CHOICE.**

"MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE UNTO THE LORD" PSALM 100:1

CONVENTION SCHEDULE, URBANA, OHIO

Sun. June 21	Mon. June 22	Tues. June 23	Wed. June 24	Thurs. June 25	Fri. June 26	Sat. June 27	Sun. June 28
	9:00 A.M. COM meeting Ministers Spouses Pre-convention Conference	9:00 A.M. COM meeting Ministers Spouses Pre-convention Conference	9:00 A.M. COM meeting Ministers Spouses Board of Missions Pre-convention Conference 10:00 A.M. Augmentation Fund Committee Meeting	7:00 A.M. Communion 9:00 A.M. Worship President's Address Business Session ANCL meeting	9:00 A.M. Worship Business Session CCC Gym ANCL meeting	8:30 A.M. ANCL meeting 9—9:30 A.M. ANCL Worship Business Session CCC Gym Children's Program	9:30 A.M. Sunday School Program 10:30 A.M. Worship Service Communion
	1:30 P.M. COM meeting Spouses Pre-convention Conference	1:30 P.M. COM meeting Spouses Pre-convention Conference	1:30 P.M. General Council	1:30—2:40 P.M. Speaker Ruben F. W. Nelson "Coping With Change" 2:40 P.M. — Small Groups of 10 3:20 P.M. — Coffee Break 3:45 — 5:30 P.M. Questions and Answers 3:30 P.M. ANCL meeting	12—2:30 P.M. Alliance Luncheon and Business 1:00 P.M. ANCL meeting 2:30 — 3:30 P.M. SSA Business Meeting 3:00 P.M. Renaissance Music 4:00 — 5:00 P.M. Human Sexuality Seminar	1 — 1:30 P.M. Board of Managers, SSR 1:30 P.M. General Council 1:30 P.M. ANCL Outing Activities: Canoe rides Cedar Bog trip Caverns Horseback riding, etc.	LAST MEAL
Ministers and Spouses Reception	7:30 P.M. COM meeting Spouses Pre-convention Conference	7:30 P.M. COM meeting Spouses Pre-convention Conference	7:30 P.M. Opening of Convention Worship Service "The Last Chants" Urbana College Reception — Dr. and Mrs. Lawson Pendleton — Hosts Centering Down	6:30 P.M. ANCL meeting 8:00 P.M. Board of Education Network Party Everyone invited 9:00 P.M. Regeneration — A Musical Experience 10:30 P.M. Centering Down	6:30 P.M. ANCL meeting 7:30 P.M. Women's Alliance Speaker Emily Taylor "Shattering the Shadow Box" 9:00 P.M. Reception 10:00 P.M. "Last Chants" 10:30 P.M. Communion	6:00 P.M. Picnic 7:00 P.M. ANCL meeting (tentative) 7:30 P.M. Johnny Appleseed Film "The Frontiers Within" Square Dance	

7:30—8:30 A.M. BREAKFAST 12:00 P.M. LUNCH 6:00 P.M. DINNER

This program subject to change

1981 CONVENTION STATISTICS

Association	Societies	Ministers		Membership		Total	Delegates
		<u>Ord.</u>	<u>Lay</u>	<u>Act.</u>	<u>Inact.</u>		
Canada	1	2		138	26	164	11
Connecticut				7		7	2
Illinois	6	2	1	173	37	210	13
Kansas	3	2		158	9	167	12
Maine	3	2		162	102	264	12
Massachusetts	7	7		245	189	434	18
Michigan	1	1		53	12	65	5
Middle Atlantic	3	3		167	85	252	13
New York	2	1	1	90	25	115	8
Ohio	5	3		139		139	11
Pacific Coast	6	7		275	63	338	20
Southeast	2	2		79	51	130	7
Western Canada Conf.	7	2	4	183		183	14
Gulfport Society	1			10	13	23	2
TOTALS	47	34	6	1879	612	2491	148

St. Petersburg Calls For A New Minister

The St. Petersburg Society is approaching the time when its minister of the past 14 years, Rev. Leon C. Le Van, will find it necessary to announce his retirement; and he has asked the church to make inquiry whether a new minister may be available for the St. Petersburg position.

