

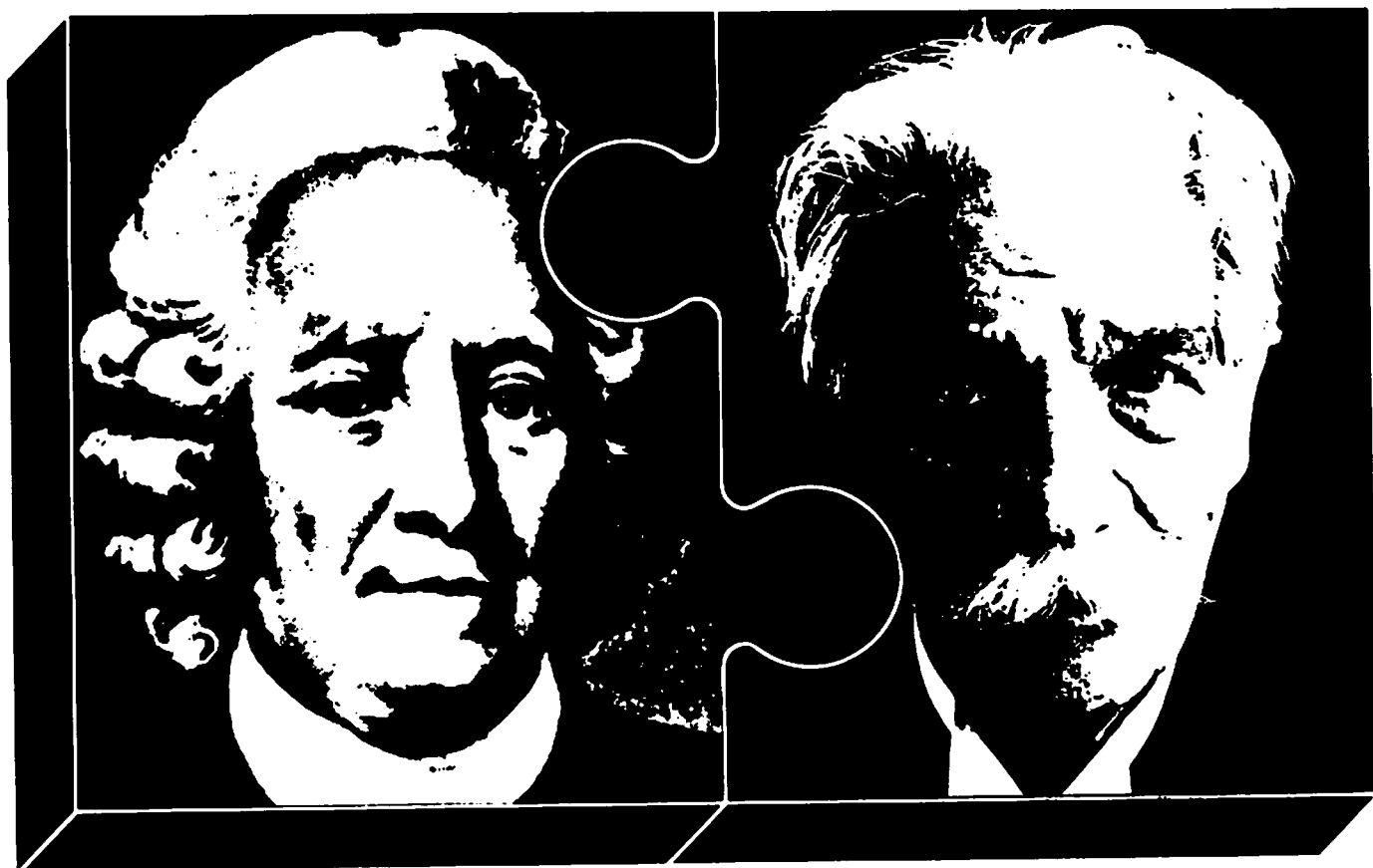
THE MESSENGER

Official Publication of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches
OCTOBER 1985



SWEDENBORG SCHOOL OF RELIGION

48 SARGENT STREET
NEWTON, MASS. 02158



*Swedenborg
and Schweitzer:
one pursued a heroic quest
for truth, the other for love.*

FROM THE EDITOR

A number of years ago, *The Messenger* was a subscription publication. Then the Dept. of Publications decided to offer the monthly journal to church members free, with the national church underwriting the entire operation. Now we are attempting to cleave to a middle road.

The Dept. of Communications (nee Dept. of Publications) wants to be both fiscally responsible and service oriented. We took the step last year to offer *The Messenger* to overseas readers on a subscription basis only — due chiefly to the increasingly high rates for foreign mailing. During Paul Zacharias' editorship, the names of contributors were printed, as were occasional pleas for increased subsidy at the grassroots level.

Now, again, we are asking that those who are willing pay at least a portion of the cost of their *Messengers*. A heightened sense of fiscal accountability, inspired by my interpretation of Ad Hoc's vision of Convention, and rising production costs motivate this new policy direction.

Hopefully, *The Messenger* serves to meet legitimate needs of the larger church body. The pages of our official publication keeps us informed on a regular basis of timely affairs within Convention. We are also able to generate a consistent sense of who we are as a broad and diverse body of Christians committed to a vision of spiritual life as given through the revelations of Emanuel Swedenborg.

The articles and personal pieces enable us to share ideas, projects, concerns, hopes and dreams. The "letters" department allows people from all quarters to respond to anything that appears in these pages. The various columns (and we have some new ones coming this year) provide a continuity of thought on major avenues of spiritual health, whether it be Biblical and doctrinal teachings ("The Upper Room") or the modern Holistic movement ("Wellness for a New Age").

It has been my hope that *The Messenger* might be used increasingly as an outreach tool. This is a major motivation behind the effort to improve its visual presentation. We now send extra copies to those churches that want to make them available to inquiring newcomers, and our church publication is also sent to a number of libraries and prisons, too.

It costs today approximately \$15.00 in total cost per year for each *Messenger*. We are suggesting that voluntary subscriptions of \$10.00 be undertaken by church members who would be willing to pay for their church magazine. The remaining third would be gladly paid by the Dept. of Communications. Please see subscription box in the back of this issue.

We offer a number of interesting items in this month's *Messenger*. We welcome George Kessler back to the pages of *The Messenger* for the first time in nearly three decades. His sensitive contrasting of his two spiritual heroes, Swedenborg and Schweitzer, juxtaposes two men who are both similar and dissimilar. Robert Kirven's thoughtful piece on ecumenical dialog and the Nicene Creed provides an insider's view of one of the more fascinating forums for theological discussion in America today. Horand Gutfeldt's article on this year's convention theme of "Communication" assists us in some creative after-thought.

And amid all the tension and strife splashed across our newspapers and TV screen regarding South Africa, we have communications from the General Pastor of the Swedenborgian Church in South Africa, the Rev. Obed Mooki and his wife, Eulalia Mooki. May we all raise our prayers in a spirit of unity, if not uniformity, for a just and peaceful outcome for that torn and disrupted land.

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The Swedish Seer and the Alsatian Altruist

George Kessler

I shall describe him as a person beloved by most who knew him, a clergyman's son, a great scholar, a tireless worker with a keen mechanical aptitude, a master of several languages, a prolific author, an organist, philosopher and theologian, whose works have been translated into many languages. Some consider him to be the most splendid representation of religion for his time. Who is he?

Most of the readers of *The Messenger* would undoubtedly answer Emanuel Swedenborg. If I suggested the Alsatian altruist, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, I would be equally correct. The foregoing list of facts and attributes, as well as some others, can be applied to both men. These two extraordinary personalities are important lodestars in my life.

It would not have been surprising if I had become a humanist, following in the theological footsteps of Schweitzer. We were both German; our maternal ancestors were of the same valley; we spent our childhood years in Alsace. We both inherited an intangible *esprit d'Alsace* — something akin to the American Way.

But the dissimilarities in our secular and religious educations led us to different theological interpretations of Christianity. Schweitzer chose the path of a radical humanistic theologian in the Lutheran Church, while I found a home in the Church of the New Jerusalem.

Although I shall continue to read Swedenborg's revelations, I do not call myself a "Swedenborgian." I am a Christian; my God in His fullness is the Lord Jesus Christ. It is he who planted in me the very desire to be. I was in that danger at one low point in my life, when I felt life had no direction or meaning. Even today, I still find it strange that I found the beautiful revelations of Swedenborg through an ad in the *New York Times*.

The Lord forbids no one to study any subject or person. He limits no one to the Word, Swedenborg's revelations and New Church people. How much poorer my existence would have been without the influences of Gandhi, Lincoln, Tu Fu and Schweitzer. "Test all things," suggests the apostle Paul, "and hold to that which is true."

