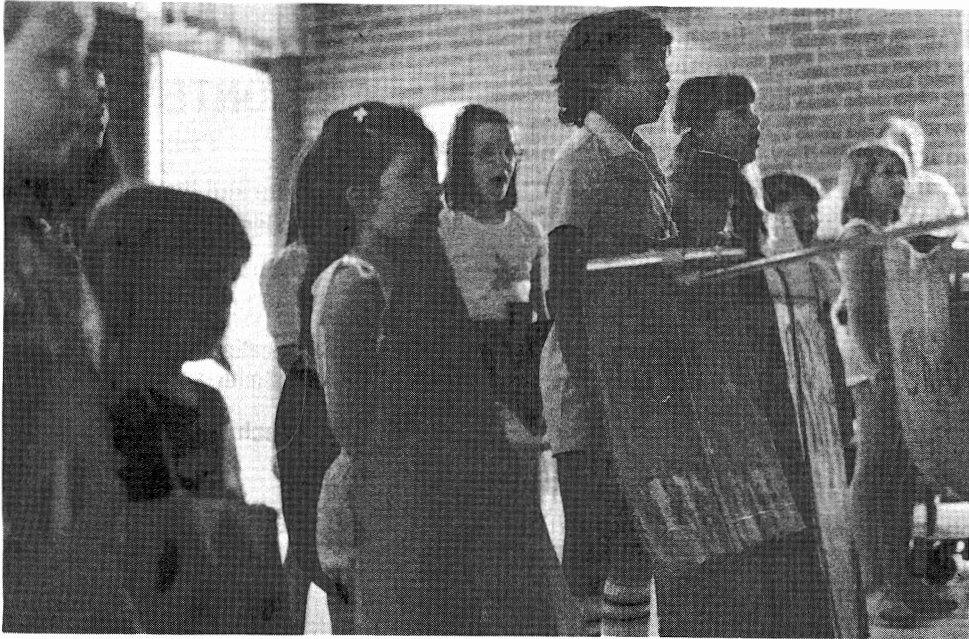


The Messenger

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH
SEPTEMBER 1983



The children's program, "We all live in one world" was altogether delightful and profound.



After the Convention Sunday Service: F. Robert Tafel, Kei Torita, Ted Le Van, Rachel Martin and Calvin Turley.

IN THIS ISSUE

George and Lynne McClure (she is the daughter of Lillian and Gustave Bischof of the New York Society) joined the Ananda Community in 1978. George's article "Universal Religion and the New Church . . . thoughts of an outside insider" is the most provocative and stimulating article we have published in some time. From his Eastern perspective the writer takes a gentle but probing look at the New Church organizations in the Western world. Some of his observations may surprise you; at least they will make you think about the direction in which Convention is moving. Do you agree with his seven premises? His views on Swedenborg's revelation? Is there an "underlying anxiety" that impedes our progress? The bottom-line question is an old one: "Are we too much concerned with maintaining the external church organization?" I urge you to read this article twice, thoughtfully, and then see how it fits into the New Church picture, both locally and nationally.

* * * *

Dr. Robert Clements is not a member of the San Francisco Society, though he and his wife attend regularly. On Convention Sunday, July 3, he preached a sermon on Peace which was sent to us by Margit Tobisch, and we are pleased to print it in the *Messenger*. This is a reasoned, objective study of the subject, based upon three fundamental teachings from Swedenborg's writings, and it all ties in so beautifully with our Convention '83 theme.

* * * *

Annella Smith and Bertha Berran are the new co-editors of the Women's Alliance section in the *Messenger* and their first contribution appears on pages 172 - 3 of this issue. We wish them every success in the coming year and it will be a successful season for all concerned if Swedenborgian women send in articles, news items, poems, etc., for "Women Communicating." Send all material directly to: Annella Smith, Box 1505, North Shore, California 92254.

* * * *

The *Arcana Caelestia*, first printed in Latin in 1749 - 56 and translated into English in the last two decades of that century, has long been the main source of our understanding of Scripture and its corresponding spiritual meaning. This 12-volume work gives a detailed description of the inner meaning of Genesis and Exodus, plus thousands of references to other

passages in the Bible. After almost 200 years the *Arcana* is finally being translated into more readable English by a Translation Committee of the British Conference, headed by the Rev. John Elliott. We commend our friends of the British Conference for undertaking this much-needed, formidable project and eagerly look forward to seeing Volume 1 of the *Arcana* this fall.

P. Z.

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UNIVERSAL RELIGION AND THE NEW CHURCH

(Thoughts of an outside insider.)

George McClure
Nevada City, Cal.

It has always seemed to me that any valid religious stance should also take into account the world views of other authentic religions. This seems to be a matter of concern to very few people. Most folks, if they have a religion at all, seem content to accept the one into which they were born. There is a saying in India that it is a great blessing to be born into a religion but a curse to die in one. The implied lesson is that while we all need early religious training, the real Truth will be found ultimately outside of all forms and structures, or rather, in the common ground underlying them. Just as the bewildering diversity of life forms may be understood in terms of the same basic cellular and molecular processes, so we, aspiring to fundamental truths, must go beyond the narrow confines of sectarianism (my way is right) and probe the strata underlying all religious diversity. Is there not more profit in exploring what we hold in common rather than setting out, then parting company over, alleged differences which are usually only apparent, if not irrelevant? This paper attempts to explore this common ground in the form of seven propositions and to relate them to the New Church today.

Man is spirit and matter is its vehicle. Though our bodies are material we are not matter nor are we bodies. Though we have risen through animality we are not animals. Though we have minds and emotions, we are not really these thoughts, these feelings or these personalities. Most fundamentally we are spirit, we are souls, we are sleeping saints lost in the delusion of separateness from God. From Him we have come and to Him we shall return.

The only work we have to do is the work on ourselves. Our only duty is to realize and manifest our God-nature, to reveal what is already there, to "remove the dirt from the diamond", to bridge the separation between matter and spirit, to "regain paradise", to be established in unity with Divine Consciousness. The methods and systems for doing this are many but all emphasize love, service, perseverance and absolute moral purity.

This spiritual work is a lifelong labor of discipline and practice. No wonder, therefore,

that an ounce of this practice is worth tons of theory. No wonder, therefore, that we must "love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength". No wonder the way of salvation in all religions has been termed "the narrow gate". Implied is the continual effort needed to resist the downward pull of matter, animality and cultural indoctrinations that are no longer necessary. Thus in every religion we find moral codes and other restraints as well as complex mythologies, rituals, symbols and practices. All too often these have replaced in importance the realities they signify. The means have become the ends. The tools have become the alter-pieces. No religion has escaped these perversions.

