

January 1985

# THE MESSENGER

*Official Publication of Swedenborgian Churches*



Feminine Images of God

## FROM THE EDITOR

THE MESSENGER begins the new year with a bang, as you have already noticed by now. Every so often it is refreshing to change one's appearance, to adapt a new style. The new MESSENGER, with its larger format, offers a more diverse menu for layout designs, giving our denominational publication more flexibility in the manner in which we choose to express ourselves.

The Central Office in Newton, Massachusetts, headed-up by that intrepid Ethelwyn Worden, oversees the middle part of the production process, from typesetting through final paste-ups. The St. Louis-Boston tandem has been a relatively quiet and faithful machine. Each month the whirring of its many moving parts noiselessly churns out the work. We hope you enjoy the finished product.

There are a couple of ways you, as reader, can help in this part of the publishing ministry of the Swedenborgian Church. I am forever on the lookout for fresh material, whether it be original poetry, "idea" pieces, or write-ups of what's happening in the various locales. Will you consider contributing something to your church magazine? Writing may seem to present a near-impossible task, but usually once the writing begins, it so often has a way of just flowing out. That's because you really do have something to say!

I also need illustrations, both from photography and from the visual fine arts. If you have clear pictures of church events, preferably in black and white, with the subjects in the pictures dominantly in the foreground, do consider sending a copy along to me. We need these to share the goings-on in your church society.

The second way you can help with this work is through a financial contribution. Most of you, as church members, receive THE MESSENGER free. This is a service the church is happy to perform. But times being what they are, the cost of producing and distributing MESSENGERS has risen steadily to where, nowadays, it costs approximately twenty dollars, all told, to deliver a MESSENGER to your door eleven times a year. As I said before, the church is happy to provide this service, but we also encourage outside support for this work of the church.

I love hearing from you, no matter what the purpose of the communication. Together, we make communications within the Swedenborgian Church work effectively for us.

The theme of this first issue of the "new" MESSENGER explores the nature of the feminine aspects of the Divine. During the mid-seventies, the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches took the bold step of affirming the suitability of women for the ordained ministry. As Christianity has been part of the patriarchal religious heritage in our world, the role of women has often been held in doubt, and even, at times, in scorn.

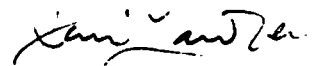
Swedenborg, however, provides as firm a pure philosophical foundation for the suitability of women for ordained ministry as any Christian heritage of which I am presently aware. While not necessarily suggesting that men and women are natural equals at all tasks, Swedenborg implicitly teaches that "feminine" elements

and "masculine" elements are equally necessary and good. When applied to ministerial tasks, these two basic elements are called for in differing degrees for different tasks.

As one who believes philosophical theory must be tested in the fire of application, I am comfortable to rest my case for the ordination of women on our church's experience with the female clergy. I am seeing a wonderfully wholistic dimension existing in our Council of Ministers, a much more diverse (and strong) aggregate viewpoint among our professionals, a superior overall quality in our ministry. My reasons for saying this are personal and, ultimately, biased; each will have her or his own criteria for evaluating the efficacy of our decision to include women among our ordained ministers. As time passes, I suspect that more and more churches will discover that history demands a re-interpretation of the masculine domination in theological perspectives. Such interpretive work is, in fact, the sacred duty of each generation. I feel much joy in my vision of the future, which tells me that women will continue to make important strides in re-defining and upgrading their position in the steering of goodship Humanity.

The three writers for this symposium, Drs. Dorothea Harvey, Mary Kay Klein and John Swanton, are all qualified to comment upon the feminine aspects of the Divine. Drs. Harvey and Klein both lend a personal grounding to their perspectives, which makes their testimony, as it were, all the more powerful. I thank them for their willingness to share this with us. Dr. Swanton passed on years ago, but his lucid and playful mind is still so current that I decided to edit and excerpt from his thinking of a quarter-century ago to bring his philosophic understanding of the Divine into our discussion.

Again, I would like to thank Val Brugler for the design and layout of the December and January cover artwork.



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# Feminine Images: Personal and Divine

By Mary Kay Klein

Like many other women, I have discovered that to begin to understand my relationship with the Divine, I must first understand my own story and the issues it raises for me. Only then can I conceptualize the Divine in a way that is meaningful for me as a woman. It is the analysis of my own story that I wish to share with you in this article.

For the first twenty-one years of my life, my awareness of being treated differently from men, and of any discrimination at all, was almost non-existent. Like most women from my background, I had attended a women's high school and a women's college. Women were the teachers and administrators; as students we were not afraid to be intellectuals or to take leadership positions, and at the same time to plan on being wives and mothers. We did not believe we lived in an environment where doors were closed to us. The shock of my first year of graduate school, where, for example, the instructor made fun of me because I was the only woman taking a philosophy of science seminar, was unbelievable. Experiences of negation and discrimination were common in my career after that: as a married woman, I wasn't serious about my career, was I? As a woman, I didn't have anything to say as a philosopher, did I, because, after all, men are rational and women are emotional? I began to question a culture that encouraged women to believe that they were not normal if they had the same career expectations as men, and were not "adults" if they behaved like "real" women.

*Historically, women have been connected with the "opposites," the "down side" of many major trends in Western thought. If man is rational, woman is emotional. If man is associated with the mind, woman is associated with the body. If man is associated with spirit woman is associated with nature, which is inherently unfree.*

As the years went on, many of the crucial experiences of my life were centered on my womanhood. As I loved my husband, as three children grew within me, as I gave birth to these children and nursed them and watched them grow, I came to understand love, bonding, creativity, bringing forth something new into the world. Yet I was still troubled by living in a culture and a religious universe which seemed to say that being a woman was important and yet somehow second rate. I realized that beyond the expectation of me as wife, mother, and career woman, there was a self which had no ultimate spiritual grounding. In a spiritual universe where God is seen as Father ("Our Father, Who art in heaven"), Jesus Christ as Son, and masculine language abounds ("God of Our Fathers"), all supported by a patriarchal culture, where is woman? If woman is

created in the image and likeness of God Who is male, what does this mean for a woman?

Historically, women have been connected with the "opposites," the "down side" of many major trends in Western thought. If man is rational, woman is emotional. If man is associated with the mind, woman is associated with the body. If man is associated with spirit, woman is associated with nature, which is inherently unfree. I noticed the same pattern of thought in dealing with students in my classes. When I asked what the difference was between male and female, I almost always got the male characteristics listed first, with the female as the alternative: active/passive, strong/weak, independent/dependent. Students rarely offered positive female characteristics--loving, nurturing, compassionate--without some prodding from me.

The major breakthrough in my understanding of a way to deal with the fundamental questions of the ground of my being came in several stages. First was the awareness, which came through a prayer experience, that God can be known, reached, touched, as a loving Mother as well as a loving Father. The positive strength of this experience, the knowledge of the unconditional mother-love, gave me a sense of grounding and finally gave me the space in which to feel truly alive. Second, I began reading scholars who have shown that there are female images of God throughout the Bible, which typically have been overlooked in our patriarchal

culture. Also, I found in Swedenborg the basic idea that both love and wisdom are essential to the nature of the Divine. This contrasted with typical Western philosophical concepts of God which emphasized power, wisdom, and strength, but did not emphasize love. Third came the issue of how to relate this to my life and thinking. I could no longer think of myself as second rate, inferior, not so valuable as a male. I had to realize that my life form, through which the energy flows, is as strong and good as the masculine life form. I also realized that I have, as a woman and as an individual, all the potentialities and characteristics of both the traditional male and female qualities. I could be loving and at the same time rational; so could any man.