Why did my interest in Albert Schweitzer never wane? As I reflect upon his life and works, I find him more than worthy as a hero to be emulated. The Lord was within him, just as he was with Swedenborg. The Alsatian altruist, like the "Aristotle of the North," decided at a certain age to dedicate his life to Christian mission.

Had Schweitzer been merely a missionary doctor, he would be unknown today. But he

The Lord lifted up this scholarly theologian, this world-class organist, this medical doctor to be an inspiring force in the sphere of love, as He did with Swedenborg in the sphere of truth.

was more than that! The Lord lifted up this scholarly theologian, this world-class organist, this medical doctor to be an inspiring force in the sphere of love, as He did with Swedenborg in the sphere of truth.

Today, twenty years after his death, Schweitzer's hospital survives, staffed by volunteers and funded by organizations around the globe. His spirit of service inspires five other Albert Schweitzer hospitals as well, and theological works are still taught in seminaries today. He truly deserved the Nobel Prize awarded him.

Any library will furnish books about the doctor's trials and struggles in Africa. They tell the story of a good Samaritan, who treated the whole person in the hour of illness. He would return occasionally to Europe or America to raise money by lectures and organ concerts to maintain his jungle hospital.

What is remarkable and inspiring is the total interest he took in his service to the people. He served as nurse, doctor, surgeon, supervisor, administrator, construction worker and farmer. He made every detail and need of the hospital his responsibility — and he still found time to write classics. If you tend to doubt God was with him, consider this: he lost not a single

patient during his entire first year as a medical missionary.

I believe that a key to understanding this giant of 20th Century religion is his boyhood in Alsace. Similar to a village like New Amsterdam, Wisconsin, the Alsace that both of us knew is pervaded by a keen sense of fellowship extending to the whole population. No one is excluded. It does not surprise me that Schweitzer grew up to see the whole world — even the faraway and exotic jungles of Africa — as vital to the spiritual health of all humanity.

Schweitzer's father, a minister, and his mother were wise and loving parents; the unifying love bonded his family with each other and with the rest of the community. Have I painted too rosy a picture of Alsace? I don't believe so. I experienced its special fellowship as a boy, but I have also gone back for several recent visits. I have found that my memories have not been merely sentimental. The people are still among the friendliest on earth.

My first tribute to Swedenborg appeared in the *New Church Messenger* more than two decades ago. I pointed out then that Swedenborg's revelations had helped me to weather what might be called a streak of bad luck in life. I did not then, nor do I now, ask for more specific truth than that which has already been given. The Lord cannot provide inspiration or knowledge to an extent that would

lessen a person's free choice of good or evil.

Nevertheless, I cannot overestimate Swedenborg as a guidepost to the Lord and the life through the doctrines. It is in this sphere of truth that I have found Schweitzer lacking. His mental anguish over God's providence and his view of Jesus as just another man indicate to me that his wisdom did not quite catch up to his love and faith — at least not in this world. And yet Schweitzer was an inspiring servant of the Lord for so many millions of people.

These two men, the Swedish seer and the Alsatian altruist, are my two lodestars. One is surpassing in the sphere of truth, and the other is outstanding in the sphere of love and service. Putting the two together are deeply inspiring to me. Reams upon reams may be written about them. I offer these thoughts on these two servants of the Lord on the chance that others, too, may find special inspiration in their combination. □

George Kessler lives in retirement in Maywood, N.J. He was active for many years in the Orange, N.J. Swedenborgian Church.

At Gunsbach

This is the town where Schweitzer lived
When he was a growing boy
Here is the house he later built;
I feel my spirits soar with joy.
Were it a thousand times as far,
To see the house I still would come;
I ring and enter through the door
And suddenly I feel at home.

George Kessler

On Albert Schweitzer

He could have lived a life of ease,
His talents were a source of wealth.
He chose to serve in Gabon's heat
The natives in their need for health.
What can he teach us, one and all
To help us in the daily strife?
Like Johnny Appleseed of old,
He lived a free man all his life.

George Kessler

A Moment of Ecumenical Dialog

A Swedenborgian Looks at the Nicene Creed

Robert H. Kirven

In the Ecumenical movement, it is generally accepted that all Christian churches share a common core of belief which binds them together, even as they are kept apart by the differences which surround that essential shared conviction. When the Swedenborgian Church joined the National Council of Churches in 1966, the Council had not been able to define that common core more precisely or comprehensively than an "acceptance" of "Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior." Since then, with the participation of our representatives to the council, the preamble has been revised to include a larger statement of our common faith, expressed in more biblical language. The new preamble describes the council as "a community of communions which, in response to the Gospel as revealed in the Scriptures, confess Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God, as Savior and Lord."

A few years ago, a new effort was begun to further expand the statement of what Christian churches agree on. It was started in a slightly different context by the World Council of Churches, an organization to which Convention does not belong, because we are not a world-wide body. We do belong to the National Council of Churches (NCC), however, and a parallel effort was taken up four years ago by the NCC's Commission on Faith and Order (commonly called by its initials, COFO, the commission is the theological arm of the Council, and the body on which I serve representing our church). The study is not aimed directly at changing the constitution again, but simply at improving the state of ecumenical dialogue — an on-going conversation based on a conviction that if we keep talking about our faith in the Lord, some good will come of it.

The World Council's study group decided that more Christians subscribe to the Nicene Creed than to any other, so they decided to use that as a starting point. The idea was to amend or add to it until a more universal statement could meet with agreement. When the NCC's COFO began to work on the project, the first three years of study and discussion at semi-annual meetings produced many interesting insights, but ultimately accomplished little more than one discovery.

We found that member churches are divided into three camps as regards the Nicene Creed: many accept it, some oppose certain portions of it, and some don't like the idea of any creed at all in the life of the church.

In an effort to get beyond that point of agreement about our disagreements, the COFO study group decided last spring that each member would write an article, in which each of us — speaking as a representative of our own church — would address three questions. (1) What is my church's position on the Nicene Creed? (2) What is our attitude toward creeds in general? (3) If we cannot accept the Nicene Creed, what would we offer as a substitute?

To make the task of reading these papers easier for all of us, we decided to make the task of writing them harder: we limited each paper to a thousand words.

In the Swedenborgian Church, we do not talk a whole lot about the Nicene Creed. Swedenborg thought it was okay, if it is correctly understood, but he felt that nobody *did* understand it correctly. As a church we have pretty much ignored it.

The creed is a statement of faith adopted by a council of bishops, called together in 325 AD by the Roman Emperor Constantine. Constantine had just become emperor, and he may have thought that the Christian God helped him do it, and so — whether in gratitude to Christianity, or just as a political move — he made Christianity the official religion of the Empire.

If it was a political move, it was because he saw the church as a means of unifying an empire that was in danger of coming apart at the seams; so he wanted more unity in the church than was in fact to be found there. He brought together all the bishops, set them in a room, and told them — as only emperors can — to agree about whatever they didn't already agree on; then he would let them go home.

This was the first council of bishops ever called, so these men had never seen each other before. Each thought that the tradition in his religion was the right one, developed directly from the teachings of Jesus. To agree on a definition of what you have to believe to be a Christian anywhere, they had

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to struggle with some ambiguities in the fundamental Christian message that none of them had noticed before. They were good men, chosen as leaders by the people and ministers of their local churches; but many of them were old, and few of them were very sophisticated theologically.

They argued a long time, finally agreeing on a compromise statement that nobody liked very much. And, indeed, Constantine did let them go home, probably pleased with himself for having solved that little problem so decisively.

What he had done, besides getting church and state entangled in a way that messed up a lot of world history and which America's founding fathers tried to avoid, was to bring into international debate one of the two or three toughest questions in the history of Christian thought: how to speak about the One God who is known to us in different ways. John's Gospel quotes Jesus as saying, "I and the Father are one;" but Matthew quotes His commandment concerning "the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit," and the Book of Acts records Peter being moved by the Holy Spirit to preach of Jesus "exalted at the right hand of God."

Since it is difficult for finite human minds to understand just *how* "the Word was made flesh," or figure out who was running the universe while God-who-is-Jesus was walking on the shores of Lake Galilee, thinking about the different essential qualities of the one God is a real challenge. If people hadn't realized how big a challenge it was before 325, the bishops sure knew it on their way home from Nicea.

Even by the time they got home, they didn't like the Creed they'd adopted. A document was written to "clarify" (read "change") it, and the new document got more respect, for a while, than the original. It was attributed to an assistant to one of the bishops at Nicea, and so it's named after him: the Athanasian Creed. But that creed hadn't been approved by any bishops, so in 381 the bishops all got together again and adopted a new Creed (different from Athanasius' or the one adopted in Nicea), and somehow that 381 version has been known ever since as the "Nicene Creed" (although scholars call it the "Niceo-Constantinopolitan Creed" when they want to be picky).