St. Petersburg does not have the membership nor finances to provide a full ministerial salary, so funding would have to come mainly from other sources. We have maintained our buildings in relatively good condition and have

paid our yearly operating expenses, utilities, repairs, etc. But our membership is small and we face the prospect of coming into semi-active condition if our difficulties increase beyond measure in the foreseeable future.

If there is in Convention a minister who might wish to undertake the St. Petersburg position, please write to Rev. Le Van, P. O. Box 12771, St. Petersburg, Fla. 33733 or make contact with Convention's Ministerial Placement Committee; Rev. Eric J. Zacharias, chairman.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

In response to the February *Messenger*; I think it was outstanding!

Every article and picture was uplifting and inspirational.

I agree with your Editorial article about sex, marriage, and homosexuals.

Thanks for the enjoyment of reading the *Messenger*.

Evelyn Clinkingbeard,
Riverside, California

Dear Paul:

Concerning your editorial in the February issue—"What Do You Think?"

I, for one, endorse the general thrust of Lois Kerr's comments to the United Church of Canada.

There is no way that justification can be made for breaking of the Commandments. The Lord gave the Commandments because they were the Laws of Order, and it is only order that the Church in heaven and on earth are founded upon.

No one begins by loving the Commandments—at least not all of them—even though we are told that we must. We can know, however, that they are the Laws of Order, and is this not the reason the Lord mercifully gives to us the Commandments? The Commandments are not stumbling blocks, unless we decide to break them and clutter our lives with dis-order.

The question is, "Do we answer the questions of human sexuality, marriage, family, in accordance with the Laws of Divine Order, or do we wish to answer from the desires of our unregenerate wills?"

Yes, we must say to those who have entered into dis-order, "We love you, but we cannot love your dis-order." It is taught in our own New Church Teachings that the Lord loves every person, and this whether in Heaven or Hell. From this we can conclude that angels love devils—but devils only love themselves. Angels, because they love as the Lord loves, are conjoined with, and in the Lord; those in the hells, while loved, are not conjoined with and in the Lord.

Conjunction with the Lord is accomplished by matching the life's thought and action to the Commandments.

Regeneration is serious business. Evils must rise and show their heads; how else can they be shunned? As a Church we do an injustice by seeking to condone evil from the pretense of love of person. Indiscriminate love of persons conjoins not only goods but evils, which are not easily removed. We should heed well the Revelation given for the New Church concerning love to the neighbor, which is to love the good in another. Only in this way can one from discernment properly love persons with care and not at the same time attach one's self to the other's evil.

I came across an interesting passage in the Arcana:

"For what has once been implanted from infancy as holy, especially if by fathers, and thus inrooted, the Lord never breaks, but bends, *unless* it is contrary to order itself." (A.C. 2180/5)

While we may not always be in order, we must at the same time strive with all the power the Lord gives us to come into order. It is when we are striving for Order, that the Lord can use even our evils, and bend us toward good. Striving for Order is not trying to bend the Commandments to fit our wills, but to make our wills abide by the Commandments.

Order is established for all levels of life. There is civil law, moral law, and spiritual law. Civil law and moral law can only be properly established when founded upon spiritual law.

I think too often the Church is swayed to follow what the courts and society dictate without considering whether it is firmly established in spiritual law.

Isn't it time for the Church to take a firm stand in favor of spiritual law?

David L. Rienstra
Fryeburg, Maine

Dear Rev. Zacharias:

For many years now, I have been deeply concerned over the weakening of our moral fiber in this country.

Our reason for living on this earth should be to develop from being self-centered individuals into becoming God-centered in all we think and do; however, present-day thinking doesn't seem to be concerned with this goal. The thought "What's in it for me?" governs our choices of behaviour.

Permissiveness and lack of responsible discipline in our homes and schools have done immeasurable harm to our children, and our

news media constantly reports unbelievably sordid stories of their lives. It seems to me we are all being trained in self-centeredness as a result of the "do your own thing" philosophy.