I also had to confront the question of what this meant. As a parent, teacher, philosopher, ad-

ministrator, lover, do I function in the same way as a man? No--and there is the kernel of a very important answer. My differences from men, whether they be the result of nature or of nurture, are a joy when seen in the most positive way. The ability to nurture, for example, grounded both in biology and in spirit, is not inferior at all. In the words of Rosemary Reuther, "The significance of our movement will be lost if we merely seek valued masculine traits at the expense of devalued feminine ones. So for me, equality cannot mean sameness, but differences do not denote superiority/inferiority, nor do they justify discrimination."

In terms of images with which to work, Swedenborg's image of God as Divine Love and Wisdom is a very positive one. There is a balance between two elements. Out of their creative coming together, the world exists.

Another suggestive idea, advanced by Mary Daly, is that it is not necessarily sensible to place God in categories described by nouns. This objectifies God, and tends to reify the ineffable. Perhaps the best way to see God is as a Verb, the most active and dynamic Verb of all.

This very brief sketch leaves many questions to be explored. How much of what we believe about male and female is the result of intrinsic differences placed in us by our Creator, and how much is cultural? How do we realize more fully the positive implications of love and nurturing in our public as well as our private lives? Do we need to move beyond the whole concept of feminine and masculine characteristics, and think in terms of a whole different model?

These reflections on the feminine side of the Divine, which started with the analysis of my own experience, are clearly unfinished and always will be in process. As I continue to struggle with some of the questions raised above, I am recreating my life and hopefully coming to a fuller understanding of the nature of the Divine and of myself.

*Mary Kay Klein, Ph.D., teaches philosophy at Urbana University, Urbana, Ohio.*

## Board of Missions Report

*By Eric Zacharias*

The members of the Board of Missions--Rev. William Woofenden, Lisa Reddekopp, Adrienne Frank, Doris Tafel, Rev. Steve Ellis, Gus Ebel and Rev. Eric Zacharias assembled in the office of the President of Convention in Newton on the 4th of October for the annual fall meeting. Two members of the Board, Rev. Galen Unruh and Rev. Randall Laakko, were unable to be with us.

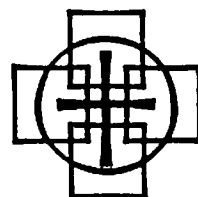
The Board of Missions is currently assisting a number of developing ministries. The Rev. Robert McCluskey is continuing the work initiated by the Rev. Susan Turley-Moore in Portland, Maine. In the Northwest, the Rev. Paul Martin Grumman is serving our people in the Bellevue, Washington area, and he is progressing with his plans for a Spiritual Growth Center on the site of his residence at Duvall. This will provide a meeting place for people throughout this large area.

Mrs. Adrienne Frank spent part of this past summer in Europe and, while there, had the opportunity to visit the Rev. and Mrs. Friedemann Horn in Zurich and the Rev. and Mrs. Christian Mania in Singen, West Germany. These personal contacts between the Board and the Church in distant places are useful and do much to strengthen the ties between us.

The Board of Missions stands ready to respond to new proposals of ministry, to initiate new programs. We have committed ourselves to providing assistance for the expanding programs at the Almont Assembly in Michigan. The residence for the Rev. Ron Brugler and his family has been prepared for occupancy. We wish the best of success for him and those who are working with him in this effort to expand the uses of this fine facility.

We have Convention membership scattered across the wide expanse of this country and Canada. Some of these folks maintain their contacts with the Church through the pages of THE MESSENGER, through participation in periodic Association activities and attendance at our annual conventions. In an effort to better understand the needs of those who are living in somewhat isolated circumstances, the Board of Missions has responded favorably to a proposal from the Rev. Ernest Martin of Wilmington, Del. that he undertake a study of this area of interest and concern. It is anticipated that he will make a report to the Board in the fall of 1985.

The Board of Missions is dedicated to serving the Church in every way possible within the limits of its people and material resources. A few days ago, the local Methodist minister and this writer were discussing the Swedenborgian Church in the Cafe. He remarked, "You people are not making enough of your Johnny Appleseed connections. You're missing the boat!" It's something to think about. The responsibility for serving the Lord falls upon all of us. It's something to think about.



# A WOMAN MINISTER

By Dorothea Harvey

*I was praying with a woman, concerned with woman issues, and as my words came to speak the prayer for these two of us, the only way I could speak of the Presence of God with us, was by saying "she." It was not my choice. The word simply came.*

When I met with the faculty of the Swedenborg School of Religion before my ordination, Dr. George Dole made a request: to put into words the experience of what it means to be a Swedenborgian woman minister. I will now try to respond to that request.

Having graduated from college (and having completed my World War II service in the Navy), I went on to theological school. I knew I had a calling to study of the Bible and to engagement with my religious faith, but I was not sure if the calling would mean a parish or a teaching ministry. What came was teaching religion and the Bible for some twenty-five years, until in 1973 Convention voted to permit the ordination of women. I then faced a new decision, of whether to apply for ordination in my own church.

In 1943 I had chosen a career and service in the Navy, over marriage. By 1973 I had realized more of my emotional needs for closeness and relationship with people. I was finding a growing openness to persons in my teaching and in my church. Would making another choice for career, this time in the ordained ministry, interfere with my new-felt need to be a woman? In my prayer life, as I struggle with issues of ordination, I found instead a greater opening to relationship with my Lord and with other people. I had read of love affairs with God, but as a non-Catholic, I suspected the nuns of sentimental sublimation. Now I knew the woman's acceptance of the love and power of God into her is very real, and different from the man's.

This I had suspected. But then, after ordination, I had an experience which caused a more profound change. I was praying with a woman, concerned with woman issues, and as my words came to speak the prayer for the two of us, the only way I could speak of the Presence of God with us, was by saying "she." It was not my choice. The word simply came. And since then my world has been different. I realized that though I knew intellectually the image of God as our Father, "he," was only a partial truth, a symbol of the Infinite that human beings can grasp; I had internalized the "he" emotionally. My woman side had had no grounding in my sense of "the image and likeness" of God my Creator. I had seen my strength in thinking, in being self-sufficient, not in my feeling or in my need

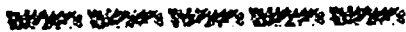
for others. But now I knew the strength of being woman, for all the caring, the openness to be loved, to need love in return, was also grounded in the nature of God.

When I turned to my Bible I found, of course, that all this was there, waiting for me to notice it. The descriptions of God in the poetry of Isaiah 40 to 66 include the shepherd who "will gather the lambs in his arms," "the One who cares enough to finally "cry out like a woman in travail," the potter molding clay, the mother who cannot "forget her sucking child," the husband who has put away his wife, the hero who cut the chaos dragon in pieces and created cosmos, the bridegroom who "rejoices over the bride," and the mother who comforts her child and "dandles" it in her lap. The major Hebrew term for God's mercy in the Bible comes from the root meaning "womb." When Psalm 103 speaks of God as "merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love," the root image of the "merciful" is of God's womb-love which cannot forget its child. All of these are powerful images, symbols of God's love and might and wisdom, powerful partly because they are not intended literally to limit God to our concept of potter or shepherd or mother or husband. The poetry in the images frees our minds to move beyond themselves to an awareness of the Infinite.

When I turned to the teaching of my church, I found again that this was there. What I have just said about the power of Biblical symbols, we know as the power of correspondences. Our doctrine of creation sees God creating not out of nothing, but out of God's own love. The model is not the architect who invents a creature to meet some concept in his or her head and scraps the ones who don't meet specifications, but the mother who contributes of her self, and then releases the child of her body to become his or her own person. For us, the ultimate realities, God's love and wisdom are both essential to the existence of any particular thing or any living creature. Both men and women with all their unique strengths and potentials are needed to symbolize for us the love of God. My woman nature is rooted and grounded in the creative love of God, just as the man's nature is. I believe our New Church ministry needs both men and women to represent the love of God. I have

known for a long time about the strength of man. Now I know the strength of being woman. I belong. And this feels good.