My under-1000-paper (I held myself to just that, including footnotes, but not continuing the heading) on a Swedenborgian view of this Niceo-Constantinopolitan Creed will be read along with the others when the study group meets at the fall meeting of the Commission on Faith and Order in Brookline, Mass., in October. I thought readers of *The Messenger* might be interested in reading it

about the same time (I'll report an up-date later).

The Nicene Creed:

A Swedenborgian View

by the Rev. Dr. Robert H. Kirven

Swedenborg School of Religion

July, 1985

In the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches, no creed is used uniformly as a test of faith for admission to church membership. Admission is at the discretion of local congregations or societies, most of which employ a rule of voluntary association (after a period or course of preparation to assure informed association).*

On the other hand, the *Book of Worship* published by the denomination contains a liturgy for "The Rite of Confirmation of Faith," which is used in its entirety or as a model in most if not all societies for the ceremony involved with admission to the church. That liturgy includes the following statement and response:

Our Faith is this:

The Lord God, the Savior of Jesus Christ, Creator, Redeemer and Regenerator, is the supreme object of our worship and life. He brought us into being. He set us free from our evils. For as we shun them as sins against him, and we do good, we attain, by his power, the true manhood for which we were created.

Today he comes anew. In the spirit and truth of his Word he discloses himself to us in his Divinity Humanity as the only God of heaven and earth, working to unite us with himself and with all in whom he lives. This disclosure, with its enlightenment and renewal of life is his Second Coming among men.

The larger life this now makes possible consists in our loving him and the good which comes from him in our fellow men. This is the neighbor to be loved, as man makes it his own, both individually and in his group relationships. Consequently, the larger the group and the good it serves, the greater our obligation to it. Our community, our country, the brotherhood of nations are larger neighbors: also our church and all other churches constituting the Lord's kingdom on earth. So again is the Lord's kingdom in heaven; and our highest neighbor is the Lord himself.

The Holy City New Jerusalem, in the light of which we walk, is the Christian Church made new, so far as it approaches him in worship and life, the

visible God in whom is the invisible.

Do you acknowledge and receive these doctrines? (Answer: I do)

Do you desire and intend, by the divine mercy and help to live according to them? (Answer: I do)

With those who are now confessing their faith, let us all reaffirm our loyalty to the Lord in the words of the Adoramus: Our Faith in the Glorified Lord.

(Unison:) We worship the one God, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world; in whom is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; whose humanity is divine, who for our salvation did come into the world and take our nature upon him. He endured temptation, even to the passion of the Cross. He overcame the hells, and so delivered man. He glorified his humanity, uniting it with the divinity of which it was begotten. Without this, no mortal could have been saved; and they are saved who believe in him, and keep the commandments of his Word. This is his commandment: that we love one another as he has loved us.

The similarities between those affirmations — especially the second one, customarily used in Sunday worship — and the Nicene Creed may be more obvious than the differences, which for the most part stem from an emphasis on the oneness of the divine Trinity as opposed to the triune nature of the one God. In the eighteenth century that emphasis appeared supremely important to Emanuel Swedenborg, founding theologian of our communion. He saw around him a misinterpretation, already centuries old, of language which he blamed largely on the framers of the Nicene Creed.

In his perception, the Trinity had supplanted the One, both in learned theology and popular piety, and "three persons" had become "three gods." Swedenborg considered combatting this polytheistic heresy to be his most urgent reforming mission. Although he noted the correctness of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds "if properly understood," he repeatedly cited the Nicene formula as the origin of and occasion for what he considered this perversion of essential Christianity*. With that theological heritage, Swedenborgians traditionally have had little to do with the creed of Nicea/Constantinople, ignoring it in all liturgical publications, and in most theological discussions.

However, if it is understood as referring to a trinity of *person* (singular), and no duality of nature is assumed, the wording is accep-

table as a Swedenborgian affirmation of faith, with some exceptions. The first is that we would not say "He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead" for two reasons. Firstly, we regard the Second Coming as an historical fact as well as a presently active process. Secondly, we see "judgment" as a kind of self-selective process in the World of Spirits (antecedent to Heaven or Hell), parallel to — and paradigmatic for — an individual's voluntary association with a church.

A second exception is "I look for the resurrection of the dead," since we believe that the human spirit, the essential person, continues to live after physical death; therefore it will not be resurrected in the flesh, and does not need to wait for resurrection in the spirit. Additionally, we would have to see the one church as catholic with a small "c" in the terms of the first statement of faith; and our Order of Baptism refers to Baptism as "a symbol of regeneration and a sacrament of repentance; for the spiritual washing called baptism is a cleansing from sins."

Despite these exceptions, the essential affirmation of the Niceo/Constantinopolitan Creed — the unity of the one God in which there is a divine Trinity — is explicitly confirmed by Swedenborg (*Doctrine of the Lord*, Pgh. 55**), and is consistent with Swedenborgian theology and liturgy. □

* e.g., **True Christian Religion** 632-634.

** *Swedenborg Foundation, N.Y., and other publishers. Paragraph references are standard in all editions.*



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**A community
of communions
confessing Jesus
Christ.**

Communication And The New Church

Horand K. Gutfeldt

The theme of the last Convention in Windsor was "Communication"—a very timely choice, because the modern explosion of communication is flooding us with new possibilities, but also confronts us with new questions and problems that have never been faced before.

What is the nature of communication in the first place? And what are the basic elements?

How very few are aware today that through the Nordic seer we are confronted with a new and different view of what it is that we are talking about—a vision that is in many ways far advanced, although it has to be put together from various parts and recognized from a language that is not always very familiar and current today.

Could it be that our whole time is only slowly beginning to understand what it might be that surrounds us at every step and to a good part makes us what we are? There are dozens of theories trying to explain communication and many contradict each other, so that it is hard to find what might be correct and relevant for us.

Yet, if we want to keep our sanity, we have to gain a deeper understanding of what going on—we are the target of impacts from T.V. radio, printing and many other channels. Is it true what has been said that in order to be a good American one has to develop an early immunity against all advertising? The task now before us is to find consistent ways to evaluate and to sift all that is essential from the chaff and rise above it to develop our integrity and individuality in opposition to the prevailing trends that try to mold us into their image.

The challenge of our age is to discover the truth that may be drowned in the sea of information and superficial knowledge of our age. Anyone who really lives and chooses consciously, wanting to be part of the New Age will be increasingly faced with these questions—or what he really is will be washed away. It may help us in this direction to obtain a larger image of the points of issue in order to find our way through the maze.

Is not all religion a communication bet-

ween God and human beings? All great religions go back to some kind of enlightenment or revelation, and we have in our church a specific claim, and included in it an appeal to the development of reason against any blind faith. Furthermore, our explanation of the Divine influx into all degrees of the Creation implies a continuous life-giving and creative radiation from a Spiritual Sun, through which we are given consciousness and feeling. This is exemplified in the holiest part of our worship, the sacrament of communion.

In order to understand communication, it is of greatest importance to review what we know in the new light what the nature of man (and of course, of woman as well) is, and this will open new vistas, because it is underlying everything else—though perhaps not always recognized. How does the human mind establish connections, and what is its true nature?

Contrary to widely held convictions, we are led to see that the essence of a human being is the spirit, the soul, which has the aspects of love and truth, also, though imperfectly called the Will and Understanding. That which makes the core, the very substance of the human personality, is the complex of affections and loves—an organism or structure of spiritual energies. With our convictions, ideals and consequent decisions, we become co-creators of what we are and want to be, for we shape and direct the development of these energies.

In part, these are conscious, and to a large part they exist beyond our awareness and are called unconscious, although consciousness is their manifestation. Each level in our mind is intimately connected with the other through correspondence, though the mind can discriminate the different degrees. Some of this may sound familiar, perhaps a little doctrinal and technical—so let us now take a closer look and see more closely, what this leads to, if it is unfolded and expressed in modern terms and related to our world of thought.

What causes any communication to come about? With certainty, something begins in one mind and is transferred to another soul—involving conscious

awareness, but also often bypassing it.

The initial impulse will begin with some kind of love or desire to express something, somehow hoping to transfer a mental state or an idea to one or more others. Without an intention or motive there would be no thought, and consequently no conveying of anything. Thus, some kind of affective disposition or love is the first cause from the center of the soul as its energy, containing an inborn longing or inclination towards expression and communication. This then builds the first pillar towards establishing that mysterious bridge between individuals that we are contemplating. A lot goes into it unnoticed: all that we have thought and felt and done up to that point flows into every thought and every expression and transmission to others.

