

FEBRUARY, 1985

The MESSENGER

Official Publication of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches

**What might the New Church
be doing in the New Age?**

FROM THE EDITOR

Church growth is likely as common a topic in church circles as any, including prayer, service and God. This is only natural. We are imbued in this business culture of ours, after all, with a belief that institutions must always be growing. So people worry and fret, scheme and plan, pray, hope and work for growth.

In small churches, the discussion can take on a particularly anxious tone. The concern is one of survival rather than mere institutional vitality. It lends a certain urgency to the matter. A perusal of *Messenger* articles reveal that this concern for growth (or lack of it) has been persistently present for the past one hundred years in the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches. "If we have the true message of the Second Coming, how is it that our reach is so negligible?" "If we herald the genuine New Jerusalem, why is our church so insignificant?" "If Swedenborg was who he said he was, why has his message remained obscure?"

I offer two responses. The first is a notion generally accepted among Convention members, but less so in other branches of Swedenborgianism. Simply put, this response suggests that Swedenborg's message has done a great deal of its intended work—but it did not do it through the ecclesiastical forms of Swedenborgian churches. The New Church is not a legalized institutional church, any more than Christ's "Kingdom of God" was the Israelitish church. In both cases, there may be considerable overlap, but one should certainly not be considered interchangeable with the other.

Through important theologians in major churches, through the Romantic poets, through the Transcendentalists, through certain scientists, through leading-edge educators, Swedenborg's revelation has been incorporated subtly and broadly into Western culture. The fact that many of his key teachings are now widely accepted (e.g. the Oneness of God; the continuation of life beyond the grave much as we know it here; faith as more than mental belief and involving ethical and moral effort) indicate that God knew what he was doing when he brought a revelation through Swedenborg.

My second response is more pertinent to this issue of *The Messenger* and more germane to the immediate questions facing us as a church. One reason we are as small as we are is that we have been too cautious. So careful have we been about protecting the sanctity of a divine revelation that we have focused overly much on faithfulness to a proper crossing of doctrinal "T's" and too little on dynamic and appropriate translation of revelation to a changing world—a world increasingly different from the one Swedenborg spoke to over two hundred years ago.

The following question has been put to eight ministers: "What should the New Church be doing in the New Age?" Two ministers offer their

thoughts in this month's *Messenger*. As a solitary soul attempting to love God more fully and serve my world more ably, I can think of other questions more trenchant for my personal regeneration. But as an ordained minister in an organized Swedenborgian church, no question sears more directly to the heart of my work. What *should* the Church be doing in the New Age, I would like to know.

We must be able to see the ways in which Swedenborg's writings have been superseded by the very New Age he heralded so long ago. The writings themselves will always be divinely inspired and useful to the serious seeker. But what about new movements, writings, inspirations since that time? We don't have Swedenborg around to comment on them. We are stuck with the human predicament of making our own discernments in freedom. The only sure knowledge we have is that the New Age is somewhat old by now, and there must be some concrete expressions of it other than Swedenborgian Churches.

In this issue, then, we will begin a three-month symposium on "What the New Church should be doing in the New Age." The more clearly we can answer this, the more skillfully we will relate to the culture in which we discover ourselves.



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Swedenborgian Wellness

by Dorothy Travers-Davies

In previous columns we have discussed how the mind affects the body and how health can be considered a spiritual possession. Now let's talk about the body as a message center and how important it is to relate to the body for information.

Our bodies are the greatest information centers ever designed. They are computerized, efficient and trustworthy. Do you realize that even before you get out of bed in the morning you can get valuable information about the cardio-vascular system simply by taking your 'resting' pulse? (That is before you have engaged in any activity.) Then take your pulse again after you have dressed and started to sit down to breakfast. Notice the increase between the first and the second pulses. You have established your body pulse 'at rest' and 'with activity'.

If you are interested in learning about allergic responses to food, try taking your pulse 20 minutes after a suspicious food and then take it 20 minutes later. Some people have a pulse elevation from 40 to 140 beats per minute from such staples as wheat or potatoes or milk. Doesn't this tell you something? It doesn't cost a penny, and it has the additional value of allowing you to have some control over your body functions so you can make changes where they are required.

Before you get out of bed, try taking your underarm temperature. Place the thermometer snugly under the arm for 10 minutes. The reading you get is a Basal Metabolism indicator. Don't be satisfied with only one day. Take it for a week and see if your own readings fall within the 97.8 to 98.2° F, which is considered the normal range. For more than a century it has been recognized that a person with too much thyroid activity runs a low grade fever (not reflected on thermometers) while the hypoactive thyroid runs a sub-normal temperature.

This is a good time to add that while fevers scare people, remember that this is a sign that the body is marshalling its own defenses. Natural healings are often aborted by chemicals and drugs which counteract fevers in progress.

When the underarm temperature is below average, the holistic practitioner suggests that, in lieu of getting thyroid extract, a program of cleansing and dietary changes should be considered to stimulate the body into a new healing mode. The thyroid is only one of a system of interrelating glands. Often, the thyroid is an indicator of an endocrine problem that affects the pancreas, adrenal cortex and liver. Does it make sense to work on only one gland when the basic problem comes from systemic glandular imbalance?

What affects these glands most strongly? The mind and the diet. This is why nutrition information is being reported more and more in all the news media. Almost on a daily basis some new

study is published about sugar, cholesterol, and food additives or colorings. Allergic reactions to sugar can manifest in hyperactivity, emotional depression, headaches, nausea, and a full range in between. But more than any other symptom, sugar reactions affect the balance of the glands in the endocrine system.

A balanced system abets a healthy state of mind. Health is wealth in two directions. Often when patients of mine have complained about 'giving up' some of their favorite foods, I have asked them which choice they would make if someone offered them five pennies or five gold pieces. Naturally, they all take the gold. Well, I explained, health is the gold and the choice is yours.

Another indication that your body is responding to a new level of care is the pH of the urine. Nitrozone paper is available at any drug store. The range is from 4.5 to 7.5 pH (the potential Hydrogen representing acidity-alkalinity on a scale of 0-14 with 7 representing neutrality). If the pH is below 6.3 your system is acid and if the pH is above 6.5, it is tending toward the alkaline. An overly acid system means that your food is only partially digested and absorbed, while the alkaline state shows that the system is a sluggish one, and the digestive juices are weaker.

Foods that produce acidity are: all meat, poultry and fish, cheese and eggs, dairy products and refined and processed foods. What's left, you ask? All fruit and vegetables, plus the grains called millet and buckwheat. Rice is fairly neutral, particularly brown rice.