*Dorothea Harvey, Ph.D., teaches Religion at Urbana University, Urbana, Ohio, and she also co-pastors the Urbana Society.*



## Swedenborgian Wellness

*by Dorothy Travers-Davies*

With interest I read the edition on 'Aging' that was in my mail when I came home from a honeymoon in Peru last month. During the month I had not only climbed mountains and visited archaeological sites in the Andes, I had celebrated my 61st birthday.

Also in my mail was a copy of *Psychology Today* which had an article on the brain and how the brain is capable, throughout life, of a thickening of the cortex through activity. It has been thought in the past brain cells do not regenerate, but the research community is rethinking this idea as well as the old notion, belief, myth or legend that intelligence is static until age causes deterioration .

A Ph.D. at U. of Cal., Berkeley, Marian Diamond and her colleagues, have uncovered evidence that the mammalian cortex has a "plasticity" or ability to develop cellularly and change the cortical depth. The neurons increase, the glial cells divide, the dendrites grow and there is an accompanying increase in the support cells.

Intelligence is enhanced. But the premise behind these experiments is that if one could change brain chemistry, one could bring about brain changes. The brain is not stable. "Use it or lose it," is Dr. Diamond's axiom. Isn't this a marvelous challenge to us as we all advance in years? And doesn't this fit in with our Swedenborgian concept of 'usage?' Wilson Van Dusen, in 'Uses, A Way of Personal and Spiritual Growth,' concludes that the love of the life is the most inmost tendency of the individual. It is when the deepest tendency and love is expressed in act that the we come into our highest use.

And geriatricians (doctors who specialize in diseases of the elderly) are now saying, "We find people with a purpose and goal and an organized daily life live longer, are healthier and happier than those who wander aimlessly through their old age."

Holistically, we look at our four bases of preventive activities and ask how these daily selections can aid our ongoingness until it is time to set aside the physical body.

First - nutrition. Certainly this is one area that obviously affects brain chemistry. So many people get depressed when they eat certain foods, while others get hyperactive. The rules of good nutrition that we all must try for ourselves are published everywhere these days. Less fat, more roughage, fruit, vegetables and grains with very moderate amounts of meats and dairy products, if eaten at all.

Second - caring for the body. Exercise, recent studies have shown, can prevent minimal loss even in groups of 80-year-old women in nursing homes, who only move their arms and legs when seated. Meditation, while relaxing every muscle in the body, can increase circulation down to the capillary level. Hand warming through body relaxing is one of the first biofeedback techniques taught to those who react to stress. So surely the tissues of the brain must also react to stimulation and relaxation.

Third - balancing the psyche. Psychological equilibrium is gained through mind exploration. Explore how marvelously free from fear your life can be when you look at the holographic psychological model currently being taught by Dr. George Dole. Swedenborg wrote early on about how the tissues of the body (and the brain is part of that physical structure) respond to the level of the activity of the mind. Body chemistry is changed by feelings.

Fourth - the living philosophy. This is the spiritual dimension within each one of us. With the doctrines of influx and usage, how can we as Swedenborgians not live joyously until that moment of passing over to another dimension? How can we not have impact on those with whom we come into contact, when we can sing out in our churches and dance at conventions?

The joy of living within this belief system as taught by Swedenborg gives us wisdom and energy that we can share with the world.



## UPCOMING MEETINGS

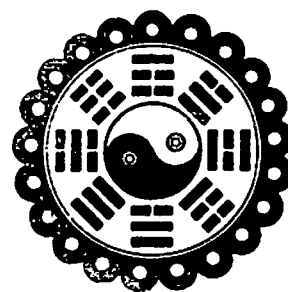
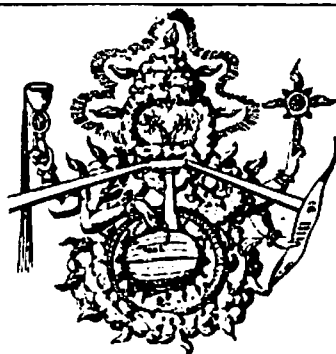
Jan. 7-8: Peer Supervision Coordinators at the Swedenborg School of Religion, Newton, Mass.

Jan. 20-21: Swedenborg School of Religion Presidential Search Committee, at the Swedenborg School of Religion.

Jan. 23-24: Convention National Program Committee, at Almont New Church Assembly, Michigan.

Jan. 24-27: General Council, at Almont.

Jan. 27-30: Ministers' Study Group, at Almont.



## The Masculine and the Feminine Elements in God

By John R. Swanton

Every now and then it is said that a woman cannot do this or that, and presently she does it, and the same is sometimes said of a man, and yet there is general agreement that there is an element that is peculiarly masculine and an element that is peculiarly feminine. I am willing to leave it at that.

The demand for a feminine element in God is widespread and of ancient origin, arising from a true instinct. It is reflected in those nature religions which attribute creation to the union of a heaven god with an earth goddess; Uranus and Gea, Zeus and Demeter, the name Demeter meaning "Earth-mother," and the cult of this Earth-mother was widely spread but unfortunately degenerated into the depraved conceptions later connected with Aphrodite and Astarte. Substitution of the cult of the Virgin Mary in early Christianity was a distinct moral gain, but it had its defects and its limitations. Swedenborg perceived, however, that it was connected with the thought of the Church as mother for he states in the little work, *Canons of the New Church* (No. 8): "Mary His mother afterwards represented the Church." In Christian circles the Church is constantly called our spiritual mother and this usage goes back of Christianity, for in the Old Testament the Israelitish nation is constantly represented as Jehovah's wife. Here it usually appears as a being apart from God, sometimes faithful to Him, sometimes unfaithful, and we ordinarily think of the Church as a finite body of Christians, larger or smaller, sometimes indeed as a mere building; and God's relation to any such body would be on unequal terms, between the infinite and the finite. A true marriage

can exist only between equals. But besides different external applications of the word Church, there is something more interior. We read:

The Church is not the Church from what is proper to humanity, but from what is Divine of the Lord. *Apocalypse Explained*, 20.

What makes Heaven with people also makes the Church, for the Church is the Lord's heaven on earth. *Heavenly Secrets*, 10761.

Heaven is the Lord. There are indeed angels, from whom is heaven; but still the angels are not heaven, but the Lord is. *Apocalypse Explained*, 1042(3).

The Lord is the only Person, and is the whole of His Kingdom, and as the Church is the Lord's Kingdom on earth, the Lord alone is the whole of the Church. *Heavenly Secrets*, 769(3).

But we have to remember that the Latin *Homo* applies to human beings of both sexes. Within this use of the term "Lord" there is a union of two elements bearing a marriage relation to each other and in which the word "Lord" is used in a more restricted sense. Thus in his work on *Marriage Love* Swedenborg says:

There are two things which make the marriage of the Lord and the Church: love and wisdom; and the Lord is love and the Church is wisdom.

Inmosty, then, the Church on earth and in heaven has, and we may say is, the Divine Being in one of the aspects which all mankind perceives and has perceived from earliest times to be feminine. And so we have the Earth-mother of paganism, and "Mother Nature," a term often used by the most skeptical scientists. That this is the feminine side of God Swedenborg in-

dicates repeatedly. This sentiment is based, however, mainly on woman's function as supplying the material embodiment of the child. It was natural and true so far as it went, but incomplete. In the Apocalypse something more is sensed in the vision of "the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God," which is revealed as "the bride, the Lamb's wife." As we have seen, there is something more to the feminine aspect of God and this is well known on the celestial plane of existence.

In the commandment "Honor thy father and thy mother," a man by "father and mother" understands his father and mother on earth, and all who are in the place of father and mother. But a spiritual angel by "father" understands the Lord, and by "mother" the Church. And a celestial angel by "father" understands the Lord's Divine Love, and by "mother" His Divine Wisdom.