We love God by serving and enjoying the world but with detachment. The basic religious activity is the more or less continuous adoration and remembrance of God through prayer, meditation, study, love and devotion. The effect and expression of all of these is service to the world. Not that we are here to serve and reform the world but to serve God in the world and to reform our own souls through selfless service by our work in the world. For in selflessness (love) is expansion toward the Divine (freedom) and in selfishness is contraction toward matter (bondage). Fundamentally, it is blasphemy to think we can reform the world. The world is quite perfect for its intended purposes: a training and proving ground for the growth of our souls and at the same time a garden of delights for their refreshment and upliftment. Yet our service must be done in a spirit of detachment epitomized by the words of Christ: "Be in the world but not of it". To do less is to become bound by the world whereas we desire to become free in Him. To do less is to cultivate a hope in the world that often leads to fanaticism and the pervasive idea that any means are justified to achieve the chosen ends. To do less tends to obsess us with results, tie us to matter and crowd out God, to say nothing of the despair engendered by our inevitable disappointments. The Indian scriptures teach that we must do our duty but to God alone belong the fruits thereof.

Lasting Joy is an internal state of the soul and is therefore to be cultivated there. Though Jesus taught that the Kingdom of God is within, yet we continuously seek it without in worldly conditions. A good case can be made that the balance of happiness and misery in this world has always been, more or less, a constant. Thus the concept of "progress" in the world is an illusion and reduces merely to a series of cultural changes which always substitute new problems for old ones. Most of what passes for progress may be seen to be so from a perspective that is limited in terms of both time and spiritual values. The great error of "social religion" is that it has focused on and emphasized the transient and the material. Not that we shouldn't help the world. We must. But, again, only for the right reasons.

The saints are the ultimate custodians of religion and not the institutions which follow them. Saints have arisen in every time and tradition and in varying degrees of God-realization and spiritual attainments. Because they have directly experienced and been transformed by the Divine, their lives lend authority to their words. They are readily identified by any who care to look carefully. Frauds are unmasked in time as their nature and their works will inevitably belie the claims of their followers. Jesus was right when he said we would know them by their fruits.

Diversity is grace ("Divided we stand"). The diversity of expression of the religious impulse is not a scandal but a sign of great vitality. No religion has escaped fragmentation. In every movement may be found the classic conflict between the conservers of doctrinal purity and authority (too often their own) and the reformers responding to institutional corruption and changing circumstances. From perversions come reformations. From reformers come their followers and thus, new religions. It follows that the truth of a religion has nothing to do with numbers of adherents or their social influence but only with how well it serves the particular spiritual needs of its followers. Just as all life evolves in the direction of greater diversity and adaptability, so the ever-renewing Spirit may be seen moving through all historical forms and circumstances, expressing itself in ways that serve our varying natures and needs. What grace, that the Lord comes to each of us right where we are!

The above propositions describe a view that looks with great compassion on all authentic forms of religious expression while also recognizing that our tendency to cling to any particular form may be an obstacle to spiritual

progress. It finds a validity in the different religions beyond their various historical circumstances, namely as vehicles to convey the One Truth to a special population or some aspect of that truth to all populations. This view recognizes saints in every authentic religious tradition and the possibility of salvation in every religion. It recognizes that many paths lead to the same goal but that the most spiritual progress is made by choosing the path appropriate to ones temperament and circumstances and following it with energy, concentration and devotion. And finally, this view finds intolerable all forms of religious bigotry, dogmatism, sectarianism and prejudice which usually amount to little more than personal or cultural chauvinism (i.e. what I and mine do or possess is the best and what I and mine don't do or possess is of little or no value).

How is the New Church to be viewed in these perspectives? We see here an authentic offshoot (one of many) of the Christian religion (one of many) which takes as its inspiration the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, a truly illumined soul of great talent (again, one of many) having genuine mystical revelations (rare but not historically infrequent). These writings, addressed to the religious issues of the day and most certainly in the idioms of that time, so inspired a small group for whom these problems were relevant (has it not always been so?) to found a new church organization. We see that this church continues to spiritually nourish the several generations of those either born into it (the usual condition) or converted to it—meaning those whose needs and temperament are in accord with this particular expression. And most would have to agree that aside from certain emphasis of style and substance, Swedenborgians are enjoined to do the same things that all believers have been commanded to do from the beginning of time: To love God and commune with Him, to obey His commandments, to serve Him in the world selflessly and with devotion and to resist the many downward pulls of our material manifestation by a constant spiritual effort.

Yet what do we see running through the pages of the *Messenger*? It is a fear, an underlying anxiety which might be paraphrased as follows: "Why aren't our members growing instead of diminishing? Why are we not more influential? Why don't others see that we have a "superior revelation" and a "reasoned faith"? How can we better articulate and preserve our identity as Swedenborgians? Why are our own children drifting away?" In short,

Swedenborgians seem to be too busy being Swedenborgians instead of vehicles for the One Truth of the Eternal Universal Religion. They are busy trying to be "unique" and defending their "different point of view" rather than offering their support and insights to the fundamental religious impulse and the universal religious imperatives.

It seems that what is needed is less of an obsession with the survival of "my church" which is, after all, only a form. What is needed is more of a concern that this particular structure serve its special population as an effective vehicle for the unchanging truths of the Universal Religion. If the vitality of any church is measured in terms of how well it meets the spiritual needs of its members, then we cannot fear for the survival of any organization which does, in fact, address the most basic religious issues fundamental to the yearning of the human spirit.

When viewed in this way how trivial much of our discussion becomes. For despite our vaunted and beloved "differences" the basic spiritual work of all of us remains the same. The rest of it reduces to history, methodology and explanatory teasers for the insatiable mind. How easily we are led down the byways of theology (i.e. What is the Trinity? Does the soul reincarnate? Is communion with spirits desirable? Are visions possible? etc., etc.) rather than getting on with the real work taught by all the saints and scriptures of every tradition: Love God, remember Him always, serve Him with selfless works of love and charity, become pure in heart by following his holy precepts . . .

The basic issue is clear. Will we continue to cling to and pump limited life into sectarian structures which inspired people in the past or shall we adapt and strengthen those structures to be powerful vehicles for the universal truths underlying all religious experience? The only true religion is one that is inclusive, not exclusive, one that is God centered, not personality or revelation centered, one that stresses love, devotion and service, not dogma, scholarship or occult phenomena, however interesting.