These are the foods for detoxifying and cleansing, for balancing and restoring. And these are the foods that can affect brain chemistry and consequently emotional problems. Sounds strange? Well, the Russians have had great success with taking care of schizophrenics. They put them in a padded cell and place the patient on a water fast for 5 days. The schizophrenic symptoms sometimes disappear because in five days the body chemistry and the brain chemistry will undergo change.

In our culture we might consider that inhuman treatment, so we are apt to put more drugs into our mental patients. But consider this: every system on a cumulative basis adds more and more junk in its arteries and tissues with age. Doesn't it make sense to, every so often, use a cleansing technique? Five days without the acid producing foods can make many people feel better than they have felt for many years, simply because the average American diet is an acid-producing diet.

For these next months, this column will be devoted to the body as a message center, and holistic techniques for body balancing, never forgetting that the mind is the king-pin of health, which is a spiritual possession.

Integration and Holism: The Journey of la Presle

by Claude Bruley

La Presle arose from the search for a happy union between spirituality, psychology and physiology, and came to fruition through the meeting and work of a minister, a psychologist and a medical doctor. The most productive forum congealing this work has been seminars. All this began with the intention of forming, little by little, a unique ministry as our thoughts harmonized and developed. In short, we sought to rediscover an authentic priesthood capable of helping to bind together the spirit, the soul and the body.

The order of the service was also modified. Our desire was to present a simplified liturgy allowing for the inclusion of all those who would later join with us, as they would bring with them certain other beliefs and practices marked by their cultural upbringing. We wanted to live a real cultural change, as well as to find again the essentials of worship, especially in the hearing of the holy scriptures, in the exploration of inspired meditation of our great clairvoyants, in the silence which aids our adoration, and at last, in the experience of commu-

La Presle's intention was to rediscover an authentic priesthood capable of helping to bind together the spirit, the soul, and the body.

The primary tool enabling us to carry out this experience has been the "science of correspondences," rediscovered by Swedenborg over two hundred years ago and brilliantly explained by Rudolf Steiner in this century. Indeed, this "science of all sciences," as the Ancients called it, made it possible to start from physiology, zoology, botany and mineralogy to discover the laws that rule our psychism and those other laws that earlier have been used by the Divine-Human to create the world. The teaching of correspondences is thus fundamental at la Presle.

To set up such a structure, we have had to seriously modify our way of thinking and methods of carrying out our profession, so that we actually bring together the work of a minister, psychologist and medical doctor. As for myself, after six years of traditional ministry in Paris (traditional worship services, doctrinal courses on Swedenborg's writings), I became aware that due to a steady decrease in the number of members of the Community, primarily through departures into the spiritual world, I had to reconsider, on pain of death, all the cultural and spiritual arrangements necessary for a viable ministry.

This is how, one day in 1974, with those who had understood that all religious structures must be reformed periodically, we decided to upset our culturally ingrained habits. We took the pulpit, the music stand and the benches out of the Chapel. We laid a thick carpet; we bought some comfortable cushions and put them along the walls; we placed in the center of this circle a low table on which we placed the Bible, a candelabra, the plate and cup for communion.

nion and prayer, during which participants hold hands and express their personal selves aloud before saying "Our Father." Let me add that there is a musical prelude and postlude and two songs, according to the cultural moments. My main point here is that the spirit led us to undertake such a reform.

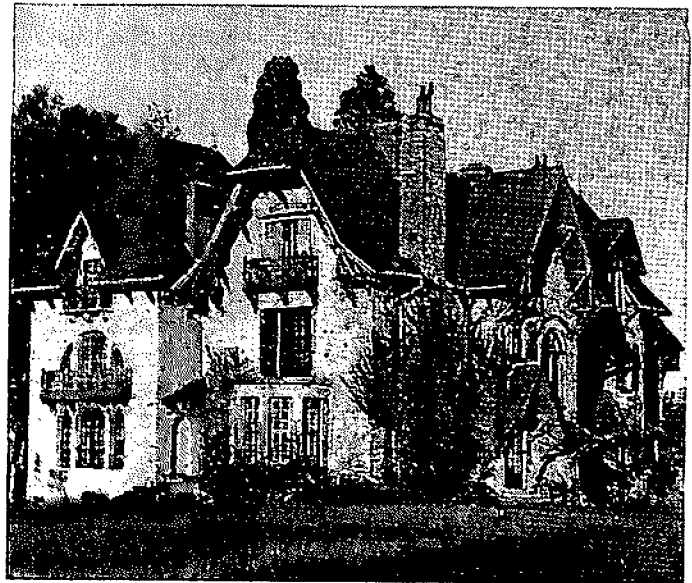
As expected, all the members of the community were not convinced of the validity of this reform. Some left. These moments were painful, but salutary for the future of the New Church in France. Very rapidly, the number of the participants increased. The fruits of the new tree being good, we could look at the future with confidence. We attracted psychologists, with whom we organized seminars, which we called "of spiritual opening



out." It was in these seminars where we organized several working-groups in psychology and spirituality. Some of these experiences did not bring the expected results. It appeared to us that certain techniques merely glorified the ego and did not actually prepare for a real spiritual conversion. We needed to find other psychologists more in harmony with our objectives. On this basis, we opened the doors to la Presle to other professionals.

We still needed to resolve the delicate problem of inserting the medical aspect into the activities at la Presle. Guided by the Providence of God, we acquired a doctor who had already participated in the different activities of la Presle. We invited him to discover and practice the anthroposophical (Steinerian) medicine, which in our eyes provides, in large part, an answer to the spiritual demands of the Gospel. This medicine, based fully on the science of correspondences as taught by Swedenborg and developed by Steiner, puts into a bright illuminating light the importance of illness and its impact on the psychic and spiritual behavior of the human being. Any doctor who accepts to work with us must also accept the reality of the psychic and spiritual components of disease. The doctor must agree to accompany the patient in identifying these components. We believe that the recovery from disease can begin seriously only when the patient has willingly identified the psychic and spiritual components of the physical condition and has accepted the work of facing them.

I have just co-led with a doctor a seminar on this subject. In the morning, I introduced the general rules on the correspondences of the human body. In the afternoon, the doctor taught more precisely on the main types of illnesses and psychic correspondences.



la Presle in Lurcy-Levis, France

As for the results of our cultural activities, they, too, have gone far beyond our original expectations. Not only are the religious services celebrated during each seminar, but many participants, who had cut all links with any kind of religion, are rediscovering a desire to find a new relationship with God. They want to receive Holy Communion, and, at present, thirty baptisms are celebrated each year.

The initial small group which believed in the future of such an enterprise has grown bigger. The seminars have increased. Today, registrations are taken six months in advance; waiting lists have been made up.

We strongly felt that the acceptance of our approach to wholeness and health would be facilitated by locating in a place away from urban agitation. Providence helping us again, we discovered an adequate locality right in the middle of France--a Chateau of extraordinary architecture, surrounded by a forest full of roe-deer, hinds, and other wildlife. It is in this privileged place that we have been carrying on our new ministry for seven years now.