This intentional energy, often insuffi-

Swedenborg says that in the Most Ancient religious epoch there was a transmission of affections through movements of the face, before language was invented.

ciently translated as "will," creates its forms in the intellect, (also called "understanding" or reason), always building upon the memories of the past—and yet containing an ever new creative element. Our intelligence shapes the knowledge, the ideas and plans—long before they become expressed in words or action. This happens in a moment, for in the realm of the spirit there is no space or time. Here we observe the first transition from one degree of the mind to another level: from the celestial or original love—energy to the spiritual or thought formation.

This is the more conscious stage where we accept or reject a certain claim of truth or relevance. Any thought will correspond in every way to the original desire or feeling—we say "I feel this is correct." The quality of every thought is profoundly determined by the complex body of causes that brought it forth—yet the two should not be confused. This is why all information comes in organized entities, incorporated into greater wholes. Every sentence is structured in a way to have at least a verb (reflecting the energy) and a subject (reflecting the form). Other elements modify these, which have always to be imbedded in greater patterns of meaning.

However, a large part of spiritual life and energy does never get formulated into

words, although that may be possible in principle. We may now follow this process a little further and watch the embodiment of a mental state take place automatically in other ways: in body posture, in some gesture, a facial expression—or some kind of articulation in language. A stooped gait, a lowered glance may betray depression without a sound. A friendly smile also may come across more clearly at times than a long speech. A clenched fist may point towards determination—and a cry for help will strongly convey a specific emotion.

Looking now at verbal expression—it will contain in style and choice of words everything of the ideas that flew into it at the moment it was born. This is also called encoding in language—and it may happen at a typewriter or microphone—always containing voluntary and involuntary elements, which will correspond to the origin, to which they can lead back.

In a more general way, such a process shapes our entire material civilization. All our cities and machines are nothing but expressions of the energies and ideas of the people that shaped them. Every object made by humans, from the crudest flint tools to the computer correspond to their origin in the minds of the producer. The skyline of a city betrays the spirit and the taste of the inhabitants that built it. It may be determined by church spires or factory chimneys, or by the outlines of tepees, mudhuts or igloos. Our entire culture is nothing but the objectivation of the collective spirit of an age with all its assumptions, its art, its laws and all other current and permanent manifestations of all that was first in the will and the understanding of human beings.

Process of Communication

Now let us look at the reception: every object, every sign is first noticed by our senses, mainly the eye. Sounds hit our eardrums—and immediately we decode and interpret some or most of the meaning that was originally impressed upon some material formation. We forget the letters and retain the meaning of a written word, we hear a message through the telephone receiver and reconstruct the idea that was behind it. We call it understanding if we find our way back to the mental state or image of the mind that created it, if we come to a similar impression which the originator had in mind. Yet, how many imperfections are involved! Always, some "noise" comes in between, for we are limited in our range of experiences that we have to fill in. In all that we understand is our whole person with our entire background again!

Even if we do not directly misunderstand, we can recognize various degrees of adequacy of understanding a communication. After recognition of the symbol, we may correctly grasp the idea that was involved in the sender, contained in the word of the message. This is the "spiritual" or conscious degree, one level above the natural or material. Our intelligence interprets everything according to our attention and receptivity, and our discernment weighs the impact that this is going to have upon us. How far shall we accept the "stop" or "go" sign at the crossing?

But if we only understand the words and not what the energy is behind them, we have almost nothing in our hand! "Hands up!" (was it a joke, or was it serious?) Every word is valid only in its total context—of the other and of ourselves—we can never get

called attention to the fact that this is the most immediate area of correspondence between the spiritual and the natural levels. There is an inborn set of corresponding motions, and much of body language has been recently explored in many areas. Under certain circumstances a transmission of central loves can find better ways than to use words to establish a very close union at the highest level. Two lovers who tune in with each other in holding hands and looking into each other's eyes may have found a much more complete bridge between their minds than others after hours and days of talk. A mother who holds her baby in her arms will communicate her love and feel a response without symbols and noise interfering.

We may remind here that Swedenborg says that at the Most Ancient religious epoch (he calls it church) there was a transmission

Each prayer is a communication with the Lord, if it is genuine, and this belongs to an increasing openness to be led by Him—to listen to intuitions and promptings of love.

away from it. The most decisive element is the parallel to the intention, to the feeling of the originator, and unless we decode or unlock the correspondence of the underlying emotion and gain access to the deeper complex of feelings, the essence or substance of the soul, nothing will be gained. Was the intention of the ad on TV to lure us into buying something we did not need? We hear "Help me!"—what was the urgency—or the mockery, or a simulation of the sound? "I love you"—is this for real, or is somewhere underlying: "all I want is your body?"

The deeper reason for misunderstandings is the failure to empathize with the original motive, even if every word or sign is completely understood. Only the highest level creates that bridge that brings people together, which is an essential feature of love. It can be shown that the degree of the capacity to understand has many shades and qualities according to the capacity to love, or maturity and regeneration. Before going further, we may interject that there are also different possibilities of establishing a communication of deeper feelings—this may be brought about by music, especially by song, or by movements of the body. We saw the dance and its function in worship at this Convention.

Especially voluntary and involuntary facial expressions can convey feelings, as every actor demonstrates. This was specifically underlined by Swedenborg, who

of affections through movements of the face, before language was invented.

The fact that there is any communication at all around is in itself a proof of the reality of the world of spirit or our real life—a fact that is given little credit today, where the emphasis is upon the material things. Information itself is spiritual, it cannot be weighed or measured. When we speak of "bits," we do not mean the meaning itself, but the smallest symbols which we can manipulate. In every case, it takes a human mind to recognize the correspondence or to decode it to get the information, or what we have on a computer screen would be worthless.

The more our civilization advances, the greater is the role that communication plays. About one third of the total national income of developed nations is spent on the various forms of communication: in the media, in all the technology supporting them, for telephones, schools and universities and in countless other fields. All of them emulate the world of spirits, where communication is much more free and perfected than in the material world, where it so often needs material carriers with all their imperfections. Yet again, also in our world there is extrasensory perception or ESP, only to a much lesser degree than in the world beyond.

Any act of understanding is a little miracle in itself, if we regard it closely, as it

was already observed by Augustine in his recorded discussion with his son Adeodat. If we understand now considerably more through acquaintance with the doctrines of degrees and of correspondences, we should still not forget that there are more miracles contained in consciousness and communication than appear at the first impression.

One thing is sure: the definition that is presented in the "Encyclopedia Britannica" 1979 of communications as "...the exchange of meanings between individuals through a common system of symbols..." is not fully adequate, although it covers essential aspects. The universality of mental states as the deeper causes, and their structure is still little acknowledged today. The chain of events listed in that article appears also shortened, when these items are enumerated: the source, the encoder, the message, the channel—then the decoder, and the receiver.

We may only remark here in passing that a detailed and complete understanding of the processes is of the greatest importance for a theory and explanation of learning. A more comprehensive grasp of all that is involved in attention and acquisition of knowledge, especially of the emotional factors and blocks may expand the efficiency of much of our teaching at home and in schools to a great degree. Indications that this is possible are shown in the so-called super-learning, which is under investigation at the present time

All real comprehension has to take full account of the subtle realities of the soul, especially a creative element. The channels of transmission have their limitations, and every one has to expand on his own what is perceived through the senses—even though over 50% of our language is redundant. Here is still a wide field of research open, and I hope that our heritage will point to new and great advances.

In a religious framework, upon which everything else depends, there are two aspects that may be outlined in a short way here: the dependency of all communication upon regeneration or the developed capacity to love, and the aspect of communication in Scripture—and in both fields we have unique contributions.

Love and Communication

Assuming we could eliminate all love, all mutual acceptance and empathy, all understanding would be reduced to a minimum—there would only be monologues, perhaps threats and commands. The more authoritarianism there is,

the more there will be isolation. It is less known that blocks to understand that may be deeply seated go back to traumas, or deep impressions of fear, caused by situations of lack of love and understanding in childhood. Also in adults, fear, hate and all negative emotions stand in the way of accepting information.

On the other hand, the more mutual love can be acquired, the more it will lead to trust, compassion and empathy, and thus to increasing improvement of communication. In the heavens, we hear that there is communication of joy from one to the other, and the same happens in a loving family, where each one contributes to the whole atmosphere. The essence of love is a desire for unity and the blessedness of others, thus love promotes all good interaction, while resentment and hate will undermine it.

It follows that the quality as well as the quantity of all communication is determined by the maturity of the individuals involved and regeneration is characterized by the awakened capacities of accepting and loving. The more a true Christianity can contribute to emotional growth through promotion of true understanding of each other, the more it will bring us towards happiness and peace, individually as well as socially.