There is plenty to do because the spiritual path is very hard work. Constant study, discipline, support and inspiration are required if there is to be either personal or organizational progress. Little progress can be expected by those whose concept of religion is limited to weekly church attendance, a little charitable giving, the correct trendy platitudes, or long explications of their "unique revelations". The spiritual path is more like the

discipline of the artist who practices diligently every day. Little wonder that great souls are as rare as great artists.

When a religion or a church or any other organization offers the kind of support that people need to reach their spiritual goals, where it's needed, when it's needed and in the form it's needed, then we may have every expectation for its success.

About The Author

George McClure is the husband of Lynne McClure, daughter of Lillian and Gustave Bischof of the New York Society. For many years he pursued a career in the natural sciences through research and college level teaching. Raised as a Christian in the Presbyterian Church, a particular area of interest has been in the way eastern spiritual teachings and our own western religious traditions enrich each other.

In 1978 he and Lynne joined the Ananda spiritual community. Ananda is a self governing village of some 200 members on 700 acres of land. It has public retreat facilities, runs extensive guest programs and has its own farm, schools and a variety of privately owned and community owned businesses. Ananda exists as an evolving model to demonstrate the application of spiritual principles to all aspects of life. For more information write Ananda, 14618 Tyler Foote Rd., Nevada City, CA 95959. The community was founded in 1967 by Swami Kriyananda, a westerner and a direct disciple of Paramhansa Yogananda, author of "Autobiography of a Yogi". Yogananda came to this country in 1920 from his native India. He founded a large work (Self Realization Fellowship) in Los Angeles where he lived until his passing in 1952. His mission was to harmonize the spiritual traditions of both East and West and to demonstrate their essential unity.

In The Next Issue

A New Beginning For Our Church

Horand Gutfeldt

Ad Hoc Committee Update

Charles McCormick

Music Workshop at Convention

Muff Worden

"Our Child"

Ken Turley

Church World Service Appeal

. . . and (we hope) responses to the McClure article.

Some Peaceful Thoughts on July 4th

Robert Clements San Francisco, Cal.

Tomorrow is the Fourth of July. I was told the other day that no one takes this holiday very seriously any more; that it's just another time to eat and drink and be grateful we don't have to go to work, but for me this is not true. I think it is a good time to think about our nation and what it has meant and does mean to us. I will try not to make this talk too political, but certainly this Sunday, if any, provides an occasion for thoughts on the relationship of religion and politics, specifically our Swedenborgian religion, specifically our American politics.

Like all of us, like anyone who reads the papers and magazines, or listens to radio and television, I have been very concerned about the potential use of nuclear weapons. Perhaps like you, I find my views on this subject are not fixed; it is a complex and immensely important issue, a problem that not only does not seem open to easy solutions, but sometimes does not seem open to *any* solution. Put in its most hopeless form, the question for our times seems to be "Can something be *un-invented*?"; the myth for our times seems to be "Pandora's Box."

I think all of us—all people on earth, in fact—can readily agree that we never want nuclear war. In spite of that, unilateral disarmament does not seem—to me at least—to be a very good idea. History has not been kind to countries or cultures that lacked the will, or the armament to fight.

But is history a good guide? It has been suggested that the lessons of history have no bearing on atomic weapons, because they possess the real ability to end history altogether. Even the issues that swirl around disarmament are not much illuminated by reference to history; in a fine *Atlantic Monthly* article this month James Fallows says that to a disarmament-liberal the lesson of history can be learned from 1914, when over-armed and over-aggressive Europeans stumbled into slaughter over a trivial incident; to a disarmament-conservative, the lesson of history can be learned from 1938, when seriously un-armed and unprepared Europeans were forced into appeasement and finally into near total submission to the evil will of Adolph

Hitler. So at least for me, the conditions are new and the lessons unclear; history is not much of a help if we seek to think clearly about atomic weapons.

If we cannot look at history for guidance, then, what truth and help is available in our religion? I would like to devote the rest of this talk to that question.

Among the doctrines of the New Church, three stand out as germane to this issue. First, that divine providence is so structured that all evils as well as all good are permitted. Second, that death in and of itself is a natural phenomenon and not an evil. Finally, that love and wisdom are nothing without the good of use.

First, permission. Swedenborg writes that "God permits; by which is meant not that He wills, but that on account of the end, which is salvation, he cannot avert." Consequently, we are raised in a world where there is literally no evil we cannot do; God will not restrain us from any folly we are physically capable of. Swedenborg specifically mentions war in this context, saying that atheists and skeptics are led to reject the whole notion of providence when they consider that wars are permitted. The skeptic looks at human history, Swedenborg says, and cannot believe in a caring and omnipotent God when he sees

the violent death of so many men, and the plundering of so many cities, nations and families; and also (when he sees) that victory stands on the side of prudence and sometimes not on the side of justice; and that it makes no difference whether the commander be upright or not upright.

Napoleon expressed this thought more succinctly in his famous remark that God was on the side of the army with the bigger guns.

The point that Swedenborg would make is a simple one, hardly surprising to anyone who reads the newspaper, but has a definite bearing on our concerns about atomic weapons. It is perfectly possible and perfectly within God's plan for terrible wars to occur and to be won by wicked people. It is presumably even possible for a totally annihilating war to be fought, now that we have found out how to do it. There is no evil we are not capable of.

Lest we feel abandoned in a dreadful world, however, the same passage in divine providence stresses that "providence continually moves in a contrary direction and in opposition to the will of man" and when mankind strays toward evil "it directs, bends and disposes (us) . . . by leading . . . away from evil and leading to good."

Turning to the second of Swedenborg's doctrines that I mentioned, we see in many places in his writings that he possessed no great fear of death, because he was completely assured about the nature of the world of spirits and of heaven and hell, and in fact he was quite scornful of those who fear death because they will lose all they value. What we lose upon death, he says, is the natural world, and if it has contained all our joys, we should indeed be terrified.

I certainly do not mean to suggest we value this planet more lightly because it is not our eternal home. When James Watt was first making waves in Washington, it was darkly hinted that he was pro-development because his fundamentalist sect thought the end of the world was at hand so—you know—slash and burn, boys—who cares if it's a National Park—tomorrow it will be atomized anyway. No, no. The Swedenborgian realizes that the Second Coming is in the spiritual world, and that the natural world is the nursery of future generations of citizens of heaven. We certainly have a positive duty to preserve and improve it!

The reason I raise this issue in conjunction with atomic weapons is that I think many of those who most earnestly support American disarmament do so for largely secular reasons; they see the death of the race as a magnified version of their own death, which they have no way of seeing except as complete extinction. Not having eyes to see the life of the spirit that flows on after death, they are filled with great dread, and, linking this dread to extinction by atomic weapons, they have conceived something resembling a religion out of their views on disarmament. It has its creed, its catechism, even its acts of devotion.