The initial group which believed in the future of such an enterprise has grown much bigger. The seminars have increased. Today, registrations are taken six months in advance; waiting lists have been made up.

Of course, we are concerned with the usual financial problems encountered by radical ministries. If our friends from beyond the Atlantic are sympathetic with our efforts, your gifts would be most welcome. We know that the future holds more growth for us, both individually and corporately. More and more, we feel we are walking in the spirit of the New Church.

Rev. Claude Bruley ministers both at la Presle in Lurcy-Levis and at the Meudon Chapel in Paris. The French Society of the New Church is affiliated with the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches, but is not formally a member body.

The Transparent Church

by F. Gardiner Perry

This article is about the Convention of Swedenborgian Churches in the coming years. Today, as in the past, Convention faces the task of fashioning an authentic expression of the Lord's New Church. These times hold particular promise because persons among us are looking in new ways at Convention's purpose and structure. The Ad Hoc Committee, for example, has recast our view of Convention on the 80s and beyond.

The article is written from the viewpoint that the external forms of Convention are distinct from the broader and infinitely deeper emergence of the Lord's New Church itself. Convention reflects essential qualities of the New Church. Without spiritual substance, Convention would be a mere shell, while the Lord's New Church apart from some organized forms diminishes a spiritual reality to abstraction.

From the vantage of this writer, there are specific events that urge us to discover and enact appropriate expressions for the vision we share of the New Church. In the Detroit area, Swedenborgians are considering the purchase of the building which they have been renting on Sundays. The minister is planning to implement alternative forms of ministry and to enhance traditional worship services. Also, the Almont New Church Assembly is writing a new chapter of its history by hiring a minister as full time retreat center administrator. Swedenborgians in the environs of Detroit may be embarking on a new phase of church growth.

To be an authentic expression of the New Church, Convention will need to reflect the qualities portrayed by "pure gold, as pure as glass." The image suggests that our churches will need to model the perpetual and simultaneous transformation of love into wisdom. Therefore, Convention will need to be very loving and very transparent.

Convention's "gold" will be its goals and purpose. Its "gold" will be pure as its love. In his book, *The Road Less Travelled*, M. Scott Peck defines love as "attending to one's own or another's spiritual growth." The process of spiritual growth involves fundamental patterns that allow one's inner and outer selves to become one whole person. Internals become one with externals. Dr. Peck identifies laziness as the single most powerful obstacle in the process of growth. He goes on to say that spiritual growth requires the effort to let go of egoistic and distorted views of life, and to learn the more loving and accurate perspectives of the whole person.

The Lord shows us that He is the source of our effort. In the Swedenborgian tradition we read that the Lord took our nature upon Himself, overcame the hells, and delivered humankind from bondage to externals separate from internals. We can attend to our own or another's spiritual growth because the Lord first united His human nature to the divine depths within Himself. From Him we receive the power to overcome the laziness that fuels our attachment to externals. The Lord's constant purpose

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To conceive of a worthy church we need to turn to theological images, which bring to our attention the qualities of the New Church. The *Apocalypse Revealed*, by Emanuel Swedenborg, is a particularly rich source. In it is a powerful image describing the New Church as being like "pure gold, as pure as glass." Imagining a piece of gold that is like pure glass presents an optical illusion. As soon as one aspect of the image is in focus, the complementary one emerges. Pure gold that is as pure as glass is a metaphor pointing to the way angels in heaven experience the Lord's love and wisdom. There, the Lord's love is felt as a golden warmth. It is simultaneously seen as wisdom's light, as bright and clear as if it had passed through pure glass.

is to draw all human beings into the process of spiritual growth.

Convention's purpose needs to be aligned with this very loving purpose of the Lord. Therefore, Swedenborgian churches will continue to be explicitly involved with the dynamics of spiritual growth in individuals and groups of persons. Indeed, the writings are unequivocal in stating that the New Church exists wherever spiritual growth is occurring.

If Convention's "pure gold" is its purpose to facilitate spiritual growth, its "glass" is its openness to the variety of ways spiritual growth can occur. Convention's glass will be as pure as its willingness to be transparent to the secular, as well as religious,

expressions of spirituality beyond its current boundaries. One can see a trend running through our society that recognizes the spiritual qualities that underline every aspect of reality. In modern physics, for example, Fritjof Capra writes about the convergence of science and spiritual traditions: "things exhibit a tendency to exist, [and occur] in a complicated web of relationships." We hear echoes of Swedenborg's efforts to translate his own intuitive experience into scientific writing.

Convention's use will be to foster personally satisfying, as well as socially responsible, forms of spirituality for those persons.

There are a few specifics that follow from these general observations. Worship will continue to be a service of corporate celebration, personal reflection, and instruction to which persons touched by the life of Convention will be drawn. Love to the Lord will become tangible as persons feel deeply connected within themselves and to others.

People are yearning for more than just glimpses of the spiritual life through music, sports, education, their work, and through any number of settings. In the coming years, Convention will intensify its involvement in these areas.

Further, there is the tendency to see spiritual growth as the purpose of life. Health professionals are identifying the qualities of personal relationships that benefit one's overall health. At the Swedenborg School of Religion, and elsewhere, music is being written that tends to bring persons into states of deeper receptivity to spiritual inflow. In all areas of education there is more attention given to involving the whole person—intellect, emotions, intuition, body, and one's relationship—in the learning process.

Even athletic experience is being drawn into the sphere of spiritual activity. This is an area of particular interest to this writer. It is frequently said that athletic performance is 10% physical and 90% mental. Sports psychologist James Bennet writes, "Thought can accomplish virtually anything within broad physical limits." Persons who understand the truth and power of this law set out on something very much like a spiritual journey. They begin a self survey for the purpose of changing thought habits in ways that typically result in a transformation of personal identity.

Involvement in a sport can begin as an effort to be the best in a field of opponents. It may become a challenge which allows that person to discover his or her "personal best" performance. For some, the experience is transformed into a rhythm of meditative motion. For others, sport becomes a vehicle for personal and spiritual growth. It provides a discipline and a structure by which one's inner self can be explored and developed. Thus, even in athletics, where we often witness a particularly blatant form of narcissism, self striving can be turned toward receptiveness to the Lord's leading.

People are yearning for more than just glimpses of the spiritual life through music, sports, education, their work, and through any number of settings. In the coming years, Convention will intensify its involvement in these areas. It will become more open to the ways persons are attempting to meet genuine inner growth needs in their secular life styles.

Ministers will become involved in teaching, pastoral psychotherapy, sports coaching, and music, to name just a few areas. Out of a growing awareness of secular spirituality, Convention will become less clergy-centered. The work of ministry will be shared to a greater extent by laypersons.