This process begins with some attempt to overcome the separation from God, which is the essence of sin, and endeavors to follow the Great Commandments of love towards God and the neighbor, of which the Ten Commandments are explicit interpretations. The more we get a feeling to keep life sacred and to promote it (not to kill), and to develop a sense for keeping, loving and developing the truth (no false witness), we can gradually proceed and ascend to the directives involved in the Sermon on the Mount, which encourages us to greatest honesty: "...let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than these is of evil (Mat. 5:37). We may make progress towards the great ideal of love even for our enemies, which is the characteristic quality of heaven; at least we may strive for complete forgiveness and understanding. All these qualities in human relations flourish when they are grounded in a communication with the Lord, whose radiation of spiritual energy is of love and truth: we will love the Lord all the more, the more we can recognize and feel His power in ourselves and in all human beings that follow His Will.

Regeneration is only fully mature if it transforms our loves. It is thus a lifelong process—yet different stages of maturity in various areas are discernible, and each one is a step in the story of Creation that hap-

pens within. The greater true maturity we can achieve with God's help, the greater will be our capacity and willingness towards increasingly profound and satisfying communication, and the easier and simpler will be all mutual understanding.

Each prayer is a communication with the Lord, if it is genuine, and to this belongs an increasing openness to be led by Him—to listen to intuitions and promptings of love. We may often notice that when we pray for another person, we come to understand him or her soon in a new way. In extreme cases, a prayer may establish a transfer of spiritual energy that has a healing effect even upon the body, as well as upon the soul. All healing, also in the medical field, is a process of understanding care.

All insight psychotherapies of different schools can be summarized in this: real understanding helps one to get in touch with ourselves and towards finding new energies to grow. Love gives strength to oneself as well as to others, because it incorporates the power of God, wherever it is genuinely received by humans. It can only be genuine, if the dependence upon the Lord is acknowledged and felt. This leads to the most important point: the communication of the Infinite with the finite in the Holy Writ.

The Word of God

Here is a message encoded in simple words that were written by imperfect agents, much of it frequently revised under the guidance of Providence. In the deeper levels of meaning is hidden the infallible power of Love and Truth in the guise of often simple words and stories. The more we can advance in regeneration, the more it can be given to us to recognize these deeper levels, and, beginning with the literal sense, to discover the light that helps us to bring these insights into our lives. At times, we may not get anything from our reading, and at other times we may be carried in raptured elation through meditations that mean a close communication with the heavens. Here again, it is repeated prayer that opens the doors of influx and understanding, as well as acquaintance with those teachings that lead the way to living application of the principles of a New Heaven and a New Earth.

A readiness and wonderment is also necessary to become sensitized to understand the voice of the Creator in nature. We hear and understand as much as we are ready for and to those with open eyes the world becomes increasingly full of signs of the wonders of the Lord. The heavens pro-

claim the glory of God, and in all things the imprint or correspondence of the hand of the Maker can become visible. We may advance in this towards a new vision of the Lord, becoming more open to the beauty of nature, as we learn to protect it from exploitation and pollution.

Readiness for communication with God as redeemer in a human form is opened in a supreme way in Communion—here is mutuality, and we can internalize His words that assure us that this is the way He gives of Himself, His Flesh and Blood, His Love and His Truth into us to feel and perceive it as our own. This acknowledgment opens new gates to our fellow humans, and yet it has to be purified through temptations to grow towards creative spontaneity in those phases where we can be led by love, not through duty or truth alone.

Learning to see with the eyes of love opens the ears to really hear, to wise and caring, yet clear-sighted and realistic attitudes. With Francis of Assisi we can pray more to understand than to be understood, and to progress in the discovery of the presence of God within us; He with us and we with Him—this is the hallmark of the New Age—to stay in live communication with the Risen Christ in His Second Coming in our hearts. □

The Rev. Horand K. Gutfeldt, Ph.D., is minister at Hillside Community Church, Swedenborgian, in El Cerrito, California.

The Upper Room

The Sword Bathed in Heaven

Leon C. Le Van

In the fifth verse of Isaiah 34, Jehovah declares: "My sword shall be bathed in Heaven." Those words may seem especially timely with memories of two World Wars still fresh in our minds. But it is not national wars we should be concerned with here, but with spiritual wars.

To spiritual warfare we are called by the Lord himself. He leads us to the conflict. He

shows us the objectives. He teaches us the manner of fighting in the words quoted: "My sword shall be bathed in Heaven." What a stirring picture those words put before us. We think at once of a great champion standing on the earth against his enemies with his sword brandished to the glory-painted sky.

In the spiritual sense, the "sword of the spirit" (which is also the "sword bathed in Heaven") is the "sword" of Divine truth. It is thought empowered by Heavenly affections. We make use of the Heavenly "sword" when we employ the powers of our minds not to hurt others but to help them. Suppose you know of someone among your friends has come into serious enmity against a neighbor. Do you feed your friend's sense of resentment? Do you stimulate his envy? Do you help him plan revenge? It will not be so if your mind is a "sword bathed in Heaven." With every stroke of the Heavenly sword you help overcome the ill will that has overpowered your friend's life; and if you are faithful in your use of the Heavenly "sword" your friend will presently become a better Christian and better person because you employed the "sword bathed in Heaven" on his behalf.

But let us not forget that the Lord's "sword of the spirit" is a two-edged sword. "Out of his mouth goeth a sharp two-edged sword." Thus your spiritual sword must have two edges also. It must have an outer edge for warfare against evils outside of yourself. It must have an inner edge for warfare against the evils within.

One of the worst such evils in us is self-love — which we may here call "love of prestige." Love of prestige calls for honors and distinctions above all others. Prestige wants the first place in the sun. The psychologist Alfred Adler maintained that the love of prestige is the supreme source of all the evils in humanity. Any person who has conquered the love of prestige is one who has labored heroically with the "sword bathed in Heaven." Once you slay the love of prestige with the two-edged "sword bathed in Heaven," all the rest of your journey in the footsteps of your Savior becomes a life of loving services and kindly benedictions to your neighbors and friends.

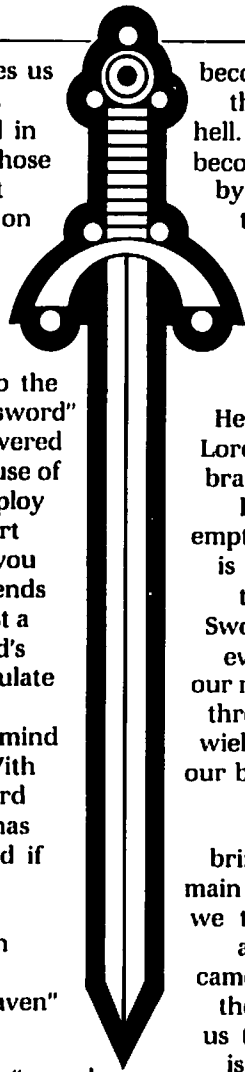
You then put away selfishness. You then give yourself for the good of others. You become meek and humble of heart. You

become as far removed from the "seat of the scornful" as Heaven is from hell. You become teachable; your spirit becomes as a little child; and you are led by the Lord your Heavenly Father. You triumph with the two-edged "sword of the spirit." You triumph with the "sword of the truth" from the Word. You triumph with the "sword bathed in Heaven."

Thus we have the story of the Heavenly "sword." Isaiah pictures the Lord Jehovah with sword uplifted and brandished, standing in the midst of a land of wild beasts, repulsive birds, empty desolate habitations. That "land" is human life. It is that "land" which the Lord Jesus Christ bathes with His Sword in Heaven to recapture from the evil and destructive things that occupy our racial heredity. But he can act only through our hearts and minds. He can wield His "sword bathed in Heaven" on our behalf only if we want him to do so.

Do we think the Lord Jesus came to bring peace upon earth while evils remain in the "land" of our heritage? Do we think the Lord's peace is a peace at any price? "I tell you nay." The Lord came to bring "not peace but a sword" in the presence of evil. He does not teach us to cry, "Peace! Peace!" where there is no peace. Thank God it is so. It only remains to be added that we, too, must wield the "sword of the spirit" which the Lord puts into our hands by the truths of His Word. He who gives you the "sword" of truth gives you spiritual welfare by any other means or by any other strength than that which you receive from the Lord of His Word.

Take the sword of truth from the hand of your Savior. Wield it with all your strength. So shall you be the Lord's follower. So shall you be his disciple. Yea, so shall you be "more than a conqueror" through Him who loves you and teaches you to fight the battles of your spiritual welfare with the sword of His spirit — the sword of His truth — the "sword that is bathed in Heaven." □



Presidential Address to the New Church of South Africa

Obed S. D. Mooki

There has been much unhappiness in our Country over the last twelve months, but especially during the unrest which started at Sebokeng, near Sharpeville, in the Transvaal. The riots started at the beginning of September, 1984, and have continued to the present day. It was as though only children were involved at first, and it seemed the trouble was confined to the Vaal Triangle only, but in no time the fire spread farther, and the fathers and mothers were roped in, and other areas, not only in the Transvaal, but also in the Cape and the Orange Free State and other places.