Consequently, in being the Ultimate Human God is a *Homo*, comprised of both genders. This ultimate fact is philosophically evident and doubtless is more clearly apparent to celestial angels, which few of us can claim to be; but when Theodore Parker and some later sectarians attempt to bring this down to the plane of our direct consciousness by speaking of a "Father and Mother God" they immediately run into difficulties. It is true that each of us has something of the opposite sex incorporated into him or her, sexuality not becoming definitely determined until the third or fourth embryonic month, but completely bi-sexual individuals are abnormal and not ideal beings. The result is that an attempt to fit our idea of God into that formula has

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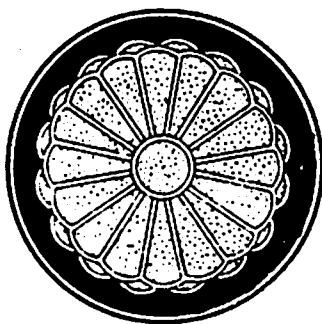
the same defects as an attempt to believe in an impersonal God and places the whole idea above our comprehension. It is not surprising that it should make its appearance in Unitarian and related circles, nor that it should also tend to be accompanied with the denial of Christ's Deity since He was certainly not bisexual.

To whatever extent the two sexes are combined in God in His infinity, when the God idea reaches our consciousness it assumes the sex pattern. We know what a Father is and what a Mother is but not what a Father-Mother could be. Creation itself presents a kind of analogy when we read that, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

And I think there is something more than analogy here, for I believe that the intuitions of people have been true in associating the sky-world with the male and the earth-world with the female, only we have made the mistake of degrading our conceptions of the lower sphere or earth. Is this perhaps another example of male arrogance? Sunshine indeed acts upon the earth but can be effective only because the earth reacts. Both really contain creative forces just as do both parents of a human being. God is operating in both but the one sphere happens to be associated by its functions and in the instinctive recognition of all humanity with the male and the other with the female. As the writer of the

Apocalypse has told us, the one equally with the other comes from that more interior heaven from which all creation springs. And so when we pray, it is to "Our Father who art in heaven," but the responding life which seeks union with the Father within each of us, the Church in us, is inmost the Mother nature of the same God. In so far as the two are united, or married, in us we become God's children.

*This piece has been edited and excerpted from a longer article published in the "New Christianity," Spring 1951. Dr. John Swanton was a distinguished ethnologist and a curator at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C.*



## Upcoming Religious Programming

January 20 or 27, **HARD CHOICES**  
(working title)

Biomedical ethics is the topic of the first 1985 "DIRECTIONS" Special, a subject that is increasingly in the news and one that touches an ever greater number of people today. George Will moderates the program with a panel of three nationally known experts and a selected audience of six to eight people, noted for their involvement in this issue.

The three panelists are:

—Prof. Alex Capron (Protestant)—Professor of Law at Georgetown University Law Center. Prof. Capron was the Executive Director of the President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Pro-

blems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioral Research.

—Dr. Leon Kass (Jewish)—Professor of the Liberal Arts of Human Biology at the University of Georgetown and has a background as a physician and biologist.

—Prof. William F. May (Roman Catholic)—Professor of Christian Ethics at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown University, his field is religion, politics and biomedical ethics. Prof. May is a former president of the American Academy of Religion.

**"THE NEHEMIAH PROJECT"**  
January 20

In the burned-out area of East Brooklyn,

42 local church congregations have undertaken the building of 5,000 single family row houses that enable residents of the area to remain in their neighborhood and offer them the dignity of adequate living conditions. Featured are conversations with new residents of the approximately 1,000 finished houses in this interfaith project and excerpts from its dedication.

January 27, **"THE THIRD AGE"**

This program explores new and creative ways in which church groups are relating to older persons. Special focus on Foxwood Springs, a residential center near Kansas City, operated by the Disciples of Christ.



*The Rev. Richard, Sr. and Mrs. Corinne Tafel, flanked by sons Rev. Richard Tafel, Jr. (right) and Rev. Harvey Tafel, and by nephew Rev. F. Robert Tafel (far left)*

## A TIME OF CELEBRATION

There are "rites of passage" along life's path that are so full of meaning that they must be lifted up and celebrated. On October 28 family and friends from across the country gathered to mark two special occasions in the lives of Richard and Corinne Tafel: their 50th wedding anniversary and Dick's 50th ordination anniversary.

The celebration began with a special worship service in the Philadelphia Church of the New Jerusalem. Here fifty years ago in its chancel Richard was ordained, and a few days later his marriage to Corinne Brenneman by the Rev. Charles W. Harvey took place. Dick served the Philadelphia Church for forty-seven years and is now its Pastor Emeritus.

In this, their beloved church, Richard and Corinne were honored with an eloquent service conducted by the Reverends F. Robert Tafel, nephew, and sons Richard H. Tafel, Jr. and Harvey A. Tafel.

F. Robert Tafel's pastoral prayer was descriptive of their loving service that touched and reached so many. Harvey Tafel's sermon spoke of his father's devotion to his church and to the larger church, having served on every committee in Convention, and as its President for six years. He described him as a "sower" par excellence. Richard was then ushered to the chancel and a presentation of a Bible stated: "On October 21, 1934 you were ordained here in this chancel. In that sacred hour a Bible was placed in your hands with the exhortation to go forth and preach the Word. In grateful appreciation is

now placed in your hands another copy of the Holy Word, knowing you will continue to be a sower." The Bible was inscribed as follows with the names of the eleven Tafel ministers covering four generations.

Presented to  
Richard Hugo Tafel  
at the 50th anniversary of his ordination in the  
ministry of  
*his brothers*  
Leonard Immanuel Tafel  
Immanuel Tafel  
Walter Winifred Tafel  
*his father*  
Louis Herman Tafel  
*his uncle*  
Rudolph Leonard Tafel  
*his grandfather*  
Johann Frederick Leonard Tafel  
*his nephew*  
Frederick Robert Tafel  
*his sons*  
Richard Hugo Tafel, Jr.  
Harvey Alan Tafel  
Sunday, October 28, 1984  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Richard, Jr.'s sermon was dedicated to their fifty years of marriage. He spoke of what constitutes a loving, understanding and devoted relationship and its spiritual principles. *cont'd on page 12*

# WOMEN COMMUNICATING

Annella Smith, Editor

Bertha Berran, Co-Editor



## IN COMMEMORATION OF SWEDENBORG'S 297th BIRTHDAY

### Swedenborg on Worship

True worship consists in the performance of uses, and from this exercises of charity. The one who believes that serving the Lord consists solely in frequenting a place of worship, in hearing preaching there, and in praying, and that this is sufficient, is much mistaken. The very worship of the Lord consists in performing uses; and during a person's life in the world, uses consist in everyone's discharging aright their duty in their station, thus from the heart being of service to their country, to societies, and to the neighbor, in dealing sincerely with others, and in performing kind offices with prudence in accordance with each

person's character. These uses are chiefly the works of charity, and are those whereby the Lord is chiefly worshiped.

Frequenting a place of worship, hearing sermons, and saying prayers are also necessary; but without the above uses they avail nothing, because they are not of the life, but teach what the life must be.

Heavenly Secrets. 7038

Since Rev. Susan Turley-Moore is a member of the newly organized Southern California Cluster Ministry and also the first woman minister to serve at the Wayfarers Chapel-January-the beginning of a new year seemed like an appropriate time to have her share some thoughts with us.

# MINISTRY AT THE WAYFARERS CHAPEL

*by Rev. Susan Turley-Moore*

One of the most challenging aspects of my ministry at the Wayfarers Chapel is reactions from couples and their families upon discovering that the minister who is to conduct their wedding ceremony is female. It is understandable that the receiver of all these reactions wishes, at times, that her gender would become a non-issue. However, since that is unlikely to happen one must develop a positive attitude toward human reactions. There are many advantages to being a clergywoman. One obvious one is that the couple's responses open the door to theological and psychological discussions otherwise easily overlooked. The ordination of women confronts professional stereotypes and cultural assumptions about the nature of marital relationships. As all other ministers, I have the responsibility of choice to perform the wedding service. This position of authority for clergywomen in and of itself does topsy-turvy to Old Testament structure of gender status. It not only presents women as powerful, but gives them an avenue to set standards of morality. The definitions of roles for adults in a family system are perhaps one of the most fundamentally controversial elements of our society. Thus, having a young female minister asking intimate questions of strangers about their marriage relationship is one of the most poignant examples of cultural change today. I am challenged with this opportunity and all of its ramifications many times over at the Wayfarers Chapel.