I couldn't agree more with the editorial "What Do You Think?" appearing in the February *Messenger* and special thanks to Lois Kerr.

The Church has a tremendous responsibility and should uphold the timeless and universal spiritual laws—who is better able to give us the direction we so desperately need?

Lurabel L. Colburn,
Bemus Point, New York

Dear Editor:

I read your February editorial with great relief! It expressed the views that I would expect a New Church man to write. Thank you.

I also enjoyed the entire February issue, altho' I did miss the always excellent essay by Gwynne Mack.

Pauline Roberts Lawrence
Novato, California

NEWS FROM NIGERIA

Dear Paul:

It is almost two and a half years since I returned to Nigeria. I have written fewer letters than I anticipated. Although it is taking me more time to re-establish myself within Nigerian economic system, yet I am beginning to like my job as Bible Knowledge Master and Head of Arts and Science Department at Ipele Community High School. As my work at school and church depends solely on public tax, despite the inconvenience, it places limitation on the scope of my achievements, especially after school hours. Constant attempt to avoid this makes me burn myself at both ends. The joy of performing uses lubricates zeal even in the face of health hazards.

Long before now I had meant to report on the progress made on the Information Centre I planned for the church in Nigeria. The position is this: Through the help of Rev. Dorothea Harvey and the lady in charge of visual aids at Urbana, I now have an audio-telex-centre, a Kodak Tele-ektralite 20 Camera, films and plain slides for designs to illustrate points graphically. The sum, equivalent to \$140.00 (Nig.) was also received in cash to balance the \$500.00 donated to the project in 1978. I claimed the parcels with \$40.00 (Nig.) last year and have since been spending exorbitantly on film processing. My experimental cassette

recordings are proving attractive for Sunday School lessons and Yoruba lyrics prelude to worship.

Some pictures were taken in December Conference which I hope will be of historic references with particular regards to Obong Ntak Society. It is not possible yet to do anything about printing newsletters for domestic and foreign circulation. The machines and stationeries are simply not at hand. I do hope that the Missionary Committee, Owo district, will give their might in August this year, to assist the project. I still believe that the centre will definitely achieve its planned objectives.

I wish to draw the readers' attention to the notice that the New Church in West Africa (Nigeria) will attain independent status on March 31st, this year. More details to follow.

Joseph Agbaje,
Owo, Nigeria

In a follow-up letter Joseph Agbaje reports that on the weekend of April 5th, 1981, the Rev. S. K. Asawo retired as General Supt. of the New Church in West Africa, and, with appropriate celebrations he—Joseph Agbaje—was appointed to this position.

Dear Editor:

We would like to applaud the February edition of *The Messenger*. The issue's variety of articles had a very broad appeal.

We felt a particular gratitude for the article, "Toward a Renewed Church" by Gustave Bischof. We were especially pleased with his discussion of the need to allow creativity to flourish and come forth in new forms of expression of the concepts and love of the Divine Revelation given through Swedenborg; the need to examine new forms of worship; and the need to reach out to those whose lives have not yet been touched by the New Church.

Many may not be aware that there is an organization that exists for those very reasons. New Jerusalem Productions, Inc. is a group of laymen from various professional fields who have come together over the past 18 months, combining their various talents, to form a company that can be instrumental in developing a truly "New Church" culture. One that can be more dynamic and far-reaching than anything achieved thus far.

The most visible of the many projects planned by this enthusiastic group is the quarterly magazine, "What News From The

Earth?" It contains original stories, book and movie reviews, breakthroughs in New Church scientific thinking, poetry, prayers and devotions, women's articles, projects to make, games and puzzles and a section done by and for children. Lavishly illustrated, it includes articles of personal sharing of how The Lord's New Church has touched our lives.

The magazine is currently undergoing some format changes and expansion and is scheduled to re-emerge this summer, on a subscription basis, bigger and better than ever. A free special mailing will be sent to anyone interested in learning more about this innovative publication.

Two back issues are available in limited quantities. Vol. 2 No. 2 (Sept. '80) and Vol. 2 No. 3 (Winter '81/Holiday Issue). They can be obtained for \$1.50 each.