None of this would make much difference—many political movements have aspects of true belief about them, after all—if it were not for the emotional stress and strain that it puts on the believers, who, I think, are often cast into a paralyzing horror or total destruction. It is not the horror that bothers me—I share it!—but the paralysis. Because they cannot think clearly about how best to reduce the danger of atomic war, it seems to me they often promote attitudes and perform acts that bring us closer to the very thing they fear.

Finally, let me spend a moment on the third of Swedenborg's doctrines that I mentioned; the thought that the best life is a life of use. What this means is that the whole purpose of nurturing love in our hearts and seeking wisdom in our intellect is that it can be put into action. The conscious choices we make and the

things we do as a result of these choices lead us either toward or away from Heaven. So a Swedenborgian is not an exclusively contemplative person, but a do-er.

Now how does this relate to nuclear weapons? First, in the most obvious way, it urges us to considered action designed to reduce the danger of the use of these weapons. Each of us will have to think how that may be accomplished and there will be as many answers as people; some will write letters, some will pray, some will get themselves arrested at Livermore, and yes, some will work inside the gates at Livermore in the belief that our own strength is our best guarantee. I know and respect men in both of these latter camps.

For Swedenborgians, however, there is a less obvious action that we are called to. The danger from nuclear weapons, of course, comes from their use, and such use would take place only in wartime. Now wars, Swedenborg says, are not what we think; they are not disruptions in the political world as much as in the unseen spiritual world that surrounds us. They are, in fact, "representative in Heaven of states of the church . . . for all things that occur in the natural world correspond in the spiritual world to spiritual things, and all spiritual things concern the church." Now this is real news! What it means is that our relations with one another, our success in resisting temptation, our ability to create and promote spiritual harmony—that, in short, the things spoken of in the other 51 sermons this year—all help prevent war! By opening ourselves to the voices of the heavenly spirits that surround us; by stopping our ears to the promptings of the hellish ones, by the life we recognize as religious, we can take active part in the spiritual world that governs the natural one, and insofar as we promote harmony there, we are workers for world peace.

In summary, then, if we as Swedenborgians are commanded to take an active part in our world and not to fear death, but warned that there is no wickedness our race cannot do, I think the proper attitude toward these diabolical weapons becomes clear. We must work, pray and speak at every opportunity to directly inhibit the likelihood of their use by our nation or any other, relying on prayer and contemplation to tell us how best to accomplish this goal, whether it be building more, throwing all of them into the sea, or some middle course. But in addition we must so regulate our lives that we are promoters of harmony in the unseen world around us. In that all-important struggle not to win a war but to prevent one, then, every one of us is a soldier.

WOMEN COMMUNICATING

Sponsored by the Alliance of New Church Women

Annella Smith, Chairman

Bertha Berran, Committee Member

PLEA FOR HELP

Thank you for electing me to the office of Publications Chairman. I have asked Bertha Berran, who now lives in San Diego, to serve with me on the committee.

We would appreciate hearing from you on an individual basis as to what you would like to have us include in the Alliance section of the *Messenger*. We would also appreciate hearing from your local Societies and Associations giving us items of interest to be published so we can all share in "what's happening." These can be short items or something more in detail. If you have a special event or item of interest, please send it to us immediately. Don't wait until you have something of greater length. Sometimes just a few lines will attract attention, and keep our Alliance pages timely.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Annella Smith, Chairman
Bertha Berran, Committee Member
P.O. Box 1505
North Shore, California 92254

ALLIANCE WORSHIP SERVICE CONVENTION 1983 LIVING THE LIFE OF PEACE

PRELUDE—"Let There Be Peace on Earth"

Sy Miller, Jill Jackson

EVERYONE—LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH, AND LET IT BEGIN WITH ME

READER—"Behold how good and how pleasant it is when brethren dwell together in unity"

Psalms 133:1

As we strive to bring peace to this convention and to our world, let us turn the search light inward and listen for that "still small voice." If we really want to make life more comfortable and pleasant for ourselves and those around us, then let us not resist spiritual guidance. In the award winning movie, Gandhi demonstrated this nonviolent technique for the prevention of conflict between races, communities and countries. He showed us that we must not be too proud to see if perhaps the fault could be partly ours. Have we renewed a strained

relationship lately or made good an injury to someone? Have we been too impatient to listen to our children or someone else who really needed to talk? Do we secretly think we are better than others or enjoy being irritating? Have we really avoided gossip? What about our family relationship? Is it serene and happy? Do we have our priorities straight? . . . or would our time perhaps be better spent creating peace and harmony and order in our *own* homes instead of working so hard to create it for the rest of the world? What about our *own* Alliance meetings back home? Do we strive to adjust and adapt our preferences to the common good and welfare of that group or do we insist on our own way, destroying the peace and harmony of all? We can never hope to do much in the larger world around us until we radiate peace from our own lives.

EVERYONE—LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH, AND LET IT BEGIN WITH ME

READER—"Peace is like the dawn of a spring morning when everything is thrilled with the spirit of doing."

Rev. Paul Sperry
WORDS OF LIFE

The pleasure of peace is in useful service. It is from the Lord's life in us—active and unimpeded by selfishness or evil affections. It is freedom from selfish lusts and self-reliance and love of worldly success. It is more than the absence of wars and hostilities, more than the removal of cares and delight, more than the success in business. It is the state of inward joy and confidence which comes from innocence and goodness in the heart and love to the Lord.

EVERYONE—LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH, AND LET IT BEGIN WITH ME

READER—"Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it."

Do we seek after and pursue peace with the same fervor and enthusiasm we do a new house, car or clothes, success, or other material objects? Do we research *what* brings us peace and how and why? Do we take time for it? Can we sit down and relax without feeling guilty? Do we read a good book, listen to soothing music, spend a day in the sun? Or do we secretly enjoy telling others we are just too busy

and can't find the time? If we know that physical tiredness invites relaxation and sleep, why don't we make the time to play golf, tennis, take long walks, or bicycle? Confusion is often a threat to peace, so why don't we get organized . . . put first things first . . . do just one thing at a time . . . avoid rush and develop a spaciousness of mind? Do we realize that a frown marks the tense person and that the face with a smile is a symbol of relaxation? We should strive to meet life with this in mind and try to have a sense of humor. Let's not take ourselves too seriously and laugh especially at ourselves now and then ". . . for what does it profit us if we gain the whole world and lose our own souls?"

Matthew 16:26

Let us pause now while we remember those who have passed from the consciousness of one world to that of another this past year.

OFFERING

ALLIANCE HYMN

O Lord all glorious, life of life.