In the coming years, Convention will extend its loving purpose to persons in a wide variety of ways. It will facilitate spiritual growth, and will be open to the spirituality present in the very design of secular life. Imagine Convention being like gold, as pure as glass: it will be both a very loving church and a very transparent church.



Rev. Gard Perry is minister at the Church of the Holy City in Detroit. In addition to his parish ministry, he is pursuing his Doctorate of Ministry degree at the Institute for Advanced Pastoral Studies, and he teaches the Inner Game of Tennis.

WOMEN COMMUNICATING

Annella Smith-Editor Bertha Berran-Co Editor

A CREED

There is a destiny that makes us brothers;
None goes his way alone:
All that we send into the lives of others
Comes back into our own.
I care not what his temples or his creeds,
One thing holds firm and fast -
That into his fateful heap of days and deeds
The soul of man is cast.

--Edwin Markham

Labor to keep alive in your heart that little spark of
celestial fire called conscience.

--George Washington

I do the very best I know how - the very best I can;
and I mean to keep doing so until the end. If the end
brings me out all right, what is said against me
won't amount to anything. If the end brings me out
wrong, ten angels swearing I was right would make
no difference.

--Abraham Lincoln

How wonderful it is for God's people to live in harmony. Psalm 133:1

The birthdays of Presidents Washington and Lincoln are in February, as is the celebration of Valentine's Day. The presidents were both much concerned with freedom and equality, and Valentine's Day gives us all an opportunity to express our love and affection for one another -- all necessary ingredients for true brotherhood and sisterhood.

Our first president is a symbol of America's resolve to be free of racial and religious prejudice. When he was president, he wrote a letter to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, Rhode Island, in which he assured the congregation that in this country there would be "no bigotry, no sanction; to persecution, no assistance." This quotation has practically become a slogan for the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

Swedenborg writes, "By brethren in the internal sense are signified those who are in similar good and truth. For in the other life all are consociated in accordance with the affections, and those who are consociated constitute a brotherhood. Not that they call themselves brethren, but that they are a brotherhood, but still there are degrees of relation-

ships according to the quality of the goods and truths. These degrees are signified in the Word by 'brothers,' 'sisters,' 'sons-in-law,' 'daughters-in-law,' 'grandsons,' 'granddaughters,' and by other family names."

The common goals of the Church Women United are: "We intend to grow in our faith and expand our vision of what it means to be Christian women in society today; We intend to develop a visible, ecumenical community; We intend to work for a just, peaceful and caring society; and We intend to use responsibly and creatively the resources God has entrusted to us -- our intelligence, our time, our energy and our money."

The Church, with our Lord at its center, is first and foremost a redemptive community in which love to the Lord and the neighbor are the cornerstones. In this spiritual atmosphere, perhaps where we may become a growing part of that redemptive community, perhaps here we can find that understanding and forgiveness and love that we seek to make our own and bring into wholeness our total personhood.

"May all people know the love and good,
That come with peace and brotherhood."

FROM OUR TREASURER -

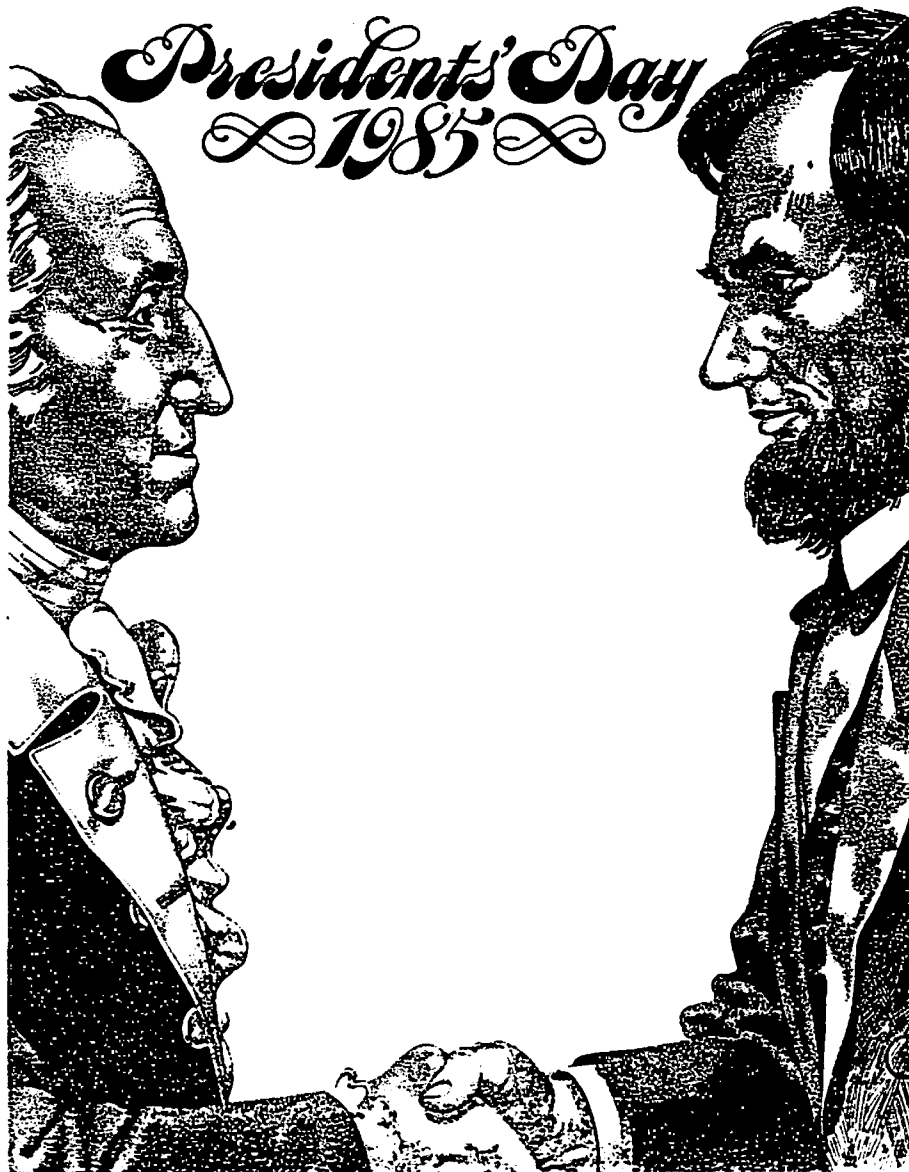
Alliance pins and tie tacks are available at \$5.00 each plus 75 cents postage and handling charges. Orders should be sent to:

Alliance of New Church Women
c/o Treasurer Ola Mae Wheaton
11274 Tropic Drive S.E.
Bonita Springs, Florida 33923

The Alliance Annual Appeal started in January and most of you have received your notices by now. You might be interested to know how the Alliance monies are disbursed. Here is an accounting of the Appeal Receipts:

Help with Convention Baby Sitting-	\$200.00
President's Travel Allowance-	\$500.00
Memorial Funds-	\$200.00

Urbana Library-	\$100.00
The Messenger-	\$150.00
Church Women United-	\$100.00
Assist Summer Camps-	\$500.00
New Church Youth League-	\$100.00
Mite Box for BOE Parenting Program-	\$1,599.00
Missionary Assist to Kei Torita in Japan-	\$500.00
Supplies, postage, etc.-	\$100.00 (or less)
Income from the Edith Blackmer Memorial Fund is used to assist a deserving Urbana Student.	