The seriousness of these riots and general unrest throughout South Africa can be gauged from the official statistics released by the authorities. From September, 1984, to the end of March, this year, 216 Blacks and 1 White, were killed; 736 Blacks were injured. Damage to buildings during the same period has been given as 28 million rands, and more than 721 vehicles, costing more than 12 million rands, were burnt out or otherwise destroyed. The number of people arrested, including children, for the same period, is in the neighborhood of 10,000.

There have been more and more riots since, and more and more killings. And many of these killings and injuries were not inflicted by the police, but by our own young people, against members of the police force and others accused to be collaborators with the "System." The way some of those people were killed was, to put it mildly, diabolical.

We have been affected by these riots and this general unrest in many ways. At least three of our ministers, and more laymen, who have been serving their communities in urban councils, suffered threats of violence, and actually suffered violence in a few cases. Some of them had to resign.

I believe that though the situation in our Country is so very tense, and without hope, almost; there is still hope of a solution to all our troubles.

I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is 'somewhere' on this troubled Boat, perhaps in the 'hinder part' of it, and that

as soon as our Government and political leaders call on Him, He will come along, as He did in the days of yore, and that He will say "Peace, Be Still!" □

WOMEN COMMUNICATING



PHYLLIS BOSLEY, EDITOR

Holiday

Heart!
Stand up and take a bow!
Look sprightly now
And cut a holy caper;
For now the soul a holiday
would take,
And so
Bow low for Jesus' sake.
This is the day and this the
hour, forsooth
The soul would make celestial
somersaults of truth.
This is the day, and this the
hour for grace,
Therefore, world, stand back
and keep your place.

Betty White
San Francisco

Executive Board Meeting The Alliance Of New Church Women

The members voted to send the 1986 Mite Box to the Mooki College Fund and we hope to have it well publicized. Our 1985 Mite Box, to help with travel costs for children under 12 years of age, amounted to a little over \$1,000. Applications will be handled by the Rev. Ronald Brugler. Grants, based on

need and distance, will be given up to \$100.00 per child. All Mite Box offerings are to be sent directly to the Alliance Treasurer.

We considered a project in which all Alliance members could take part and decided to focus on a knitted baby blanket which is simple to make. Directions will be published in *The Messenger*. These blankets are distributed to clinics around the world by Church World Service. I hope each of you will talk it up in your local churches, and that our isolated members will participate and thus feel a part of the Alliance.

It was suggested that we might place a Mite Box on a table at our regular coffee hours each Sunday. In this way those who are not members may participate in this thank offering.

Doris Tafel, President

Chaired the meeting at Almont, MI.

June 29, 1985

Report on "The Ribbon"

Mary C. Ebel

On Sunday August 4, the Peace Ribbons that some of you made, were wrapped around not only the Pentagon, but the Capitol and Lincoln memorial as well. These three buildings were also linked together with ribbons along a Virginia highway, across Memorial Bridge and up both sides of the Mall. That's a lot of ribbons. About 25,000 were sent to Washington to make up the 15 miles needed.

The founder of this activity, which commemorated the fortieth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, is Justine Merritt from Denver, Colorado. Her wildest dreams realized this turnout.

The program was extremely well organized. At each of the three sites there were speakers, people singing folk songs written for this day and some of the survivors of the bombings. My Peruvian daughter, Maria (from American Field Service days) was eager to be with me, so we gathered with others on the Capitol lawn. There a third of the states had tables with their ribbons on them. If you couldn't find your own, you carried one for someone else. When we started to walk, there were staff members along the route to answer questions and guide us. By two o'clock we had paraded around the Capitol and onto the Mall, where we tied our ribbons together. Balloons were released and there was much cheering. It was a thrilling sight to behold and I wouldn't have missed it for anything. 250 of the rib-

bons will go to the Peace Museum in Chicago, others to Oakland, California, and still others elsewhere around the country.

Two other times I've marched in Washington during the struggle for E.R.A. By contrast, this was much less vehement but far more important. This was not just a celebration to recall Hiroshima or a demonstration by a group of anti-war pacifists. It was a statement by a lot of people concerned about our growing nuclear stockpile. We must not close our eyes to the craziness of the nuclear escalation.

From South Africa

Dear Margaret Ball,

Thank you ever so much for your letter and greetings from the Alliance of New Church Women. We highly appreciate the part our sisters are playing to try and get things better for us. We are all concerned. At our last Annual Conference a resolution was passed that we, as a church, should concentrate on praying for peace for our country. We are looking forward to a time when there will be peace, the kind of peace that the Lord would like us all to have, the world over. As you know there really is much to pray for, and keep together for, especially as a church.

Our church continues to grow. For this we thank God. When we hear how concerned our brothers and sisters the world over are about us, we feel very good, and encouraged.

Yes, Margaret, we have been given the "Go Ahead" at a time when everything around is difficult. However, the Lord is merciful. We have during this last month managed to level the grounds of the new site. There were many holes as the site has been vacant for over fifty years. We have also managed to have the two sites joined together, and fenced, giving it all a dignified look. I can safely say a small beginning is around the corner. With your joint prayers and good wishes, we should be somewhere in a few months.

We wish the Alliance all the success. Convey our greetings to our dear brothers and sisters of the New Church in the U.S.A. and Canada. Tell them we love them all.

Affectionately yours,

Eulalia Mooki,
South Africa



Book Review

Invisible, But Mighty

James F. Lawrence

Emanuel Swedenborg is the spiritual father to all of the New Thought denominations, as well as the Shakers, the progressive socialist communes of the 19th century, and most of the important liberalizers of religious thought in America. So runs the theme of a new 400 page book by a successful American author and scholar, who is not affiliated with any Swedenborgian organization. *New Thought Or A Modern Religious Approach*, by Martin A. Larson, Ph.D., who has more than a score of popular books to his credit, goes much farther than many Swedenborgians would dare to go in asserting that Swedenborg is THE, not just a, spiritual philosopher responsible for the massive shift in modern religion from a non-rational faith to one that is guided by understandable and illuminating spiritual principles.

The Trinity as three separate personages, Jesus' death as an atonement and sacrifice for humanity otherwise lost by reason of original sin, the existence of a physical heaven and hell, the necessity and saving power of Holy Communion, and the belief that Jesus will one day return in physical and recognizable form to conduct a Last Judgment and inaugurate the Kingdom of Heaven, are all pillars of conventional Christianity which have been giving way to a more elevated and spiritual interpretation.

According to Larson, the new, more enlightened approach, taught now by large segments of mainline Christianity, as well as by the New Thought churches, was first fully articulated by Emanuel Swedenborg. Indeed, Larson describes the Nordic as, "The great revealer of all time."

The first chapter, titled, "Swedenborg: The Fountainhead," introduces Swedenborg's amazing life and mission and covers two dozen or so Christian themes re-defined by Swedenborg. Much attention is given to his spiritual understanding of scripture, elevating the Bible from the confusing literal shell of teaching material to a unified and pure presentation of the Divine and its operations. The single most important teaching of Swedenborg's that has been picked up and amplified by many strains of New Thought and New Age groups is that of Divine influx. Larson sees this revelation as the first insight that a "vitalizing power flows constantly and universally from the central life-giving force into everything that exists." This teaching provides the basis for many New Thought and Holistic practices of physical and mental health. In the old Christianity, people were seen as spiritually impotent, needing a vicarious salvation and a mediating ecclesiastical order to conduct their spiritual affairs. The modern rejection of this view in favor of an understanding of people as spiritually powerful, if they commit themselves to spiritual and mental health practices, stems from Swedenborg's writings.

In another chapter, devoted to tracing Swedenborg's influence on "The Great Popularizers" of the New Theology, Larson cites the "Unitarian Swedenborgians" (Ralph Waldo Emerson, Theodore Parker, William Henry Channing, William Ellery Channing, George Ripley, Margaret Fuller, among others) as being heavily imbued with Swedenborgian thought. Henry James, Sr., Henry Drummond, Emma Curtis Hopkins, Thomas Troward, Charles Brodie Patterson, Ralph Waldo Trine, Joel Goldsmith, Emmett Fox, Horatio Dresser, Christian Daa Larson, Ernest and Fenwicke Holmes all received extensive treatment as spiritual writers, teachers and leaders of important movements, who relied on essential Swedenborgian teachings for their religious innovations.

In addition, the Christian Science Church, the Divine Science Church, the

Church of Religious Science, the Unity Church, as well as the early New Thought pioneers, Phineas P. Quimby and Warren Felt Evans, all receive a chapter each, examining their contributions to progressive religion and their debt to Swedenborg.