To receive the special mailing, to obtain back issues, or for more information about the company itself, write: New Jerusalem Productions, Inc., P.O. Box 8816, St. Louis, Mo. 63102.

Yours in regeneration,
The Staff of NJP

A BANAL VISION?

To the Editor:

The problem with Peter Francuch's article in the April, 1981 *Messenger* is not whether it has a leg to stand on. There is a more poignant and, I believe, central issue. Put as a question, it is: are prayer and meditation concerned with such banal matters as Dr. Francuch's article contains?

Compare the article's content with the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Job, the Song of Songs, and the Psalms? Compare it with Jesus' revelatory experience at the Baptism, his struggle at Gethsemane, his passion on the Cross? Compare it with Swedenborg's *Memorable Relations* or Pascal's *Pensees*? These are classic expressions of the God-man dialogue worked out in prayer and meditation and Dr. Francuch's prayer and meditation bear no resemblance to them.

It is a disservice to prayer and meditation to use them to settle matters of subjective opinion. Further it is highly suspect to invoke them to buttress argumentation (i.e. with the Rev. Frederick Schnarr's statements in the December, 1980 issue of *New Church Life*). Dr. Francuch says, in effect, "Can you argue with God and Swedenborg?", impervious to the implied claims he makes for himself.

One is saddened and left wondering what the appearance of Dr. Francuch's article says about the level, or one aspect, of present day Swedenborgian consciousness.

David J. Garrett
El Cerrito, Ca.



FROM CHURCH RECORDS

BAPTISMS

WIENS — Dale Allyn, son of Robert and Laurel Wiens, was baptized into the faith of the New Church on March 15th, 1981 at Summerland, B.C., the Rev. Erwin Reddekopp officiating.

MENKES — Matthew Todd, son of Randy and Tammy Menkes, was baptized into the New Church faith in the LaPorte New Church on March 6, 1981, the Rev. Eric Allison officiating.

SCELLENBERG — Krista Rae, daughter of Gerry and Mary Schellenberg, was baptized into the faith of the New Church at the home of her grandparents in Winnipeg, Man., in June, 1980, the Rev. Richard Baxter officiating.

CONFIRMATIONS

LE VAN — Theodore James Le Van was confirmed into the faith and life of the New Church in Cambridge, Mass., on Nov. 16, 1980, the Rev. Gladys Wheaton officiating.

LICHT — Jean Licht was confirmed into the faith of the New Church in San Diego on February 15th, 1981, the Rev. Ivan Franklin officiating.

MARRIAGE

PUTNAM—MUISE — Stephen Putnam and Desiree Muese were united in marriage near Creston, B.C. on March 21, 1981, the Rev. Erwin Reddekopp officiating.

DEATH

SHORTHOUSE — Carol Anne Shorthouse, 30, of Calgary, Alberta, passed into the spiritual world on March 13, 1981. The resurrection service was conducted by Carol's uncle, the Rev. Erwin Reddekopp on March 16, 1981.

The Upper Room

THREE COATS

*by Leon Le Van
St. Petersburg, Fl.*

It is written of one of the best-loved mothers of the Bible (Hannah, mother of Samuel) that each year she made for baby Samuel "a little coat," and brought it to him when she came with her husband to Shiloh to the yearly sacrifice. We can easily think of those "little coats" as gifts by mothers to us all.

The first such "little coat" is the "coat of life." The life of any nation comes from the mothers of the race. This is as true of our own country as of any other.

No human life comes into the world without a price on the part of the mother. A good example is the instance of an expectant mother in Los Angeles who was fatally stricken with Hodgkins disease some years ago. Three months before the time of her predicted death she was to have her baby. Would it mean her death would follow immediately if she went through the ordeal of child-birth? She did not hesitate a moment.

"Dying is the least of my worries," she told her doctor; and she gave birth to her child without fear. She gave her child the "coat of life."