How Does God Move in History?

By Paul Oesch

Christian philosophy of history maintains that God in His providence has effective control of world events—thus of wars, of revolutions and of historical developments. It is not necessary that this control be overt—as was mostly the case in the history of the Jewish theocracy. It may be covert, which is mostly the case in subsequent and modern history. The general and most universal aim of God's providence is human redemption. Sometime, long ago, in human history, moral and spiritual degeneration took place, which is *symbolized* by the story of the Fall in Genesis. Symbolism is self-evident for we know that serpents don't talk and eating fruit is not a serious offense. So there is more than meets the eye. It is also not just to punish descendants for the faults of their forbears—no one is ever punished for what the mythical Adam and Eve did; but by hereditary sin is meant the inherited tendencies toward evil; no realist can deny these tendencies—for we see and read about them every day. The philosophy of Rousseau and later of Karl Marx denies the "fallen" element in humanity.

God's redemptive operations are not seen as intermittent but as constant toward the realization of the spiritual plane in human existence—both individually and collectively. The Christian philosophy of history assumes broadly a continual improvement of the human condition—viewed spiritually. This progress is not, however, continuous and uninterrupted; it can

be compared to an inclined spiral with both up and down movement—but nevertheless a general progression. As mentioned previously in this paper, this philosophy is deduced from apocalyptic and eschatological passages. Isaiah 65 speaks specifically of the "wolf and the lamb feeding together"—psychologically indicating progressive control over the lower "wolf" nature; Daniel 7:1-14 describes the eventual victory of a spiritual culture or of Christianity; likewise Dan. 2:44-45. Ezekiel 36:30ff treats of the "second coming," which need not be interpreted materialistically but can be understood as a *renewal* of the essence of Christianity—"power and glory" indicating a sort of apothiosis of the present limited Christianity. Is not a spiritual and moral renewal of mankind a "new heaven and earth," "the New Jerusalem," or "the holy city coming down from God out of heaven"? (Rev. 21:1-2)

As alluded to above, God's power and control over history can be rationally seen by considering a few prophecies and their later fulfillment. In many cases the fulfillment is literal, in others symbolic, yet quite identifiable—as those, for instance, which refer to the coming incarnation, the accession of the Gentiles and the coming of the Kingdom of God—meaning Christianity in its *ideal* state. A few examples: Isaiah, in ch. 10:5-6 foretells the Assyrian invasion of Israel of 721 B.C.; in ch. 29:1-6 the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in his second invasion is foretold; in ch. 53:1-9 the Incarna-

tion is foretold; in ch.

54:103 the accession of the Gentiles or European Christianity is predicted; in Ezek. 28:1-10 the fall of Tyre and its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar is predicted; the return of the exiles from Babylonia through the instrumentality of Cyrus, the Persian, was foretold (see Isaiah 44:28); Herod's slaying of the innocents was foretold by Jeremiah (see Matt. 2:16-18); the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 A.D. was foretold by Christ in Matt. 24:1-2.

Emanuel Swedenborg stated the doctrine that there must always be a church on earth and that this is provided by the Lord. This statement requires some elucidations. First of all, in this philosopher's view, the term "church" comprehends a broader spectrum than is usually envisaged among your "run of the mill" theologians. An individual who responds positively to the "Word" (meaning in its broadest sense all genuine revelation) is a "church in leasts"—whereas generally it means a group or groups of those "in the faith."

But why must there always be a church? One explanation is that unless a "church," or reciprocating community in "the faith," exists somewhere on earth, the nexus between God and the human race would be broken—also the connection between the "spiritual" world and the "natural" world. Theosophists and non-scriptural metaphysicians are wont to speak of the connection between the "dense world" and the "astral" plane. In metaphysical conceptions, when this should occur everything material would decompose and vanish. In sophisticated and esoteric Christianity, the same concept is held. In metaphysical Christian thought, the "church," or in its broadest sense the spiritual plane of life, is like the heart and lungs of the body—without these there is no human life. (It could be added here and not be considered too irrelevant that Schopenhauer in his *The World as Will and Idea* also basically propounds a similar idea—that the will, both the individual and the universal will are the animating and sustaining forces of all nature and without these there would be no life and activity. Schopenhauer's "will" is of course a metaphysical and non-material entity—so some similarities of conception with what is advanced above in this paragraph can reasonably be assumed. (see *The World as Will and Idea*, "Second Book"—"The World as Will.")

This piece is an excerpt from the current issue of *Critique, A Journal of Conspiracy and Metaphysics*, published by The Critique Foundation, Santa Rosa, California.



Reading Room: AN INVITATION TO LEARNING

By Ernest O. Martin

One of my favorite boyhood memories is evenings spent in the reading room of the public library. I sat by a huge stone fireplace and read until the librarian started putting out the lights, reminding me that it was time to go home.

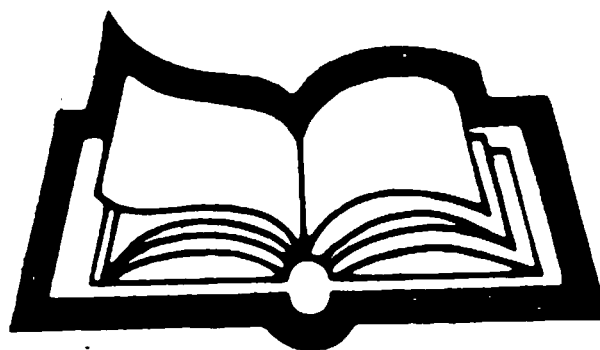
I have a dream, to recreate that library experience in my home and in church book rooms around the country. We were one step away from establishing such a center at the Wayfarers Chapel when the landslide forced us to close the building. The dream has been deferred.

The Swedenborgian Church has always placed emphasis on reading and study. Members tell how they were introduced to the teaching of Emanuel Swedenborg by finding a copy of **Heaven and Hell** on the shelf of a second-hand book store. The first proclamation of Swedenborg's teaching in America was at Bell's auction room and book store in Philadelphia on June 5, 1784.