To Thee we raise our grateful songs;

Lift up our souls from thoughts of self

To Thee to whom all life belongs.

Below all depths Thy mercy lies;

Above all heights Thy love ascends:

Thy providence our path surrounds;

Thy watchful care each step attends.

From Thee all good desires proceed

All holy thoughts we gain from Thee

The good we do is Thine Alone,

Thine shall our hearts' thanksgiving be.

Reveal Thyself to us, O Lord,

In love, in wisdom, more and more;

That we may find Thee ever near,

And praise and serve Thee and adore.

Amen

EVERYONE—LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH, AND LET IT BEGIN WITH ME

Carole Reinstra
Religious Chairman

IMPRESSIONS OF CONVENTION FROM TWO OF OUR KANSAS "FRIENDS"

I had a very definite feeling in this convention that our Church is on the edge of growth if we have the will and the intelligence to take advantage of the times. I was especially struck with the diversity of backgrounds of the people who were first timers at this convention. I have an impression that there is a readiness for the ideas of the Swedenborgian Christian Church "out there" and we need to get busy and make ourselves more visible and accessible.

I am excited when I think about the possibilities.

I also liked the willingness to try new forms of music in the services. This is another example of a way to make ourselves more accessible and visible to people, and to be in step with the times. Being willing to use various kinds of music for worship reflects the more holistic approach to life that is developing among some of us.

I was also impressed with the quality of the young people that are moving into leadership roles in a changing church. The dynamic of the passing of leadership and ideas from an older generation to the younger is a gradual progression in a growing, changing order. The new age and the New Church are evolving before our eyes and it is exciting to see.

My overall impression at this convention was the immanence of change, gradual and progressive, from within and the possibilities for the future of the church.

"Jan" Janice Beougher

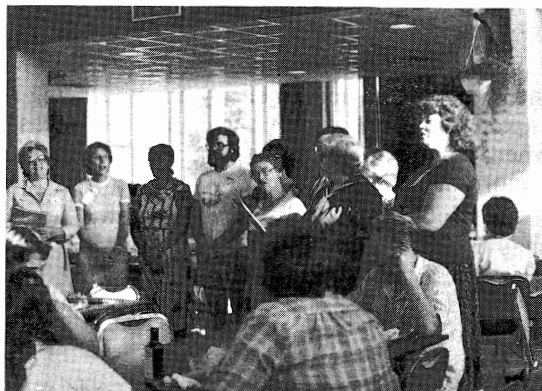
* * *

Each of the conventions I've attended, beginning in 1976, has had its special memories. This year the presence of Rev. and Mrs. Llewellyn Fraser from Guyana and wonderful music made the meeting memorable.

Those who shared their musical talents were "Muff" Worden, Ken Turley, Jenny Martin, Kei Torita (who sang "The Holy City" at her graduation from SSR), the children and the choir members. Mrs. Horand Gutfeldt thrilled us with her beautiful flute playing.

Another memory was singing the Caribbean version of "The Lord's Prayer" as led by Rev. Fraser. And a special "note" to "Muff" Worden: "Please lead us again with your musical table graces next year!"

Marian Mull



We second Marion Mull's request for more singing graces at next year's convention.

Graduation Speech

Kei Torita July 1, 1983

First of all, I would like to say thank you from the bottom of my heart to all people who helped me and supported me in many ways these 10 years.

I want to say special thank you to the faculty of SSR who loved me and supported me for these 4 years; thank you to my friends in Urbana who helped me in many ways these 10 years; and I would like to extend my thanks to all the friends in the General Convention for supporting my ministry.

Now is the time for me to go back to my own country, and help people there, using what I have been studying in this country.

In my ministry, I am going to work with my father first. I am going to combine both traditional and innovative approaches. I respect my father's ministry and his congregation's needs. But also I want to cultivate new congregation to build the future church.

I was often asked about Japanese women and about my going into ministry: Aren't you supposed to stay home? Are there women ministers in Japan? How would a woman minister be accepted in Japan? etc.

Certainly most of Japanese women stay home, especially if they are married. But women who choose to have a career are respected and encouraged. For instance, there are more women medical doctors in Japan than in the United States.

There are women ministers, too. But it does not make any difference for me in deciding whether I should go into ministry or not. If there weren't any yet, why not become the first one? If we do not do certain things because there are no previous examples, there is no progress in anything in history.

Some people have shown their concern to me, saying, "It won't be easy for you being a Japanese woman." Of course, nothing is easy when anybody is going to start anything important.

Certainly Japan is a well-known male chauvinist country. But I know how it is not because I heard about it across the ocean, nor because I observed it as a tourist, nor because I observed it as a man in Japan, but because I lived there myself as a woman.

From my own experience, I want to help Japanese women both in the church and outside of the church. To be told they are second class

people does *not* mean that they actually are second class people. Life is a direct experience for each and every one of us. If we know this *really*, then we know that there is no such thing as second class people. I believe helping women to raise their consciousness will help men, too.

Now I am going back to a culture where they believe that silence is gold and eloquence is silver. This is not only for women but also for men. Big mouth is not appreciated there. They believe they should open their mouth when it is necessary to say necessary things. People who think I am too shy to be a minister, please don't worry. I will open my mouth when it is necessary to say what is necessary, as I am doing right now.

Also I will keep in touch with the General Convention by writing and by visiting this country when I can. I will let you know what I am doing in my ministry.

Thank you very much.

FROM THE SAN FRANCISCO SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Let me share with you a letter that was found in our donation box in the church. It read: "To the Pastor of this church: I was visiting a friend up the street, and came upon your beautiful church. I felt strongly the serenity and "Presence" and so came in . . . I took a photograph of your round window with the dove, because it resembles the bird bath in my garden—also visited by doves . . . The books look very interesting; I purchased a small one plus a postcard. Imagine my surprise to find the booklet on Helen Keller, who has always been very special to me . . . I went to school in New York at St. Patrick's Cathedral School . . . One day the Monseigneur and two ladies came into the cafeteria. He surveyed the children in line and beckoned to me. I went over to him. He spoke to the ladies (pulling me forward with his big Irish hand) and one lady put her hands on my head and then slowly felt my face. I was terrified at first and then I felt very calm—her hands felt like flower petals falling lightly on my eyes and hair and cheeks. I closed my eyes and was very quiet . . . Someone made some noise, I opened my eyes—She says, "You must be very pretty" said one of the ladies . . . The Monseigneur bent down and from his cerise waistband (which was ample, indeed!) he brought a gold medal. "Take this, Margaret," he said, and always remember you met a great lady today—Miss Helen Keller." . . . When my mother died, I slipped the medal into the casket

(Cont'd on pg. 178)

Introducing Arcana Caelestia

Until now a long work written in Latin in the middle of the eighteenth century—*Arcana Caelestia* by Emanuel Swedenborg—has been available to English readers in a translation made in the last two decades of that century by John Clowes, the then Anglican Rector of St. Johns, Manchester. Over the years the Clowes version, it is true, has undergone a few minor revisions; but now English readers are about to be offered a new translation. The translator of this is another author John—John Elliott—and the publisher is the Swedenborg Society, which has existed since 1810 for the specific purpose of editing, translating, and publishing Swedenborg's works. Volume One of the new translation will be on sale to the public from 27 October, and the remaining eleven volumes are expected to appear at intervals of one to two years each.