A minister named Gordon Mattice told the following story about an experience of his childhood. "When I was a boy of seven on the farm," Rev. Mattice said, "I recall how one of the barns caught fire and was practically burned to the ground. After the flames had gone out and it was all over, my uncle and I walked through the charred debris which the flames had left. As we made our way through the still-smoking ruins, we came on a charred and burned bundle that looked as if it had been a man's coat humped up in a knot. I kicked it aside and to our astonishment there crept out from beneath it six or eight little baby chicks. It was a hen, a mother bird, who had perished in protecting her young from the roaring flames."

The chicks lived and grew up with no realization that the mother hen had made of her cremated body "a little coat" to hide her babies from the flames.

The second coat is the "coat of love." The love of a mother is the best copy of Divine Love

that this world knows. It is an image of the Lord's love for us. We crown mothers because of their love. It is a love that does not calculate cost. Regardless of what a child may say or do, the mother is always ready to forgive and forget.

Let every day be Mothers Day;
May roses grow along her way;
Faith her monument.

A day for her? for you she gave
Long years of love and service brave;
For you her life was spent.

A "coat of life;" A "coat of love;" and now we come to the "coat of light."

The "coat of light" is woven of rays of truth that come from the mother's instructions. "Light" is the light of the mind. Think of the guidance that mothers give as they labor (sometimes none too successfully) to cause light to shine in the children's minds. They command. They explain. They coax. They urge. They threaten. In these and other ways they copy and exemplify the Divine Love of God. The Lord tries to lead all of us by the same pattern that the mother tries to lead and guide her children.

By "honoring father and mother" is meant that children should honor their parents. They should obey them. They should be attentive to them. They should be grateful for benefits received from them. Children should remember with all thankfulness that they have been fed and clothed by them. Children are introduced into the world by parents to act in civil and moral character. Likewise they are introduced into Heaven by parents who give religious advice and counsel. Thus, parents provide for the temporal prosperity, and also for the eternal happiness of their children.

The Risen and Glorified Lord Jesus Christ is our Heavenly Father. The church is our Spiritual Mother. As Hannah brought "a little coat" each year for her growing baby Samuel, may the church give a new coat of life, of love, and of truths to each one of us as we live and advance in the world today.

ADVANCE CONVENTION REGISTRATION

"Make A Joyful Noise Unto The Lord!"

Urbana College, Urbana, Ohio

June 24 - June 28, 1981

Name _____

Address _____ Phone: _____

City, State _____

Accompanied by:
Names

Relationship

Age of children

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Mode of transportation _____

Arrival _____ Departure _____
(Give date, hour, and COMPLETE FLIGHT information - if applicable.)

RATES

Room and board, based on double occupancy, is \$15.00 per day in air conditioned residence halls. Leaguer's and children's room & board, based on double occupancy, is \$13.20 in non-air conditioned residence halls. Children under 2 years old are free, in their parent's room. Camping and trailer sites are available at \$3.00 per day. No outdoor fires can be permitted because of local burning ordinances. Campers may use Coleman stoves or charcoal broilers for cooking. Camping areas must be reserved in advance.

Registration fee is \$15.00 per person except Leaguers and small children. Registration fee must accompany your registration form. The Registration Fee will be \$25.00 per person if postmarked after June 1, 1981. This fee covers cost of receptions, Saturday banquet, transportation to and from airport, and common meeting rooms, etc. Leaguers planning to attend must also send advance registration form.

All registration should be in prior to June 1st for facilities and transportation planning at the College. The Dayton, Ohio airport is the only place we can pick up people coming in by airplane. Accurate arrival times are required. Meeting place at the Dayton International Airport will be at the large world globe in the front lobby, next to the baggage pickup area. The Springfield, Ohio bus terminal will also be serviced.

Make Registration checks payable to the "General Convention—1981" and mail with registration form to:

Roger Paulson,
General Convention Central Office
48 Sargent Street,
Newton, Mass. 02158.

THE MESSENGER

Box 2642, Stn. B
Kitchener, Ont. N2H 6N2

RETURN POSTAGE
GUARANTEED



**Plan Now To Attend
Convention
In Urbana, Ohio
June 24—28, 1981**