Larson tends to give Swedenborg's direct influence every benefit of the doubt, and many a church historian will not be willing to concede some of the connections Larson makes between various thinkers and Swedenborg's revelations. This reviewer, in fact, recently gave a presentation on Swedenborg to a group of a dozen ministers from New Thought churches (Divine Science, Unity, Religious Science), and only two of them had any awareness of who Swedenborg was, and neither of them had previously supposed the Swedish titan to have been very prominent in the development of their theology.

Overall, however, the sheer quantity of documentation begins to make an impressive case for what many of us in the church have long been contending: namely, that Emanuel Swedenborg's writings have proven to be the means by which an invisible, but mighty new age has dawned. Furthermore, this transformation has occurred subtly, largely through the minds of cultural movers and shakers other than the various Swedenborgian organizations. It is good, finally, to hear a non-Swedenborgian Church scholar discover the same intriguing thesis.

Mixed in with familiar Swedenborgian themes are several New Thought themes that Larson sees as clearly taught by Swedenborg, but which may be news to many longtime students of the 18th century revelator. In at least two areas, Larson seems to interpret Swedenborg too conveniently for his purposes of painting Swedenborg as the progenitor of New Thought. It is difficult for me to understand how he can be so awry on these two matters, when he has obviously labored through a thorough study of Swedenborgian theology.

Both areas have to do with the nature of God. The first is Christology. Repeatedly throughout the book, Larson suggests that viewing Jesus as God in much the same way that we all are capable of becoming Gods was begun by Swedenborg. New Thought churches make no distinction between the nature of Christ and our nature. Christ was merely a great Wayshower, someone far advanced upon the path. We all can and will be just as spiritually attuned someday. Swedenborg, however, was repeatedly at pains to

distinguish between Christ's glorification and our own regeneration. Though they may be parallel processes, they are separated by a discrete degree: Jesus was of the Source; we are receptacles of the Source.

The second area is even more central to actual religious practice. Larson continuously cites Swedenborg's God as an impersonal God. Since God is immutable cosmic law and is pictured as a Central Sun, Larson presents Swedenborg as thereby ridiculing the notion of a personal God—one to whom we can talk and pray. Knowing God personally—relationally—is not a part of New Thought, so far as I can make out. For Swedenborg, however, the fact that God follows immutable laws does not suggest the impersonality of God. Rather, the greatness of God is such that God is *beyond* personality—much *more* than personal—which does not mean impersonal. The Highest is so vastly beyond our consciousness that the best we can do is to be related to Him as if He were a person. The human personality is our highest experience of consciousness. Therefore, God is far more consciously relational with us than we can understand or know. Indeed, Swedenborg did not merely believe that he had a personal relationship with the Father—he *knew* it.

Generally, however, this reviewer finds that *New Thought Or A Modern Religious Approach* deals faithfully and creatively with Swedenborg's revelation and its issuance into the mainstream of the American religious thought. More than any other book to date, Dr. Larson's lengthy, but readable story of the new theology documents broadly and solidly the Swedenborgian influence upon the culture in which we live. (*New Thought Or A Modern Religious Approach*, Martin A. Larson, Ph.D., \$19.95, Philosophical Library, 200 West 57th St., New York, NY, 10019.)

□

People and Places

Fryeburg Family Camp

The Fryeburg New Church Assembly had another grand session this summer. Situated on the crisp and clear Saco River, with the White Mountains in the backdrop, this Swedenborgian family camp offers inexpensive vacation opportunities that are spiritually stimulating as well as relaxing. There were two classes complete with original artistic visual aids for all ages of children; lec-



Colgate Searle examines his City on the Water at the edge of the Saco River, providing fun for all.

tures followed by discussion was the fare for teens and adults; and enormously generous portions of fellowship and recreation were available for everyone. Campers are housed in cabins, rooms in the main building or in tents. Some of the activities are swimming, team sports, mountain climbing, canoeing, musical and dramatic presentations and sight-seeing. For early registrations for next year, write to Louise Woofenden, 48 Highland St., Sharon, Mass. 02067.

Martin Leads Communication Workshop

Dr. Perry Martin, a resource person for the Board of Education, facilitated a workshop on the subject of communication for the Trustees and organization leaders of the Fryeburg Church of the New Jerusalem. The five hour workshop brought the leaders to a point of decision-making on several ideas. There was strong consensus that the

time had been spent productively. Dr. Martin is available for use by most local congregations. She may be contacted at: 40 Fawn Lane, Kennett Square, Penn., 19348.

Zacharias Takes English Assignment

The Rev. Paul B. Zacharias, longtime minister at the Church of God Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario and editor of *The Messenger*, has agreed to fulfill a temporary vacancy in the General Conference Swedenborgian Church in Birmingham, England. Rev. Zacharias and his wife, Pat, will be spending this church year in Birmingham, and they welcome correspondence from any of their stateside friends. We will be hearing from Paul this year through occasional columns. Their address is: 41 Winleigh Rd., Handsworth Wood, Birmingham, England, B20 2HN. Interesting footnote: Believe it or not, Paul made the *Guinness Book of World Records* this summer by officiating at the first recorded wedding held in a football stadium.

St. Louis Minister on TV

Utilizing the free and broad publicity of the airwaves is becoming increasingly popular for Convention ministers. The Rev. James F. Lawrence recently sat in for a short interview on a talk show program run on the local CBS affiliate station. For approximately 6 minutes, Lawrence answered questions and spoke about the Swedenborgian Church on the program "Confluence." Since the interview in late May, the program has been shown at least four times, resulting in both phone calls and a few visitors to the church. The church was also featured recently in an article entitled "Garden Chapel Option For 1980s Weddings." Appearing in a special bridal section of the country newspaper, "The Citizen," the article described the physical charm of celebrating weddings in the garden sanctuary of the Church of the Open Word.

New Blake and Swedenborg Book

William Blake's visionary books of illuminated poems have fascinated and puzzled readers for over a century. A newly published anthology, *Blake and Swedenborg: Opposition is True Friendship*, draws upon new research and historical works to uncover sources and underlying meanings of Blake's art in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. Dr. Kathleen Raine, the noted Blake scholar, asserts in a previously un-

published essay in this anthology: "Wonderful as are Blake's poems, his visionary paintings, his aphorisms, it is, in essence, the doctrines of Swedenborg that Blake's works embody and to which they lend poetry and eloquence."

Now, for the first time, this anthology draws many isolated strands together to create a new critical overview of a previously undervalued source of inspiration for much of Blake's art and beliefs. *Blake and Swedenborg: Opposition Is True Friendship*, 158 pages, quality paperback, \$9.70 postpaid. Swedenborg Foundation, 139 East 23rd St., New York, N.Y. 10010.

Volume 3 of *Arcana Caelestia* to Appear

The John Elliott translation of Swedenborg's foundation work, *Arcana Caelestia*, has now progressed through the third volume of the 12-volume set. Volume 3 continues to show how the story of Abraham is an account of the formation of the Divine Human. It details many of the spiritual perils that best humanity, and deals in profound psychological terms with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The project is funded by the General Conference of the New Jerusalem. Volumes 1, 2, and 3 may now be obtained from the Swedenborg Society, Swedenborg House, 20-21 Bloomsbury Way, London, WC1A 2th.

Religious Programming for Television

There are some outstanding programs coming up on the three national TV networks this fall. Below are synopses along with the best information available at this time. (Local stations frequently tape these programs for delayed broadcast, so check with your local affiliate on the broadcasting plans for any possible changes.)

Viewers who wish for television networks to carry programs dealing with religious values and issues need to be aware that their power as consumers is extensive. Here are five steps to secure air time for a healthier slate of television fare.

1. Make use of all your available contacts to local network affiliates: contact churches, business leaders, personal friends of station personnel.

2. Have your contacts phone and/or write letters to the program director or station manager of your local TV network affiliate.

3. If an affiliate finds it impossible to carry a program on the scheduled air date, urge alternative scheduling. Generally, networks allow up to 60 days for a delayed broadcast.

4. Use the information in this newsletter to publicize programs in local newspapers, denominational publications, community service newsletters, etc.

5. Write letters of appreciation to your local stations.

CBS "For Our Times"

Network feed: 11:00-11:30 a.m., EDT (until the last Sunday in October; thereafter, EST). For the convenience of stations that prefer to tape *For Our Times* for delayed broadcast, CBS now offers a prefeed at 2:00 a.m. Caution: check with your local CBS-TV affiliate for the time and date they will carry any program. Most FOT programs have interfaith credits: National Council of Churches, New York Board of Rabbis, and United States Catholic Conference.

October 6 (tentative), "Foxwood Springs Revisited" (working title)

A return to Foxwood Springs, the creative community-centered residential project for the elderly near Kansas City developed by the Disciples of Christ. (Interfaith).

October 13 (tentative), "Saying Goodbye" Part II (working title).

