

THE MESSENGER

DECEMBER 1966



DECEMBER-JANUARY CALENDAR

December	7	John F. Seekamp's ninetieth birthday.
	9, 10	General Council Research Committee at Philadelphia
	30	Poole-Schellenberg Wedding
January	21-23	Convention Planning Conference and General Council
	24	President Tafel to address The Council of the Clergy of the General Church of the New Jerusalem, Bryn Athyn
	29	Swedenborg's Birth Date

JOHN F. SEEKAMP CELEBRATES 90th BIRTHDAY

John F. Seekamp is 90 years old on Dec. 7th. The entire church has reason to be grateful for the long and active career of John F. Seekamp, but any publication connected with the Swedenborgian church owes a particular debt to his ability and devotion. It is a joy to wish him a Happy Birthday and a pleasure to recall all that he has done for the New Church Board of Publications, the Swedenborgian Publishing Association, and most prominently the Swedenborg Foundation. He has been a director of all of these, and President of the Foundation from 1953-1961, and a voice of both courage and prudence in the affairs of his church.

From me formally as editor of The Messenger, and personally as one of the many who have had the pleasure of working with him here are BEST WISHES TO MR. JOHN F. SEEKAMP AND GRATITUDE from me and the church.

POOLE-SCELLENBERG NUPTIALS

The Messenger has learned the happy news that Miss Mary Schellenberg and Mr. Stewart E. Poole will be married in the Wayfarers' Chapel on Dec. 20, 1966. Few readers of The Messenger will need identification of either name, for both have been prominently active in Convention for many years. Miss Schellenberg, whose mother was so largely responsible for the Wayfarers' Chapel, is at present Secretary of the Chapel's Board, and Mr. Poole is Vice-President of the Convention.

URBANA COLLEGE LIBRARY FUND

Word has come to The Messenger that The Ladies of the Pittsburgh Church have given \$100 of their proceeds of a rummage sale to the library and the San Francisco Society has pledged a sum of \$1500 to be paid over a span of three years. The proposal that the Mass. Assoc. pledge \$15,000 reported last month, can now be reported as a pledge rather than as a proposal.

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CONTINENTAL ASSOCIATION FORMED

When President Tafel visited the European field in the summer of 1965 he was able to attend the inaugural meeting of a new body associated with the work of Convention, The Continental Association of the New Church. Formally organized Aug. 28, 1965, the Association unites French, German, Italian and Swiss Swedenborgian organizations in a federation for the pursuit of their common goals. The Association's headquarters are in Switzerland, and the Rev. Alfred G. Regamey, General Pastor for the European Field is president. A Quarterly Bulletin is published in Zurich under Dr. Friedemann Horn's editorship and is printed in English, which serves as a common denominator for members speaking three non-English languages.

The most recent Quarterly Bulletin expressed gratitude to the Australian The New Age for mentioning the foundation of the Association and publication of the Quarterly Bulletin, thus reminding this editor that The Messenger has overlooked an important event in the life of the church. Apologies are in order, but much more so are belated congratulations to the ministers and laymen of the Continental Association, for the forward looking step that they have taken and to Dr. Horn for the informative and most readable Bulletin.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I believe Steve Koke ("The Problem of Swedenborg's "Earths," The Messenger November 66) is using or assuming a larger definition of "human race" than is often used. I think that by "human race" Steve would not limit his definition to creatures with two arms, two legs, etc., who need oxygen and water for survival, but rather he would mean creatures capable of becoming free and rational and with an intellect capable of conceiving of a concept of God, knowing the truth of the concept, acknowledging the love from God, and capable of returning love to God. I think if his definition is something such as this the possibilities of still-applicable truth in Swedenborg's science are greatly increased.

Marian Kirven

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION MEETS

The fall meeting of the Connecticut Association of the New Jerusalem was held on Tuesday, October 18, at the Center Church House in New Haven with the Rev. Clayton Priestnal of New York City conducting the service and administering the sacrament of the Holy Supper.

After the usual sharing experience and sociability of the luncheon hour, the business meeting was called to order. A special guest at the meeting was Mrs. Bertha Berran, President of the National Alliance of New Church Women, who explained that the women of the Connecticut Association could form an Alliance group and become members of the National group. This action was enthusiastically voted, and the per capita tax immediately collected.

Mrs. Foster Woods and Mrs. Martin Lynn were named as a Committee to study the Constitution of the Connecticut Association; their report and possible recommendations to be presented at the annual meeting in May, 1967.