The bride and groom's reactions to being married by a clergywoman reveal many implications about the expectations of their marriage relationship. Most couples are thrilled with the option of having a woman marry them for, by and large, couples today are not interested in a hierarchy in their relationship. Rather, they are relating in a spirit of cooperative teamwork from a perspective of equal worth. Usually, each individual has his/her own career and both are supportive of the other's goals and aspirations. They see each other as two interdependent adults facing the world together and with a sense of mutual respect will build their home in partnership.

Each needs the other to be fully adult. In fact, very few men or women choose to marry someone who needs to stay dependent or childish. Our marriage service, based on Swedenborg's concepts of marital love, reflects this adult-to-adult relationship of mutual respect and caring. It is why our couples are very pleased with the wording of the marriage ceremony.

Usually, those who are initially concerned about a woman marrying them have been raised with a certain image of their ceremony which is set in a Catholic church, conducted by a Priest and it includes Mass. More often than not it is the couple's parents who react the strongest to the shattering of their dreams for their children and understandably so. This becomes an opportunity to offer my skills as a family therapist.

It is a pleasure to work with people of color for they know the trials and tribulations of being a minority; thus, we have a common ground of experience to share. I also appreciate marrying the couple where the groom supports woman's equality not only for the sake of women, but because he knows this means equality for all people. Then I can truly rejoice in the potential for this couple's life together.

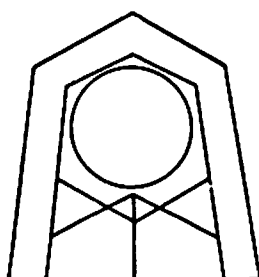
Perhaps the most difficult situation has been when the groom is older than I and threatened by women in positions of power. In this situation it becomes a challenge to maintain my integrity as a minister of the Swedenborgian Church, while building trust with the couple. This situation also puts the bride in an awkward position, and it is interesting to see how she often tries to build bridges between two worlds, something that women are very skilled at doing. All of these confrontations have forced me to define my religious values and my identity as a minister in a much more acute way. And this is good.



## LOVE ALWAYS

Love when days are glad and golden  
Love when sorrows make them grey,  
Love when health is ever splendid  
Love if it should slip away.  
Love when friends are fine and loyal,  
Love if any prove untrue;  
Whatsoever life may bring you,  
May the Lord give love to you.

Loreta Inman



**Tafel Celebration**  
*continued*

The music throughout was uplifting and consisted of anthems and hymns that were favorites of Dick and Corinne.

Following the service everyone gathered in the parish house. A toast was given by Robert W. Tafel, words of appreciation were delivered by the President of the Philadelphia Church, Frederick Heldring, and a remembrance book from the Ladies Aid was presented to Dick and Corinne. The "newlyweds" then cut a delicious three-tiered wedding cake.

It is unique in this age of mobility that in a single edifice occurred the ordination of its minister, his marriage, baptism of all three children and all carrying on the work of their beloved church.

Later in the afternoon a reception celebrating this grand occasion was held at the Tafels' home in Narberth. The weather, too, honored them with a golden warm day permitting an overflowing of nearly two hundred guests to venture into the gardens.

A high point of the reception was a humorous poetic toast written and delivered by their son, Dr. Jonathan L. Tafel. This was followed by the presentation to Dick and Corinne of imaginative Hawaiian-style hats decorated with flowers made of good U.S. currency, gifts from friends and relatives. A special thanks must be given to Doris Tafel and her sister, Joan Dopler, for the time and effort they gave in preparing the hats as gifts which symbolize the richness Dick and Corinne bring to our lives and our deep-felt love for them.

The Tafels will further celebrate their anniversary with a two-week stay in Maui, Hawaii. We wish them God's speed.



**"YARD SALE" AT THE CENTRAL OFFICE**

Central Office is offering several items, in its "yard sale by mail," to Convention churches. Requests will be considered on a first-come first-served basis, and YOU must arrange for pick-up or shipment of the items. Please phone us at (617) 969-4240 to reserve your goodie today!!!

**FREE** to good home: One large 3M photocopier (8½ × 11 & 8½ × 14 and in between), with several rolls of its special paper. Will require two or three defensive backs to move it downstairs from office to truck. Kemper Road, this is your last chance...!

**FREE:** One medium-sized, hand-operated model Scriptomatic addressing system, with some supplies. Great for church monthly mailing lists.

**FREE:** One small-sized, hand-operated model Scriptomatic addressing system, with some supplies. Great for a church with a smaller mailing list (of course!)

**FREE:** A set of 52 Wayside Pulpit posters (a whole year's supply!) as demonstrated at the Wilmington, Ohio Convention. They include quotations from Swedenborg and others in candy-apple red on white, and are excellent for wayside pulpits, bulletin boards, and other surfaces you can think of which will attract attention.

**NOT FREE:** One Xerox 3100 photocopier complete with cabinet on wheels. (Low mileage) We are asking current book price of \$1500. for this item, but are open to bargaining a bit.

**ALL OF THE ABOVE MACHINERY IS IN GOOD CONDITION, CLEAN, AND IMMEDIATELY USABLE. AND IT IS ALL LOOKING FOR A NEW HOME — HOW ABOUT YOURS???**

**ALSO:** We have a small quantity of extra 1983 Convention Journals at the bargain price of \$1.00 per, to tide you over until the 1984 ones (late, sigh ) make their appearance



# SWEDENBORGIAN GROWTH CENTERS

*By Ernest O. Martin*

The purpose of our national church denomination has been set forth as follows: "The General Convention exists to help people be open to the Lord's presence and leading, especially by fostering personal and ordained ministries which facilitate the spiritual well-being of people, and which have in common a working for the Lord in bringing in the New Age—the descent of the Holy City, New Jerusalem."

"The light in which we seek to walk shines from Lord Jesus Christ in His second coming, available to us through the divine presence in our hearts and minds, and through revelation in the Holy Scriptures and in the work of the Lord's servant Emanuel Swedenborg."

To carry out this purpose, a variety of ministries will be necessary. A task force of the Council of Ministers has been appointed to explore more effective use of our ministerial resources and to give special attention to team ministries, regional centers, cluster ministries, and growth centers.

For some years the Southeast Association has operated a growth center in DeLand, Florida. A farm house and guest cottage and a ten-acre orange grove function as a worship center, meeting place, and a residence for the minister and his wife, Ernest and Hazel Frederick.