Arcana Caelestia was first printed 1749 - 56 on the press of a certain John Hart in premises off Fleet Street which were situated in a narrow lane known then as Popping's Alley and today as Poppin's Court. The publisher was yet another John—John Lewis—of Paternoster Row, alongside St. Pauls Cathedral. But what is the point of translating an eighteenth century work in these latter years of the twentieth? Indeed who was Emanuel Swedenborg, its author?

Born in 1688 the son of a Lutheran pastor who was consecrated a bishop a few years later, Swedenborg received a distinctly religious upbringing. After attending Uppsala University, the Oxbridge of Sweden, he lived abroad for about five years (half of which time was spent in London) meeting scholarly persons such as Flamsteed and Halley and gaining various practical skills. Soon after his return to his homeland in 1715 he became a civil servant and remained so until 1747 in the department responsible for the mining of metallic ores. During these years he wrote on various scientific and philosophical subjects, which led him to travel to different parts of Europe in search of information to include in the books he published. It was while he was on one of his journeys that in Holland in 1743 he underwent certain mystical or spiritual experiences which were to change the whole course of his life until his death in 1772. As a result of those experiences Swedenborg

declared that while reading Holy Scripture or the Word of God he was enabled to see its soul or inner and real meaning, as well as having the eyes of his spirit opened to see into the world where we become conscious after death. He also asserts that he was commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ to make known to the world the things heard and seen by him.

The eight Latin (twelve English) volumes that constitute *Arcana Caelestia*, the first and the largest of the works published by Swedenborg from 1749 onwards are accordingly both exegetical and visionary. The whole work is essentially for Christians, and for those who wish to embrace the Christian faith but perhaps hold back for lack of understanding. In the main and exegetical part we are shown in detail the inner or spiritual meaning within Genesis and Exodus, and countless references to, and explanations of, other parts of the Scriptures are offered. In short that inner meaning has to do entirely with Jesus Christ, who is Lord and God, and all His dealings and relationships with all human beings. At the beginnings and ends of the main sections expounding the Scriptures other matters are inserted which may be described as 'visionary', such as the nature of heaven and of hell and the manner in which we are raised up into the next life. Strictly speaking these inserted descriptions of the for us as yet unseen world have a separate title—*Mirabilia* or 'Marvels'—whereas *Arcana Caelestia* is the title of the main exegetical or expository parts.

The major title may be understood as follows: The letter or literal statement of Scripture is like an ark or chest (Latin *arca*) containing things hidden from view. Insofar as these hidden things are unknown they are 'secrets' (Latin *arcana*). But though concealed from the eyes of men and women on earth those things are known to the inhabitants of heaven and are in that sense 'heavenly' (Latin *caelestia*). Swedenborg's mission was to make these heavenly arcana known to the world, as the fuller title shows—'A Disclosing of the Heavenly Arcana contained in the Sacred Scripture or Word of the Lord etc.!

As regards the importance to modern man of this eighteenth century work, the translator of the new edition writes in his introduction—

By immersing himself in *Arcana Caelestia* the genuine seeker after God becomes acquainted, in the central sections of the work, with the inner reality of the Word, or—to use our Lord's own words recorded in John 6: 63—with its "spirit and life", without which "the flesh" of the literal statement "is of no avail".

To some in these last two decades of the twentieth century Swedenborg's reports of what he heard and saw in the spiritual world will perhaps have far greater appeal than the explanations of Scripture. In this so-called materialistic age there appears to be widespread belief in survival beyond the grave; but even sincere Christians have little to go on now that the crude teachings of former centuries have passed away. To them, as to those whose desire is to find the living God within the Scriptures, *Arcana Caelestia* comes as a precious gift from above.

Volume One of the new English edition of *Arcana Caelestia*, consisting of 473 pages of translation plus the Translator's Introduction, will be on sale from 27 October at £7.95 (Hardback) and £4.95 (Paperback). It will be obtainable from the Publisher, The Swedenborg Society, 20 - 21 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2TH.

(We assume this first volume of the new edition of the Arcana Caelestia will shortly be available at all New Church bookstores in North America. Ed.)

Swedenborg's Vision Of The Future Life

(Excerpts from a talk given at Philadelphia)

by Joseph Fort Newton

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

(Revelation 21:3)

One thing I have learned through Swedenborg is that the spiritual life of man is one—a continuation of this life. That has become the profound conviction of my heart. Well do I remember the thrill which came over me with the discovery of that truth. All are seeking the same truth: all are journeying towards the same goal. We are fellow-seekers after that truth, the truth of the spiritual life of man.

This much-sought-after knowledge has been given to the world through Swedenborg.

Then, Swedenborg taught me the truth of the continuity of life—its unbrokenness. Once that truth enters the mind, we do not speak of the "future life," but of "life later on." This great truth was taught me eloquently, persuasively, by Swedenborg; a man who lived in the spiritual world while walking here on earth among men. A man who was wise and humble; who could have made a fortune out of his wonderful powers, but who knew how rightly to value his gift, which others might have over-estimated, but which he knew how to restrain. His experiences in the spiritual world were indisputable. His mind was prepared by God.

His visions of the spiritual world helped me beyond all power to express. He taught the continuity of life with a depth which surpasses the teaching of any other writer. As a boy I was terrified by what I had been taught. The old

theology gave me a vision of God which frightened the soul of a sensitive boy. The preachers of that day seemed to delight in preaching sermons on hell, which kept me awake at night. Hell was a mortal hurt, that lingered long. There seemed some hope in the Roman Catholic teaching regarding Purgatory; a person could some time come out of that state; but there was no hope in the Protestant teaching. All the evil were swept into the terrors of hell, to remain there forever and ever. I remember one preacher who undertook to show what "forever and ever" meant. He said: "Suppose a bird were to take away one single grain of sand from an island—one grain every ten thousand years. Well, by the time it had carried away that whole island, that would be only one summer in forever and ever." You laugh. But I assure you that it was not funny to our forefathers. It was an awful thought, that of eternal punishment. It cast the shadow of fear over the children, and made cringers and creepers of men. What a release it was, then, to learn of Swedenborg's teaching of the ineffable love of God, even in this (i.e. so-called "punishment after death").