The Convention Journal lists fifteen New Church libraries and book rooms in the United States and Canada. The most active are the book room at 79 Newbury Street in Boston; the book room at Swedenborg House in DeLand, Florida; the information center at the Wayfarers Chapel in California; the Swedenborg collection at the Urbana University library; and the library of the San Francisco Church. The best-known book room, not formally associated with Convention, is the book store and library operated by the Swedenborg Foundation in New York.

If we are seriously interested in making the teaching of Swedenborg available to more people, we could open book rooms in downtown shopping centers. Swedenborgian literature could be attractively displayed as well as Bibles and carefully chosen books on religion, philosophy and psychology. Arrangements could be made to show some of the most popular Swedenborg Foundation films through video cassettes.

Adolph Liebert has suggested that our church in Philadelphia establish a book room in the downtown area. The proposal is being explored, including possible location and cost. It is suggested that a minister be employed to manage the book room and that volunteers be recruited and trained to serve as staff members.



Our thinking about the possibilities of Swedenborgian book rooms might be stimulated by visiting reading rooms of the Christian Science Church. If you live in a city that has a Christian Science Church there will undoubtedly be at least one reading room, for it is a requirement of the denomination. In sixty-three countries around the world there are 2,855 reading rooms. Some of the rooms are open every day of the week; others are open a few days a week or perhaps one evening a month. The hours of service will depend on personnel available, usually volunteers.

An article in the Wilmington newspaper describes a typical Christian Science reading room in downtown Wilmington. The large reading-study room is furnished with study tables, wing chairs, good lighting and a deep-pile gold carpet that defies noise. The reading room is separated by glass partitions from the small front sales room and lending library. For sale are Bibles, Christian Science books, and other religious books and records.

"One of the biggest attractions seems to be the window displays," the librarian said. "People often stop to read the featured Bible verse that is changed daily. In good weather there's a street rack of pamphlets free for the taking. Every day the **Monitor** is available from a newspaper vending machine. If just one person is helped by reading what's in the window display, it's worth the effort."

The librarian went on to speak of the purpose of the reading rooms. "The rooms are a regenerative place, neither a library nor a religious book store. The emphasis is on sharing, not selling; on praying and studying, as well as peaceful reading. There's no hard-sell attempt to proselytize."

If we want to consider establishing Swedenborgian book rooms, we should take advantage of the experience of others, including the Christian Scientists. We might also ask Convention to sponsor a workshop on book rooms, enlisting the support of Rafael Guizot of the Boston book room, a staff member from the Swedenborg Foundation, a representative from the Wayfarers Chapel, and others to serve as resource persons.

Whatever we do, let's do it well. The location will be carefully planned, giving thought to the clientele we are seeking to reach. The building will be attractive

and inviting with colorful decorations and comfortable furnishings. A patio or indoor area could provide space for visitors to enjoy coffee, tea or a brown bag lunch. Plans must be made for adequate financing, capable management, trained staff, and professional promotion and advertising.

If the idea of a Swedenborgian book room in your community excites you, speak to members of your church who you think would be interested. Invite your minister to meet with you and dream together. If you want some guidance and support from Convention, write to the President of Convention. He can suggest resource persons to meet with you to help develop a proposal.

A new project enlisting the cooperation and support of many of the members can be energizing for a church group. When we reach out beyond ourselves and respond to the interests and needs of others, we gain a new sense of usefulness and mission. As new people discover the insights and principles that drew us into the Swedenborgian Church, we will experience renewed purpose for ourselves and our church.



Rev. Martin ministers to the Church of the New Jerusalem in Philadelphia and is currently exploring ministry to isolated Swedenborgians. He is also conducting research into the establishment of a Swedenborgian Growth Center.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

—Cary Bradley

The Church of the New Jerusalem in Fryeburg, Maine sponsored and produced an "Anne Cary Bradley Art Exhibit." Cary Bradley was a noted New Church artist, whose paintings are to be found all over the country. An activity class from the nearby Snow School visited and spent much time reading articles and discussing her work. Over 20 paintings and several articles of memorabilia, including a lovely set of Cary Bradley's own books, were displayed for visitors.

—Guest Appearance

Gretchen Worden, member of the Church of the New Jerusalem in Philadelphia, appeared on national television last fall as a guest on the David Letterman Show. Gretchen is the curator of the Mutter Museum, a medical history and pathology museum within the College of Physicians of Philadelphia. She brought to the show a collection of old medical instruments and machines -- some outdated, some sheer quackery -- which she demonstrated with assistance and distress from her host.

—Ecumenicism

Of note is that Doris Tafel, of the Church of the New Jerusalem, Philadelphia, is the president of Church Women United of Greater Philadelphia. Church Women United held their Advent Worship Service this year at the downtown Philadelphia Swedenborgian Church for the third year in a row. They used the Swedenborgian order of service from the Book of Worship.

—Gift

Urbana University has received a major gift of nearly \$25,000 from the estate of the late Mrs. Ruth Coffeen of LaPorte, Indiana.

Mrs. Coffeen, a member of the Swedenborgian Church, had a continuing interest in the institution and its future.

This gift raises to nearly \$100,000 the amount which has been received from private sources for designated projects during the past year.

The estate gift left by Mrs. Coffeen to the University was designated for use by the institution's library.

Coming: Pre-Convention Conference 1985 on Communication

by Lorraine Sando

Have you ever come to convention and wished that you felt more comfortable meeting new people? Are there things that you've wanted to say to your closest Convention friends and found yourself tongue-tied? Have you ever wanted to commune more intimately with God? Communication/Communion is the topic of this year's Pre-Convention Conference. Here are some comments from last year's participants: "It's taken years off of me;" "The closeness brought about in the group helped me in overcoming self-consciousness;" "I Gained new in-

sights into my own need for sharing with other people who care, and I discovered that other peoples' needs are every similar to my own."

Begin now to plan for that Pre-Convention time in June. If you've been before, call a friend and encourage them to come. If you haven't, tell yourself, "This year I'm going to take the exciting risk of meeting and sharing with new and old friends and bring new meaning into my life." Watch the next *Messenger* for further details on the Conference.

1985 General Convention LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

General Chair

Rev. Ron Brugler, Almont Retreat Center 1513 Cameron Rd., Almont, MI, 48003. 313-798-8487 (for events at Almont).

Rev. Gard Perry, 2108 Alicia Lane, Royal Oak, MI, 48073. 313-546-7583 (for events in Windsor).

1. **Transportation Committee**-Chris Laitner, 10 Hannah Court, Midland, MI, 48640. 517-636-7674.

2. **Child Care Committee**-Betty Jean Neuenfeldt, 11794 Kendaville Rd., Riverdale, MI, 48877. 517-833-7040.