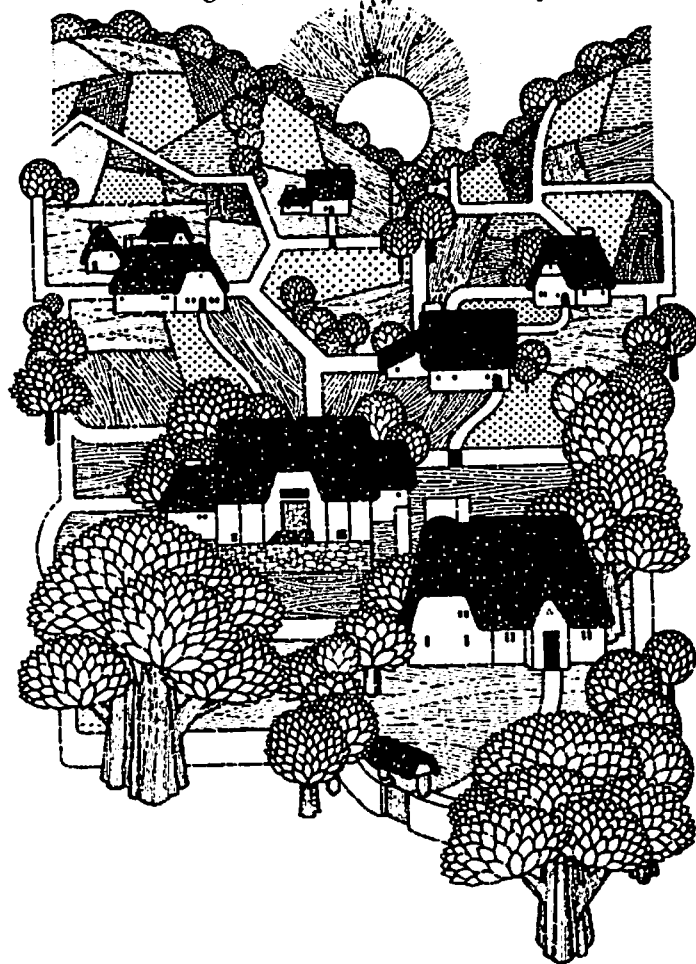
The Rev. Ronald Brugler has been employed to be the resident director of the church center at Almont, Michigan. Facilities have been expanded and winterized, and meetings and conferences can be held all year round. The Board of Education met there last spring and will meet there again in March. The General Council will hold its mid-winter meeting there in January.

When the Cincinnati Church relocated to suburban Montgomery, it embarked on a new program focused on spiritual growth. It later developed a camp/retreat center on a lake and called it "Beside-the-Point." The church conducts a very active wedding ministry, using both an outdoor chapel and the indoor facilities for weddings and receptions.

The Rev. Paul Martin Grumman and his family have purchased forty acres of land in Duvall, Washington, outside of Seattle, and are developing a growth center to serve the northwest.

The Los Angeles Church is in the process of selling its property, and it is exploring options for the future, including the establishment of a growth center. The Philadelphia Church is in a similar situation. The church is negotiating for the sale of its property in downtown Philadelphia, and one of its options is to participate in a growth center outside Philadelphia.

Recognizing the need for new forms of ministry, the General Council has authorized "a one-year study to determine the need, usefulness, desirability, and feasibility of establishing Swedenborgian centers for growth in the United States and Canada." The study is being directed by the Rev. Ernest Martin in cooperation with a seven-person feasibility study committee, and with the direction and support of a General Council committee that includes Randall Laakko, August Ebel, Adolph Liebert, and Charles McCormick. The feasibility study committee is focusing its attention on the Middle Atlantic area, and in the greater Philadelphia area in particular.



The dream is to develop a Growth Center which will become a leading Swedenborgian center in the world, in terms of personnel, resources, programs and activities. People will be welcomed from all over the world to become a part of the community for an hour, day, weekend, month, year or for their lifetime. They will be welcomed to participate in any of the programs and activities including spiritual growth groups, study, research, the arts, gardening, recreation, worship, etc. Food and housing will be available for a limited number of people, and plans will be made to enlarge the facilities and accommodations as the need arises. Convention boards and committees will be invited to meet there, and facilities will be provided for the central office of Convention if the Church so desires.

The Center could offer space and accommodations for ministers' and spouses' institutes, for forums, conferences, institutes, workshops and camps for both Swedenborgians and non-Swedenborgians. The success of the Center will depend on involving non-Swedenborgians in leadership roles and as participants. To make the Center self-supporting, the facilities must be used a good part of the time.

A first-rate Swedenborgian library will be developed and facilities provided for a research and study center. It is proposed that the Center become the communications center of Convention, and that the most modern

technological equipment be utilized and personnel trained to operate it. A further goal would also be to establish a multimedia center to serve the whole church.

Rental apartments will be provided for those wishing to become part of a retirement community. Another service that has been suggested is the operation of a hospice, especially for children. Our church has people trained in this field who are anxious to give expression to their skills in this vital use.

The Center will be open every day of the year. A core community will reside there and others will be involved for limited periods of time. Staff will be also be available to go out to other centers and churches.

It is proposed that this Center be a model for other centers throughout the world. Because of the great geographical isolation of our church groups throughout the United States and Canada, for example, it is important that several centers exist to serve the different regions. It would then be essential that the different centers work closely together in mutual support and encouragement.

To help the General Council determine the need for and usefulness of Swedenborgian growth centers, we invite your response to the following questions:

## =====QUESTIONNAIRE=====

1.If you are presently involved in a growth or regional center, what aspect of the center's life has been most helpful and significant for you?

2.If you have not been involved in the life of a growth center, check which programs or activities appeal to you. Star the one in which you would most like to participate.

- being part of a retirement community\_\_\_\_\_
- study and research\_\_\_\_\_
- worship and meditation\_\_\_\_\_
- a service project such as a hospice\_\_\_\_\_
- participation in seminars, workshops, and retreats\_\_\_\_\_
- other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

3.If a center were established near you, would you participate in its programs?\_\_\_\_\_

4.Would you be willing to contribute time, energy, talent, and money? Be specific.

5.What activities or functions would you like to see included that have not been mentioned?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address)

Please send your replies to:  
The Rev. Ernest O. Martin  
714 Ashford Road  
Wilmington, Delaware 19803

# BOOK REVIEW



by George F. Dole

*Arcana Caelestia*, by Emanuel Swedenborg; John Elliott, translator; Vol 2, London, Swedenborg Society, 1984. 479pp.

The *Arcana* presents special problems to the translator, not the least of which is its size. Mr. Elliott has undertaken a truly formidable task, and must be sustained in it year after year by a quite singular devotion. Beyond its size, however, the *Arcana* varies in style from the formulaic to the discursive, at times simply listing "the facts" in summary fashion, and at times exploring implications at some length and with considerable intensity.

Reading in this second volume of the Swedenborg Society's edition leaves the present reviewer with mixed feelings. Physically, it is a lovely volume; and I particularly commend the use of "white space" between paragraphs. Mr. Elliott has also made some progress in translating Swedenborg's punctuation. It is a help to have complete sentences marked off by periods rather than by semicolons and colons.

Browsing here and there at random, I find many passages that read reasonably well, though the overall impression is distinctly formal. There are many sentences of the form "That *x* means *y* is clear from *z*," which are particularly awkward when (as for example in nn. 1568 and 1698) *x* or *y* is long. Mr. Elliott seems somewhat more at ease in the interchapter material than in the exegetical material.

In a number of details, however, the translation presents difficulties. Compare, for example, the following renderings.

When cognitions are implanted in the former state, which has been described, they make it one of light.

When knowledges are implanted in the state described above, they make it lucid.

When knowledges are implanted in the state described above, they make it bright and lucid.

n. 1561

Or again,

It is in charity or love towards the neighbour that the Lord is present, in

which case it is possible for Him to be adored from the heart.

In charity or love toward the neighbor the Lord is present, and then He can be adored from the heart.

... for the Lord is present in charity, or neighbourly love, and may then be adored from the heart.

n. 1150

In each case, the first rendering is Mr. Elliott's, the second is that of Pott's revision of Clowes (1915), and the third is that of Clowes (taken from the third edition, 1831). In the first set of examples, Mr. Elliott does pick up *priori*, "the former," which both Clowes and Potts omitted. In both sets, however, there seems to be a progression from concise, direct expression in 1831 to unnecessary and unwarranted wordiness in 1984.

This tendency recurs in the pages of the present volume, and sometimes occasions obscurity.

That 'it will be, when the Egyptians see you' means knowledge comprised of cognitions, it being the nature of that knowledge when celestial cognitions are seen that is described, becomes clear from the meaning of 'Egypt' as knowledge comprised of cognitions, as shown already

n. 1472

Apart from the outright misuse of "comprise" (cf. also 1637. 2ff., "ideas comprising thought"), which means "consist of" or "include," this is the kind of sentence that needs to be read three times before it makes sense.