But let me be more specific in connection with the teaching regarding the spiritual world. We all know of the old teaching of the scenery in that world—the gates of pearl, and the streets of gold. All of that has vanished for the thinking mind, yet there is nothing to take its place; nothing to give us a description of the spiritual world. Many have thought that the inability to vision the spiritual world is a loss of faith in the future life itself.

Swedenborg was able to give to the world, in place of the old scenery, a picture—a wonderful picture, of the future life. That, it seems to me, was his supreme service to the world at large. If only some artist could present that picture which Swedenborg gives to us, what a great use it would be to the human heart, which is in sore need of it.

Again, Swedenborg carried the idea of law over into the unseen world, long before Drummond wrote his *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. The trouble is Swedenborg was born 200 years too soon. When we carry over the thought of law into the spiritual world, our thinking is helped immeasurably. The spiritual world is not any longer a mere matter of whim, but a matter of Divine order. And there are other laws—the law of prayer—and of forgiveness. All is law. What an enormous relief such a teaching is! I tell you, it helped my faith in God, when I realized its truth. Yet, when we hear it, we think we always knew it—perhaps we always did, but did not know that we knew.

This great and illustrious Christian Seer helped me to a clearer insight into the meaning of love, and of my soul—of our souls; and of citizenship in the unseen world of law and order and fellowship. It is one of the most beautiful doctrines which he taught.

The time will come when these things will be believed; when the teachings of Swedenborg as to the reality of the spiritual world will be as bread and milk and food to souls who cannot live without it.

CHURCH WOMEN UNITED CONVENES COMMON COUNCIL

New York, NY, June 30, 1983—CHURCH WOMEN UNITED held the annual meeting of its Common Council at Stony Point, New York on June 23 - 27, 1983 for the purpose of consultation, policy making, program development, strategizing, planning and promotion of their 1984 Ecumenical Assembly to be held in July 1984 at Purdue University. Convened under the leadership of its national president, Dr. Thelma C. Adair, the council brought together 140 Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox women from 50 states and Puerto Rico. It included CWU state presidents, representatives and staff liaisons from 29 cooperating denominational women's organizations, officers of the corporation, members of the Executive Council, the Nominating Committee and the national executive staff.

The Common Council took significant actions regarding U.S. foreign policy. It reaffirmed CWU's resolution opposing all operations, covert and overt, by the United States against Nicaragua and all forms of U.S. intervention in Central America, including military aid and training to El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. It endorsed the historical principle of public sanctuary of refugees as a legitimate Christian response and called upon the U.S. government to encourage and facilitate equitable protection for and adequate aid to displaced persons and refugees from Central America. Underscoring this action, the group heard the dramatic testimony of two Nicaraguan women, Yvon Siu and Zulema Baltodano, about the critical situation in their country and the eyewitness account of CWU members of the March, 1983 Women's Interfaith Study Tour to Nicaragua led by Sr. Marjorie Tuite of the CWU executive staff. A letter signed by members of the Common Council was sent to President Reagan protesting the U.S. government's policy in Nicaragua and Central America.

The Common Council reaffirmed their support for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and the Nestle Boycott. Reflecting continuing concern for the rapidly escalating nuclear arms race, A Policy on Disarmament and Development was presented calling for first steps toward unilateral disarmament and reduction in military spending by the United States. A letter was sent to His Eminence Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of the Archdiocese of Chicago commending him and the Roman Catholic Bishop's conference for the Third Draft of the pastoral letter, "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response."

In anticipation of the 1984 Ecumenical Assembly at Purdue University, promotional materials were unveiled, production plans initiated and strategies developed for promotion of this quadrennial event. Its theme: "Come, Build a New Earth: Pieces to Peace."

The spiritual thread that connected these marathon meeting sessions was provided by a series of unique worship experiences. Women of Hispanic, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Black churches each designed a special service featuring prayer, litany, scripture and music reflective of their individual religious traditions.

CHURCH WOMEN UNITED in the U.S.A. is a national, ecumenical Movement of more than half a million Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox and other Christian women

representing a broad spectrum of religious tradition, race, age, economic status and ethnic background. Working through a national unit, 51 state units (including one in Washington, DC) and 2,000 local units, it is dedicated to the empowerment of women and making peace and justice for all people a reality in the world.

FROM CHURCH RECORDS

BAPTISM

FORLER—Erin Brianne, daughter of Brian and Wendy Forler, was baptized into the Christian faith in the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, on July 22, 1983, the Rev. Paul Zacharias officiating.

MARRIAGE

MILLER—SCHMIDT—Kevin Miller and Mary Schmidt were united in marriage in the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener on June 11, 1983, the Rev. Paul Zacharias officiating.

DEATH

ELIN GUSTAFSON, long time member of the Chicago Society, was called into the higher life on May 4, 1983.

A graveside service was performed on May 6, and a memorial resurrection service was conducted for her at the church on June 5, 1983, Thorton Smallwood officiating.

BOOKS

The three books below are published by The Swedenborg Lending Library & Enquiry Centre, Sydney, Australia, and can be obtained from:—

SWEDENBORG FOUNDATION INC.,
139 East 23rd Street, New York, NY 10010.

SWEDENBORG & 20th CENTURY THOUGHT.
Australian University Lectures (1979 - 1980). By William Ross Woofenden, leading American Swedenborgian scholar. Slim offset paperback of 80pp.

Lecture 1. Thoughts on Swedenborg's Impact on Educational Theories and Practices.

Lecture 2. Emanuel Swedenborg, Baconian Scientist and Seer Concepts of vacuum and ether in relation to Isaac Newton's (and earlier as well as later) teachings. Swedenborg's impressive early contributions to cosmology: with conspiracy of silence by academics.

Lecture 3. Does Man Control Science, or does Science Control Man? Rebuttal of the

arrogance of materialistic scientists, adducing passages from Swedenborg's theological works.

Lecture 4. Some Thought Affinities Between Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804) and Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772). To many the part of this book which will fascinate the most, particularly laymen unfamiliar with Kant's philosophy. Good case made out for hope that the Thinker and the Seer will one day be seen to complement each other, with the younger indebted to the older. Excellent summary of Swedenborg's attainments and impact on Kant. Price 4.50 postpaid.