Focuses on a pioneering program developed at Fort Worth's Huguley Memorial Hospital (one of 26 health care centers in the Sun Belt run by the Seventh Day Adventists) to help the bereaved come to terms with and transcend their sense of loss. Features Huguley Chaplain Larry Yeagley, who conducts the free, five week Grief Recovery Program open to the public; and interviews with "graduates" of the program.

October 20, 27 programs to be announced.

November 10 (tentative), "A Program on the Coalition for Alternatives in Jewish Education" (title TBA).

The Coalition for Alternatives in Jewish

Education (CAJE) is a grassroots organization through which professional educators and lay leaders share innovative ideas. At CAJE's 10th annual meeting on the campus of Northwestern Illinois University at DeKalb this summer, CAJE members from throughout the U.S. and eleven other countries gathered. Folksinger Theodore Bikel shared his observations on Russian Jewry following a recent trip to the Soviet Union.

November 24 (tentative date), "Harvest of Hope".

Features an ecumenical summer camp for teenagers at Accomac on Virginia's Eastern Shore under the auspices of the Society of St. Andrew, a world hunger ministry affiliated with the United Methodist Church (originator of the famous Potato Project). "Harvest of Hope" campers spend their mornings gleaning potatoes, tomatoes, and cabbage which would otherwise be left unharvested in the field, for distribution to the hungry; in the afternoons and evenings they study ways of making a difference in a hungry world. Teenagers from Methodist, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches participated in this year's "Harvest of Hope."

(Other November "For Our Times" programs to be announced later.)

ABC News Specials

October 27 (tentative date), 12:30 - 1:30 p.m., EST, "The Moral Crisis in American Education (working title).

Is education today an extension of the family—or a vehicle for the transmission of the larger society's values? How are values taught in schools? In a homogeneous society such questions would never be asked. But in a pluralistic society they become burning issues for parents, teachers, students—and religion. This hour-long ABC News Special, hosted by correspondent Carole Simpson, looks at the moral crisis in American education, ways values and character development

are transmitted, the family's relationship to the schooling process, and the relationship (or conflict) between public or private education.

(Caution: the date shown is tentative and this program may air earlier in October; be sure to check with your local ABC-TV affiliate before publicizing.)

NBC Religious Specials

October 27, 5:00-6:00 a.m., EDT, "Land of Fear, Land of Courage" (re-run; OAD 12/5/82).

Recent events in South Africa have thrust Desmond Tutu, now Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg, into international prominence as an opponent of the system of apartheid and a steadfast advocate of social change achieved by non-violent means. Bishop Tutu received the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts. Originally broadcast in 1982, Land of Fear, Land of Courage is re-broadcast now because it is a timely and prophetic portrait of a country in turmoil and of a bold and compassionate spiritual and political leader. (National Council of Churches).

November 24, 5:00-6:00 a.m., EST, "Chagall's Journey"

Author Chaim Potok is host-narrator of this hour-long tribute to the great French master of modern art Marc Chagall, who died earlier this year. Visits to museums in Paris, Nice, Jerusalem, and Philadelphia, and reminiscences of people who knew and loved Chagall. Chagall's Journey features the magnificent stained glass windows on Biblical themes commissioned by David Rockefeller for the Union Church of Pocantico Hills in Tarrytown, New York. (Jewish Theological Seminary).

December 8, 11:00-11:30 a.m., EST, "Falashas No More"

A moving account of the resettlement of the Falashas—Ethiopian Jews—in Israel following the dramatic airlift which rescued them from famine in their native land. The realities of culture differences as well as the bonds of a common religious heritage are poignantly portrayed. Filmed in Israel, this Hanukka Special Program is narrated by Rabbi Stanley Schachter of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. (JTSA)

Meditation Tapes Available

Two musical meditation tapes, an outreach project of the Urbana Society with assistance from the Pittsburgh Society, are now available. Steve Ledingham, B.S.S., N.H.A., and Barbara Mackey, Ed.D., both performed the music and produced the tapes.

Tape 1: "Service Music From Urbana" features hymns ("Morning Has Broken" and "Blessed Be The Tie"), chants (Sanctus and Nunc Dimittis), plus other music suitable for formal and informal worship and meditation.

Tape 2: "Music from Urbana" explores sounds and moods in an improvisational manner.

Both tapes contrast performances on an antique cello and state-of-the-art musical synthesizers. The organ music on Tape 1 was recorded on the three-manual Reuter pipe organ in Weaver Chapel on the Campus of Wittenburg University in Springfield, Ohio.

Musicians playing on the tapes are: Paul Wolfe, organist and minister at Christ Episcopal Church in Springfield; Steve Ledingham on the synthesizer; Barbara Mackey on cello. Dr. Mackey is the classical music coordinator, while Ledingham is the technical coordinator. Both Steve and Barbara are active in the Urbana Society.

Production of these tapes is but one aspect of *Creative Musical Experiences*. In the past four years, Steve and Barbara have

Service Music from Urbana Cassette Tape



Side I - Service Music -
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presented *Creative Musical Experiences* for schools, nursing homes and church groups, including the General Convention at Windsor in June, 1985.

Each tape and accompanying brochure is available for \$7.00 postpaid. Please indicate your order clearly and send with check or money order to: Dr. Barbara Mackey, 727 S. High St., Urbana, Ohio, 43078. Please allow 4-6 weeks for production and delivery. Order now for Christmas and other special occasions.

Dear Lord, our Savior, Guide and Friend

Bessie Althin Toombs

*Dear Lord, our Savior, Guide and Friend,
At Thy dear feet we lowly bend,
Ever watchful, may we be,
Eager, Lord, to walk with thee.
Lift Thou our eyes to see thy Light
Opening paths to guide our steps a-right,
That we may ever helpful be*

*In Thy service Lord, with Thee.
We thank Thee, Lord, for blessings never
ending,
May we share them, by weary hearts be-
friending;
We need Thy guidance, Lord, in every way,
Lead us dear Lord, with Love, we pray.*

Have You Been Counted?

The Boston Church challenge is still open. What an opportunity for all of us to double our giving! Imagine — for each \$10.00 donation to the Advanced Degree Education Fund, the endowment will grow by \$20.00 until the total fund reaches \$50,000. However your donations, or pledges, must be in before October 31, 1985.

This is a most worthwhile effort since the people we aid in education today at S.S.R. and at other seminaries for the Masters and PhD programs are indeed the New Church's future leaders, preachers and teachers.

Please send pledges or checks to:

Advanced Degree Education Fund
48 Sargent Street
Newton, MA 02158

Make checks payable to **General Convention** and indicate on the check that your contribution is for the Advanced Degree Education Fund.

From the Nominating Committee

The General Convention offers you an opportunity for service in an area where you may have special interest and skill. The Nominating Committee will be presenting a slate of nominees to the 1986 convention to serve the Church in such areas as the General Council, the Board of Missions, the Dept. of Communication, the Board of Education, and the Board of Managers of the Swedenborg School of Religion.

We ask that you give your talent and commitment-level some thought. If you find that you have the interest to serve the Church at the national level, please communicate this to me for consideration. Simply address your correspondence to: Rev. Eric Zacharias, Chair, Nominating Committee, Pretty Prairie, Kansas, 67570.

LETTERS

What is Pro-Life?

Dear Editor,

I have sent the following letter to the American Life Lobby: "A candidate for government office, when asked about his stand regarding abortion, said, 'If there is any right to life, there is a right to be wanted.'"

How many anti-abortionists have volunteered to give continuous care and love to the thousands of unwanted babies born into our world neglected, abused, and rejected? To ignore the suffering of unwanted or mistreated children after they are born is far worse than preventing their birth.

Abortion is the lesser of two evils. The birth of a physical body is not the life; and to insist upon birth without providing a protected life is a tragic error.

Your energy, time, and money could immediately help humanity if applied to the proper development of children already here, rather than to bringing babies into a crowded world.

It is not the quantity of the population that is valuable, it is the quality."

Swedenborgians may be interested in the following quote from Swedenborg's *Divine Wisdom*, III-5: "Will and understanding do not begin with man until the lungs are opened, which does not take place until after birth." For Swedenborg's discussion of when human life begins, readers may wish to consult *Divine Love and Wisdom*, 316 and 404-407.

Gwynne Dresser Mack
Fryeburg, Maine

Request For Books

Dear Editor,

We in the Northwest are launching a new regional outreach ministry. We have just leased a beautiful and historic stone house (that is actually called the Stone House) for a ministry that will include Swedenborg books for sale, a reading library and space for seminars, workshops and meetings. Located in the greater Seattle area, this new thrust in ministry will allow us to better meet the needs of the growing spiritual movement in this part of the country.

We are in special need of books for our fledgling reading library. We are asking people from all over Canada and the United States to send us Swedenborg books, Swedenborgian collateral works and