This passage raises another and equally serious point. In the Word List at the end of the volume (p. 477), "Cognitions" is defined as "items of knowledge relating to interior things," and the word translated "knowledges" is associated with "known facts." If these definitions are substituted in the present sentence, I am left wondering what in human experience is "known factual knowledge consisting of items of knowledge relating to interior things."

In defining "cognitions" as he does, Elliott follows Chadwick (*Lexicon to the Latin Text of the Theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg*. Part I, London, the Swedenborg Society, 1975, p.33),

who gives as a fourth meaning of *cognition* "(pl., as distinguished from scientific) known fact about interior things," citing A.C.24.1. This latter passage, however, states explicitly that "cognitions" are "of the inner person," while "scientifics" are "of the outer person." If these are taken as subjective genitives, the distinction is quite appropriate to the meanings of the related Latin verbs. *Scio* does focus on "knowing about," on "being informed." *Cognosco* focuses on recognition or acquaintance. The one, then, suggests second-hand knowledge, the other first-hand--a difference in mode of knowing rather than in subject matter. The inner person encounters meaning far more directly than the outer.

In terms of human experience, then, I believe that the *scientiam cognitionum* at issue in n. 1472 cannot possibly be "knowledges comprised of cognitions." The phrase must refer rather to information about encounters with meaning or insights. The writings themselves abound with such information, and can be read in strictly "Egyptian" fashion. That is, the information can be learned and processed mechanically, without any inner encounter with the meaning involved.

In general, Mr. Elliott has tried to deal responsibly with Swedenborg's substantive adjectives by supplying nouns. He is aware that I would certainly extend this practice to the most frequent ones—"the good" and "the true"—but disagrees, so while we do not have "celestial" or "spiritual," we still have "good." At times, he goes to extremes, as in translating *doctrinalia quae sunt ritualia* as "types of matters of doctrine which were forms of ritual." I can only grope for the meaning he intends, and suspect that the phrase refers to doctrinal views or assumptions embodied in ritual.

Two other recurrent renderings may merit attention. First, *constat* is regularly translated "is clear from." *Consto* implies "standing together with," and I believe Swedenborg used it deliberately to stress consistency rather than clarity. Second, the comparative force of *interior* and *exterior* is regularly ignored.

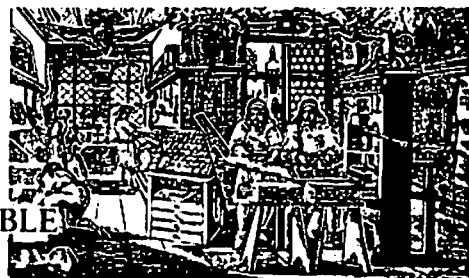
Often, as in n. 1594.5, it would be illuminating. I remain uncertain also as to why *homo* is sometimes rendered "person" and sometimes "man."

My personal acquaintance with John Elliott leads me to believe that we are akin theologically. As translators, though, we seem to be at variance. I have elsewhere taken exception to his equation of literalism with fidelity, citing J.C. Ager's distinction between formal and essential faithfulness. I find A.C. 8628 terribly compelling in this regard, and would have translators strive rather for that state described in A.C. 1638, when "It is the sense inwardly intended that calls forth the words" (Clowes' translation). I am saddened to see the erosion of Clowes' flashes of vividness, the apparent abandonment of his quest for the simple and the direct. The doctrines simply are not much use to me unless I know what it is in my own experience that they are talking about.

*Dr. George Dole is the author of AN INTRODUCTION TO SWEDENBORG'S LATIN and the translator of Swedenborg's HEAVEN AND HELL, DIVINE LOVE AND WISDOM, SOUL-BODY INTERACTION and THE UNIVERSAL HUMAN.*

## TWO NEW BOOKS AVAILABLE

The Swedenborg Foundation announces that *An Introduction to Swedenborg's Latin* by Swedenborg translator Dr. George Dole is now available at the price of \$8.95. Dr. Dole has translated several of Swedenborg's works and has taught "Swedenborg's Latin" for several years at the Swedenborg School of Religion. Swedenborg's Latin, Dr. Dole points out, is much simpler than classical Latin and does not require the usual long period of learning all facets of a language before being able to read it with reasonable comprehension. Do you sometimes wish that Swedenborg were easier to read, and do you wish that Dr. Dole would hurry up and finish the rest of Swedenborg's works? Perhaps you would like to venture into an exciting avocation of learning Swedenborg's Latin and begin reading the writings in



the original. You may find Swedenborg's ideas suddenly more lucid and clear, far more understandable than the old English translations render them.

The Swedenborg Publishing Association announces the release of a new edition of *The New Church in the New World* by Marguerite Block at the price of \$12.95. An "Epilogue," written by Dr. Robert Kirven, President of the Swedenborg School of Religion and Professor of Church History, brings this book up to date on a number of issues dealt with in the book. This is the one full, scholarly work on the history of the Swedenborgian Church of America. All serious church members will certainly want this valuable reference book handy to answer any number of key questions concerning their church.



# NCC and Ad Hoc on Similar Tracks

By Robert E. McCluskey



On Nov. 7-10, I attended the Governing Board sessions of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. Also representing our church were Rev. Gladys Wheaton, Rev. Ted LeVan, and Ms. Nancy Little, president of our youth league. We joined delegates from thirty other denominations to talk, listen, teach and learn what Christian unity might mean in 1984. There were many important and provocative issues raised during these four days: we heard reports from delegations to Central America and the Soviet Union; we reviewed policy statements on racial justice and child-care issues; we debated the direction of the Council and our individual churches; and we heard Bishop Tutu (winner of the Nobel Peace Prize) give a humorous yet powerful sermon on his struggles in South Africa and the true meaning of the church. These and other events revealed the extensive involvement of the Council in real and pertinent issues of the world, lending a truly Christian perspective of the concerns of all people.

This article, however, will not focus on any of the specifics of the meetings. Instead, I would like to discuss some of the important implications which the Council's work has for us and our church. Actually being part of the proceedings helped me to gain a better sense of the purpose of the structure of the Council itself. And I couldn't help but notice that the NCCC and General Convention seem to be developing in similar, though independent directions. Perhaps the best example of this was the Report of the Presidential Panel on the Future Mission of the Council.

Very briefly, this report, which received input from all the member churches, is a first step toward updating and re-organizing the structure of the Council to meet the demands of both a rapidly changing world and Christian Church. Beginning with a common vision and purpose, the report sets forth certain goals, a design or structure through which these goals can be attained, and specific programs and resources to actually carry them out. This approach bears a strong resemblance to work presently being done by the Ad-hoc Committee for Convention; starting from a common purpose, the Committee has delineated specific goals, objectives, and strategies aimed at fulfilling the purpose of Convention. While it is true that many businesses and organizations have also had to reconsider their future in light of a rapidly changing world, the experience of the NCCC has a theological aspect which has, I believe, significance for us as a church.

To begin with, the council is consciously seeking to re-define itself as a "community of communions" instead of a "cooperative agency" of the churches. This change in identity was brought about by a changing sense of what ecumenism is all about. In the Council's own words, "We believe the Christian gospel calls us to a deeper and more significant fellowship - a fellowship where differences are not ignored, but appreciated and used in a larger design . . . in larger calling." That is, rather than passing over differences in an attempt to find some safe common denominator, the members of the Council are seeking that greater whole which can only come from truly accepting and working with others as they are. They see that unity includes and strengthens diversity and uniqueness, rather than obliterating distinctions. It seems that work of the Council over the years has helped to generate this new understanding of the gospel image of community; an image which values plurality and variety. The shift to a more flexible structure is also intended to accommodate the diverse needs and talents of the different members.