3. **Worship Arrangements**-Elinor Johnson, B-33 "Frosty", Fisherman's Village Marina, 1200 W. Retta Esplanade, Punta Gorda, Florida 33950. 813-639-3232 ext. 433/ or 850 N. Ottawas, U.S. 23, East Tawas, MI, 48703. 517-362-3343 (May, June '85).

4. **Hospitality Committee**-Marjie Shelley, 125 Reynick, Saginaw, MI, 48602. 517-790-2976.

5. **Convention Desk Committee**-Joyce Fekete 13948 Melvin, Livonia, MI, 48150. 313-427-9624.

6. **Food and Refreshments Committee**-Marjie Shelley.

7. **Publicity Committee**-Marjie Shelley.

8. **Musical Resources Committee**-Chris Laitner.

A Celebration in Washington, D.C.

by Mary C. Ebel

I want to communicate to you some of the joy and excitement we felt at the installation service last September of Rev. Richard M. Baxter as our pastor in Washington, D.C. Rev. Randall Laakko, as President of General Convention, conducted the service. Over thirty visitors joined us in the celebration, including representatives from several churches in the Washington area and from our neighbors, the DuPont Circle Citizens Association.

In his sermon Rev. Laakko reminded us of the responsibilities of the love and caring we must share with

each other, both church family and pastor. Assisting in the celebration was a consort of two vocalists and five other musicians playing on medieval and baroque instruments. The celebration continued with a champagne reception shown in the picture. The future of our Church, of Convention, and of the ministry of our pastor were well-toasted.

This was the first installation of a pastor in the history of the Washington Society. It is a rather infrequent practice within Convention, but I hope it will become more common. It's exciting!



Reception following the installation of the Rev. Richard M. Baxter



BOOK REVIEW

by Horand K. Gutfeldt, Ph.D.

For a long time, scientific and psychological thinking has avoided any classification of Good and Evil, which occupy a prominent place in Swedenborg's system.

Certainly, the impartiality of modern thought has cleared away many superficial labels of a bygone era and has allowed us to look at phenomena in and around us in a fresh, unbiased way. At the present time, however, with an increasing crime wave and the search for social justice, a new necessity is felt to discover more permanent values—not everything is relative! It is a pity that so often now superficial labels are pushed into the foreground, rather than insight into deeper causes. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Moral Majority movement.

In this social arena, then, it is encouraging that a psychiatrist and Christian has written a book which moves toward a profound psychological assessment of these matters. *People of the Lie*, by M. Scott Peck, M.D., investigates the deeper roots and phenomena of evil in individuals, as well as in social relations, weighing the destructive effects in all directions. His courageous inquiry emphasizes the connection of evil and falsity—a decidedly Swedenborgian understanding. Peck attempts this tentative definition: evil is that which detracts from the fullness of life in all different levels and areas.

One can appreciate, also, the critical glance thrown at various approaches to exorcism; he comes to a cautious and rational evaluation of sensational claims. His discussion of obsession, as contrasted to multiple personalities, seems to show the way to deeper understanding of both phenomena. A few question marks, though, might be added to his references to the Lucifer legend and the theological discussion concerning the origin and role of evil in relation to creation.

He lists three main attitudes in present thinking, which he suspects are not helpful, but he admits that he is aware of no fully satisfactory explanation to the problems involved. Suddenly, one perceives that the solutions are convincingly offered in Swedenborg's *Divine Providence*.

"Evils are permitted for the sake of the end, which is salvation." Swedenborg is far ahead of most of the psychological and theological thinking up to the present.

This fine book by Peck suggests to us that it is time to renew our understanding of what evil really is in ourselves and in our society. Few in our culture seem to be aware that Swedenborg offers a cogent and holistic view of the role and cause of evil. As we work towards a new clarification of the ethics of Love in the New Church, it may surprise some of us how far removed we are from many of the culturally popular notions of the day.

(*People of the Lie*, M. Scott Peck, Simon and Schuster, N.Y., 1983)

Two Books For Children

The General Church of the New Jerusalem in Bryn Athyn, PA., has just produced two good-looking books which teach basic Swedenborgian concepts to children. *Heaven's Happiness* is a story of one of Swedenborg's heavenly experiences related in *Marital Love*, which is retold for children by John L. Odhner. Mr. Odhner does fairly well at keeping the story on a level understandable to children, and the illustrations, though quite simple, should facilitate the interest of young ones. *Life is Forever: An Introduction to the Spiritual World for Children*, by Peter M. Buss, is somewhat larger, at 8 1/2 x 11, but is similar in appearance and style. It also has lots of illustrations. *Heaven's Happiness* can be purchased for \$3.65 each and *Life is Forever* for \$2.95 each from the General Church Book Center, Box 278, Bryn Athyn, PA., 19009.

FROM THE GRASSROOTS

Considering the New Age

Dear Editor,

This is not a response to Charles E. Witzell's letter (November, 1984), but a more general question about the same subject:

What are the real effects of the Last Judgment, and what are our chances of uncovering them?

It is difficult to detect the external results of any deeply internal process that is not just the movement of our own intentions. The Last Judgment took place in the spiritual world, and because the spiritual world is the world of all things deeply internal, the effects of the Last Judgment should be just as hard to trace. Our tendency has been to look at some very constructive trend in recent history and attribute it to that event. And we may be right. But some important questions are still left over.

First, is everything, or are even most things, *bound* to get better? The New Age is an age of renewed freedom, not necessarily an age in which things will get better and better. We could blow it. Depending on how we use our freedom, things could get worse. Furthermore, as spiritual freedom increases, issues deepen. The presence of great good is balanced by the presence of equally great opportunities for evil. Every now and then someone will take advantage of those opportunities, and if they have had enough leverage, things will go bad.

Secondly, are the better external developments always from a high source? There is a frustrating ambiguity between the actions of what is sometimes called "enlightened self-interest" and the actions of truly caring people. Especially in anxious and crisis-laden times, many large social movements may be driven by a need to mobilize against further pain. Even democracy--and especially capitalism--could be justified this way.

Thirdly, an age like our own, which constantly has to deal with crisis, probably will produce a lot of spiritual heroism and some great new developments. But are they due to a revolutionary event in the past or to the natural tendency of crisis to mobilize the good allotted to us anyway? The influences of a Last Judgment are probably going to be more subtle and highly general.

Finally, we may lack objectivity. Can we make the right comparisons? Without knowing what it was really like to live in the 18th century, we may not know how it *felt* to confront the problems of spiritual living just before the Last Judgement. Immersed in a post-Judgment period, we don't have the "before" condition as a reference point. That tends to keep us from telling whether the spiritual atmosphere in which we live is really better or worse than it was then. And the constant presence of deep issues and anxieties may obscure our sense of the nearness of heaven, almost as if nothing so significant had happened at all.