PERSON TO PERSON TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. Colourful glossy paperback introducing us to a Personal Religion. By Paul V. Vickers. Reprint by Swedenborg Enquiry Centre, Sydney, originally by British New Church Federation, 1970. "The Lord is much too interested in our welfare to show Himself visibly"—a good thought! Also, that the Sacred Scriptures are not called the Lord's Word as a courtesy title, but because there He can actually talk to us, putting together in our mind the ideas of His Word, therefore unique. Know the Lord, from the Word, and then prayer, provided it keeps the Lord before the mind when praying, cannot fail. Concludes with a "Conversation Piece", namely the Lord's Prayer, with explanatory drawings. Price 3.75 postpaid.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT, paperback by Richard H. Teed.

The greatest sermon. Timeless maxims expounded as to their spiritual meaning in the light of the true doctrine of the New Church. The Lord's Prayer given to us in the Sermon. Religion and prayer are inseparable, because religion is a living relation between man and God and prayer is "talking with God". True prayer seeks not to change God but ourselves so we may receive His gifts. All genuine prayer is answered but temptation (though never to be courted) is the means by which we are delivered from evil. Repentance is recognition of debts. Price 3.50 postpaid.

Newsletter . . . (cont'd from pg. 174)

. . . But I always remember that day, as I will *this day*, when it seems we almost met again. . . . A spiritual meeting, of course! Cheerio, Margo Gildea.

I wonder how often we realize how many people and in how many ways our church serves.

Edwin G. Capon, Pastor

THE UPPER ROOM

THE ARK'S RETURN TO ZION

*Leon C. LeVan
St. Petersburg, Fla.*

Readers of these pages are familiar with the concept that the journeyings and progressions of the Ark with the Children of Israel represent the advances and elevations of worship and the church with us.

The three places where the Ark rested in its return from Philistine captivity picture the three successive degrees of the church and worship in everyone—and explicitly the Three Heavens.

The church with us (or our worship in the church) progresses and rises to the Lord in an orderly and Divinely-ordained manner by way of the Three Heavens—just as the Ark went from Abinadab's house near the Philistine border to Obed Edom's house near Jerusalem and at last to its tent in Mount Zion.

In the Lowest Heaven (which is called the First or Natural Heaven) all the good things we do are received—day by day, week by week, year by year. That Lowest Heaven receives the invisible side of our works. Let us say you went to church last Sunday. That was a good work. It had a visible side and a side not visible. The unseen side of that "good work" was received in the Natural Heaven.

Spiritually speaking, the "Ark" was in the house of Abinadab near the Philistine border. In the Lowest Heaven (called the Natural) all things belonging to our worship and good works which the Angels find inconsistent with the internal church and Heaven are removed.

Did you go to church for fear of disappointing others? Did you go from habit? Did you go for good reputation? Did you go to meet a difficult duty? Did you go to wear nice clothes? All motives are seen by the Angels of the First, Natural Heaven and any that are unworthy are removed from your worship. This was your state in the "house of Abinadab." This was your worship as received in the Natural Heaven.

As the church and worship signified by the Ark advance through steps of regeneration, men and women in due course reach a state of spiritual life in which they govern themselves (and their conduct) not merely by worldly standards but according to the truths of religion. There external motives (such as were removed in the First Heaven) are not permitted to come.

But in this advanced state the Angels of the Second Heaven behold your ideas and thoughts. Worship rising to the Lord must

accord with the purest principles of truth. Here (in the Second Heaven) it is not allowable for even good intentions to pass higher if they are garbed with mistaken or false ideas. Truths from the Lord are genuine truths and they differ from fallacies. There is a true Doctrine of the Lord. There is a true Doctrine of the Sacred Scriptures. There are true Doctrines of faith and charity. The Lord has revealed His truths in His Word for the Heavens and for the earths; and those genuine truths are signified by the "new cart" by which the sacred Ark was transported from the House of Abinadab near Philistia to the house of Obed Edom near Jerusalem.

Your worship, which was purified by the Angels of the First Heaven from all external and worldly motives, is not purified further by the Angels of the Second Heaven; and there all false and erroneous ideas are taken from it. That Second Heaven is represented by the "Ark" in the house of Obed Edom the Gittite.

The blessings and happiness which came when the Ark was in the house represent the blessedness and happiness in the internals of your spirit when your worship is cleansed from all errors of thought and wrong ideas by the Angels of the Second Heaven.

But there is yet a Third or Highest Heaven above the Second and First. In that Highest, Celestial Heaven are the Angels who are inmost in love to the Lord and love to the neighbor. In the journeyings of the Ark that Heaven is represented by "Mount Zion" in Jerusalem, where King David had prepared the Tent for the sacred vessel. "Zion" was the holy mountain of Jerusalem. It was the highest point in the "city of David." There the Ark was to reach the end of its journeyings. "Mount Zion" represents the Highest or Celestial Heaven—the Heaven of Love which is nearest the Lord.

The Angels of that Celestial Heaven most purely perceive their own nothingness and the Lord's allness. They know that of themselves they would be nothing but evil, and that only the Lord's mercy withholds them from dropping back into the delights of self. Love that is wholly pure is love that is wholly selfless. The Celestial Angels permit nothing in man's worship to continue upward and onward to the Lord except the purest and most selfless love. As the Lord receives it, then are fulfilled the words of Jesus, "You in Me and I in you."



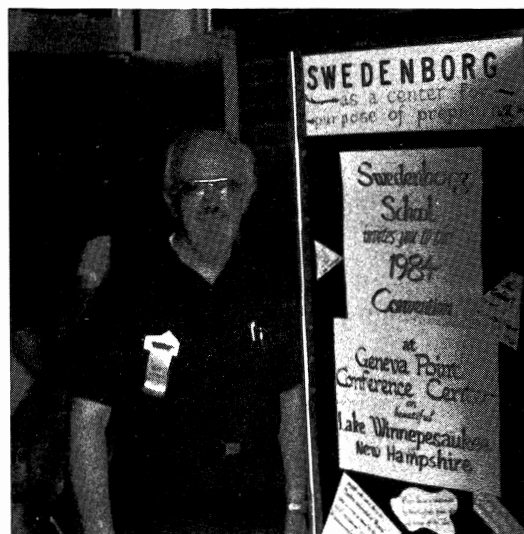
Between them, Ad Liebert and Dick Tafel Sr., have contributed over 100 years of faithful service to Convention.



Patti Holt and Marion Mull with the Kansas peace banner.



The Martin family: Jenny, Perry, Rachel, Olive and Ernest.



S.S.R. President Robert Kirven invites us to Convention '84 at Lake Winnepesaukee in lovely New Hampshire.