As the Swedenborgian delegation went over this report, we were continually struck by the many "New Church" overtones of this change within the Council. For instance, consider Swedenborg's own statements that the New Church would be made of individuals from many different traditions and backgrounds; that while the externals would remain the same, with a plurality of denominations, the internals of the Christian Church would be renewed, and the New Church/New Jerusalem would make itself known everywhere, more and more. Swedenborg's continual emphasis on the heavenly society as a "unity with diversity," where differences add to the perfection of the whole, seems to be echoed in the overall direction of the NCCC toward a "community of communions;" i.e., a whole composed of diverse parts, working together in love to the Lord. Also obvious to me at the meeting was an emphasis on love and usefulness, holding doctrine, or "truth," as secondary. Here again, our church teaches that it is only by attending to love and the good of life that we can prevent doctrinal differences from becoming divisive.

One question I found myself asking was, "Would I recognize the New Church if I saw it?" That is, General Convention has developed a structure and process that has sought to be consistent with those doctrines of the New Church which were revealed to Emanuel Sweden-

borg by the Lord. However, much of this doctrine presents an image of the New Church that is (indeed) much broader and universal than General Convention. The New Church is present wherever faith and charity are being conjoined; wherever love to the Lord and the neighbor are sought; where the Lord is acknowledged and the Word is (NJHD 244, 245). With this in mind, it is not surprising to see that the NCCC, along with other Christian bodies/groups, is slowly but surely manifesting certain qualities of the New Church. What I believe we are seeing is a different but equally legitimate development of the Lord's New Church.

I also believe it is something we can and should be very much involved in. I am excited by the fact that Convention can make a significant contribution to the Council as it moves in this new direction. We have the opportunity to offer a theology that finds not only a call to unity in Scripture, but the need for diversity and inclusiveness as well. Our very understanding of such a "community of communions." I might point out that we have been members of the NCCC for many years.

As I review what I have written so far, I seem to be referring to the Council as "them," and this is not an accurate picture. In a pamphlet designed for public distribution, the Council describes itself by saying, "We are not a *they*. We are a *we*." That is, the NCCC does not exist apart from the individual churches which make it up; and this includes the Swedenborgians. As we consider our involvement with the Council, we should remember that this is a unique form of outreach. Here we do not seek to bring others into our church; neither are we expected to change our theology or tradition to conform to some other belief. Rather, we have the chance to talk and exchange ideas with other churches in an atmosphere of freedom and mutual support, where our identity and uniqueness are valued and preserved.

I would like to close this article with a small, personal incident which might better communicate the peculiar kind of excitement I felt at these meetings. On Friday, I was invited to participate in the Saturday morning worship service, which was led by Rev. William Johnson of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Besides being asked to say a short prayer at the beginning, I had no discussion with Bill about the nature of the service. And so I was more than a little surprised when Bill opened the service with a short, simple statement from the Word: "The Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him." As you might imagine, these words had such a familiar ring to them that for a moment I wasn't quite sure where I was. However, instead of contemplating the mysterious ways of Divine Providence (or is that Divine Coincidence?), I decided to simply enjoy the warm feeling of being among new friends, united by our love to the Lord.

*Rev. Robert McCluskey is the minister of the Swedenborgian New Church in Portland, Maine.*



## LETTERS

Dear Editor,

The Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario is in need of *Hosannas*, the 1968 Third Edition. If there is a group in Convention with *Hosannas* not in use at present, would they kindly write the undersigned. We, of course, would pay the shipping charges.

Paul Zacharias  
116 Queen St. N.  
Kitchener, Ont. N2H 2H7

Dear Editor,

I am an enthusiastic reader of Swedenborg of about three years, and I am in search of a way to procure the complete set of his writings. However, I have just recently graduated from college, and I do not have the wherewithal to purchase such a set from the Foundation. Is there anyone out there with a set of Swedenborg's theological works not being used? If so, please consider my heartfelt desire for these treasures. I would be happy to pay the shipping charges for them.

Paul Andrew Coats  
9 Forest Glen Ln.  
Kirkwood, MO 63122



## PEOPLE AND PLACES

Dr. George Dole, faculty member at the Swedenborg School of Religion in Newton, Mass., was one of several presenters at the Second Annual East Coast Conference of the Association for Transpersonal Psychology. His topic: Swedenborg: Intimations of a Holographic Psychology.

The Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario conducted a Reaffirmation of Marriage Vows ceremony on October, extending special invitations to those who have been married through their wedding ministry there. A full house of over 100 people attended this innovative occasion.

The Kansas Association had their annual get-together at Camp Mennoscah the weekend of October 19-21. Programs were planned for all ages, with a special study offered on the theme, "The Operation of the Holy Spirit."

The Church of the Open Word in St. Louis in cooperation with the Miracles Contact Center of St. Louis sponsored an evening of a video-taped lecture by Burt Hotchkiss, with fellowship, refreshments and opportunities to purchase literature from the Swedenborg Foundation and the Miracles Contact Center. Attendance for this pleasant evening was approximately 40.

The Church of the Holy City, in Washington D.C., held a Marriage Enrichment Weekend October 26-28, growing out of their wedding ministry there. Led by Rev. Richard and Mrs. Polly Baxter and Drs. Richard and Cindy Margolies, clinical psychologists, the emphasis was on communications and interchange, leading to a useful time of skill-building for successful marriage.

Leadership Education Institute, LEI, a program designed for young people between the ages of 16 and 22, will be re-constituted at the Almont New Church Assembly in Michigan, one hour from Detroit, the week following the annual convention this summer, June 30-July 7.

The Swedenborg School of Religion has several caps and nice sports shirts with the Swedenborg School of Religion moniker on them. If you would like to purchase them at the price of \$10.00 per shirt and \$5.00 per cap, write to:

Mary Bryant  
Swedenborg School of Religion  
48 Sargent St.  
Newton, Mass. 02158

## CHURCH RECORDS

### *Anniversary*

REDDEKOPP—Rev. Henry and Mrs. Susanna Reddekopp celebrated their 50th anniversary on Nov. 19, 1984, with a special service and reception at the Rosthern New Church Society in Western Canada, the Rev. David Sonmor officiating.

### *Baptism*

WELCH—Bradon Michael Welch, son of Konny Welch, was baptized into the Christian faith on November 25, 1984, in the Church of the New Jerusalem, Pawnee Rock, Kansas, the Rev. Eric Zacharias officiating.

WHITEHEAD—Darren Whitehead and his son, Dallas Whitehead, of the New Church in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, were baptized into the Christian faith in August, 1984, the Rev. David Sonmor officiating.

### *Marriage*

TUCKER-LAWSON—Robert Tucker and Laura Lawson, of the SNAP Society, were united in marriage on Saturday, November 24, 1984, at the Unitarian Parish in Brattleboro, Vermont, the Revs. Rachel Martin, the bride's cousin, and Peter Denny officiating.

### *Deaths*

MITCHELL—Walter B. Mitchell, 68, of Wandering River, Alberta, passed into the spiritual life on November 21, 1984. Memorial services were held with the Revs. Karen Hansen and David Sonmor officiating.

SCHMITT—Willard L. Schmitt, 64, long active in the Pawnee Rock Society and the Wayfarers Chapel, passed into the spiritual life on October 28, 1984. A memorial service was held at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Pawnee Rock, Kansas, the Revs. Galen Unruh and Eric Zacharias officiating.

ULMER—George Ulmer, 93, longtime member of the New Church in Western Canada, passed into the spiritual life on October 12, 1984. Memorial services were held on October 15, 1984, the Rev. David Sonmor officiating.

UNRUH—Alice E. Unruh, 81, member of the Church of the New Jerusalem, Pawnee Rock, Kansas, passed into spiritual life on November 20, 1984. A memorial service was held in Pawnee Rock, the Rev. Eric Zacharias officiating.

General Convention of the New Jerusalem  
in the United States of America  
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