All I can do with these questions now is go out on my own limb. So here is a guess that may only be as good as any other: What emerges from these observations is the suggestion to go to unprecedented spiritual heights in any important activity. The vision of great good up ahead is essentially the modern view of heaven. In a pre-Judgment period, the issues are restricted. One sees little possibility that one can do much for good or evil; one's spiritual consciousness is clouded over and dimmed, and one faces life much more passively. If one has any religious awareness, there may be a horrible sense that one has been forgotten by God.

This state of suppressed consciousness still characterizes many people. We do not necessarily experience the clarifying effects of the New Age automatically. What marks the New Age experience is its readiness to open-up long-range and creative perspectives to those who look for them. The pre-Judgment state remains in many places, but it is no longer without alternatives.

Steve Koke
Grass Valley, CA





Church Records

BAPTISMS

Runka--Justin Paul Glenn Runka was baptized into the Christian faith on Nov. 18, 1984, in the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, the Rev. John Bennett officiating.

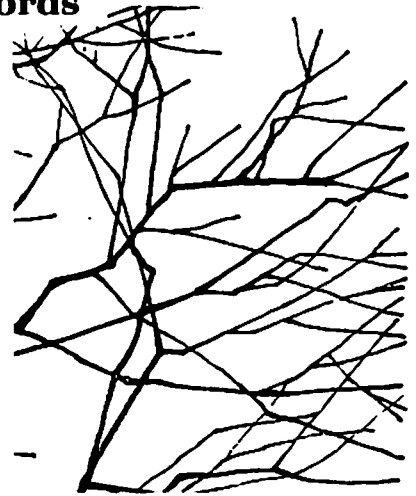
Korsten, O'Connor and O'Connor--Lynda Korsten, Francis O'Connor and Katherine O'Connor were baptized into the Christian faith on April 22, 1984, in the Church of the Holy City, in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, the Revs. Henry Korsten and John Bennett officiating.

Winthrop--Joshua Paul Winthrop, son of Steven and Nancy Winthrop, was baptized into the Christian faith on June 17, 1984, in the Church of the New Jerusalem, Philadelphia, the Rev. Jaikoo Lee officiating.

CONFIRMATION

Korsten, O'Connor and Sawchuk--Lynda Korsten, Katherine O'Connor and Audrey Sawchuk were confirmed into the life of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches on April 22, 1984, in the Church of the Holy City, in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, the Revs. Henry Korsten and John Bennett officiating.

Rahn, Edwards, Reick, Lederman, and Schmidt--Art and Joan Rahn, Lori Edwards, Tammy Reick, Babara Lederman, David Lederman, and Kathy Schmidt were confirmed into life of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches, on Dec. 9, 1984, at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, the Revs. Eric Allison and Paul Zacharias officiating.



DEATHS

Gilchrist--Doug Gilchrist, longtime member of the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, passed into the spiritual world on Nov. 26, 1984. Memorial services were held in the Church of the Holy City on Nov. 29, 1984, the Revs. Henry Korsten and John Bennett officiating.

Lishman--Ross Lishman, 62, of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, passed into spiritual life on Dec. 3, 1984. Resurrection services were held on Dec. 6, 1984, the Rev. Paul Zacharias officiating.

Quaiser--Marie Quaiser, 85, for many years custodian of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, passed into the spiritual life on Dec. 16, 1984. Resurrection services were held on Dec. 9, 1984, the Rev. Paul Zacharias officiating.

Ward--Gertrude Ward, longtime member of the Swedenborgian Church, passed into the spiritual world on Nov. 8, 1984, in Knox, Indiana. Memorial services will be sometime in the spring.

On Being "Religious"

By Margaret Schwarm

Are you religious?

Haven't you ever had someone ask you that question and be at a loss how to answer it? I know I have—many times—when I talk about my work and activities in the church. I don't know how to answer that question because I really don't know exactly what is meant by "religious."

Does it mean that I go to church every Sunday?

Or does it mean that I hold an office in the church hierarchy?

Or that I am "God-loving" or "God-fearing" (whatever interpretation you want to put on that!!)?

Or perhaps I am considered ethical—or moral? (By whose standards?)

What are the determining factors or the rules by which I can judge myself as being "religious"?

As usual, the first place I go to is the dictionary: Random House: "*Religious* has many meanings and is a general word applying to whatever pertains to faith or worship." (That is so general that it doesn't help me a bit!)

Webster: "Imbued with religion, pious, devout, godly, scrupulously faithful, conscientious, member of religious order, congregation." (So what does "devout" mean? Or "pious"?)

Webster again: "Pious—constant attention and extreme conformity, with outward observances to suggest sham, hypocrisy." (Spare me from this!)

"Devout—fervent spirit." (Well, I think I have a fervent, whatever that means, spirit.)

Godly? I try to be.

Scrupulously faithful? Well . . . I do slip-up occasionally.
(So who's perfect?)

Conscientious? I have been told I am.

Member of religious order? Yes.

Congregation? Yes.

So, I have responded to these words, but does that tell me whether I am religious or not? Not at all.

The Latin root of the word "religion" is "re-ligo," meaning to tie back. E.M. Lawrence Gould in his book, "The Business of Living," states that the word implies restrictions and rules. Through the ages, religion has set up restrictions upon human thinking and conduct, but all too often they are the wrong ones in the spirit. He talks about the Game of

Life in which we are required to set up new rules and restrictions. The first aim of real religion is to discover and make known the rules of this Game of Life.

And how do we find the rules for this game? Again I am quoting Gould: "The more we learn about the world we live in, the more we find that it is controlled in every part by rules or laws. From the paths of the solar systems to the movements of the tiniest of atoms, everything takes place according to law." A scientist would agree wholeheartedly with that. When we abuse our physical bodies and go against the laws of healthful living, we see and feel the suffering and degeneration that is the result. When we break the spiritual laws, we pay for it with inner suffering and pain.

Gould puts it into these words: "Real religion is the *study* of the rules of the Game of Life and the *search* for the strength and skill to play it well." He also says that "the second aim of religion, if it be the real thing, is to bring us in touch with the Author of the Game Himself. By doing this we gain the power to go beyond mere knowledge into knowing and understanding."

Using his analysis of what it means to be "religious," the picture becomes clearer. Yes, I have studied the rules of life and the lessons experiences have taught me; and yes, I am searching for the "right rules" (meaning truth). I have found that the only real happiness that is mine is the happiness I find in following God's rules, the Author of my Game of Life. Since I will be playing this game until I enter the other side of life (and most likely will continue there, also), then being religious is voluntarily participating in an orderly process that brings me ever closer to the angels. That's worth striving for.

Margaret Schwarm is a writer and counselor who works for a book publishing firm and is a member of the New Church (Swedenborgian) in Manhattan.



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