Following the business meeting Mr. Priestnal led a discussion in response to a series of diverse questions which ranged from what Swedenborgian materials are available to the blind, to evolution in the light of Swedenborg's teachings, and on to "Earths in the Universe" in relation to present day speculations about other planets. The meeting adjourned at 2 p.m.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Readers of the Messenger:

This issue comes to you, I hope, some time near the Christmas season, and bears my personal hope that the joys and the deeper blessings of the season are realized for each of you.

Writing this in November, in the midst of pressures that have no discernable relation to Christmas, I am particularly struck
(cont'd., p. 185)

RISTO RUNDO

A Yugoslavian Arrives at the
Swedenborg School of Religion
and Writes his Impressions of

AMERICA!

While I was flying by jet-plane above the clouds, I felt like a man who came for the first time to a long beach in the middle of the summer and could not endure the bright light shining from all sides: from the blue sky with the kindled bowl and from the gleaming white clouds.

My first day was lengthened by five hours. I felt very tired when the plane began to descend. For several minutes we plunged into the gray fog. There were no more white clouds nor kindled bowl. There was only thick gray fog. The plane was still descending. It broke through the clouds and I saw the loveliest sunset in my life: houses, churches, moved like swans, while the red hoop embraced the horizon. It was a real welcome, the most beautiful one. The New Continent spread her arms to me. I shivered and burst into tears.

When we landed, the sun had gone and a strong wind was blowing. We had to go into the airport building. The wind was so strong that I hardly could keep my balance. Somebody offered me his hand. I cannot recall the face exactly, but it was one of the thousands of faces here in America. So I reached the big corridor of the airport. The clerks showed me the way I had to go, but I still do not know what I was told by the immigration officer -- I could not understand anything (I learned later, for my consolation, that he was Irish). I handed him all the papers I had. Then I waited for my luggage beside a giant wheel on which the suitcases turned around. I waited and waited. At last, only one suitcase sprang up. Another suitcase was lost. Again the officers, this time those of Lufthansa, asked me to fill out forms, although I did not understand much of what they asked me. I looked back to see if there was anybody to help me. I saw a man waving his hand. That would be the man waiting for me at the airport, I thought. He approached. Behind the

glasses the black restless eyes of the intellectual, the smile of a child. The appearance is opposite of the stereotype notion we have about Americans. Yes, it is the unknown friend, my future professor who is expecting me. He carried my suitcase, but I did not ask any questions. My astonishment and enthusiasm never end at the goodness of these people towards me. At times I thought I should ask questions to find out the reasons why these people were as they were. But I felt I needed no explanation. A baby that is nourished by his mother does not ask why. So I received the warm human spontaneity and sensitivity that surrounded me at every step. These people see only what is good in a person. Everybody is disposed as a friend and brother to everyone else.

Let me explain this stream whose strength and warmth we in Europe can hardly anticipate. I know that everybody is equally rich, but I am sure they feel equally useful. Anybody is in business with gifts from the Lord. Social influence and power corresponds to social position, which is not a mask that hides secret and negative forces, but is a sincere position that is as efficacious as its bearer who uses it in the right way. No one hates anyone; no one wishes for another's property. Those who are in need are supported by those who have more and who do not expect any thanks or recompense. All goods are God's gifts, our goodness itself is a gift of God and is a means to transmit God's gifts to his neighbor. No one ascribes to himself merit nor asks public recognition. To be good and honest, to trust in other's promises, to respect everyone's convictions, is natural realization of one's inmost ideals. I never thought that there was a society in which the private individual's goals are in accord with the public ones. Everybody has a right to express his convictions and beliefs. These are so respected that these people need much time to realize that there is something perilous for the community. All ideas and actions have accumulated since the beginning in such a manner for the general good of the nation, that the people in this country hardly can conceive that there are ideas and actions adverse to the public interest. This

is that "childish mentality" assigned to the American by the European. But this is only a manifestation of the moral and material prosperity of the nation.

I think that this prosperity is of great and inestimable importance, just as is the Christian and moral background on which the American society is founded. Earlier there were rich and powerful states that were not forced to import either products nor raw materials, with a strong army and a perfect administration. Let us recall only Austro-Hungary Monarchy. They disintegrated because the outside enemies utilized her inward moral instability: class differences and class hatred, intolerance among nationalities and denominations where everyone felt or claimed to be for the public good and to impose on the world his own system, a system that was always ego-centered and close-minded. Austro Hungary disappeared leaving all her people in moral disintegration like she had found them earlier.

From the very beginning the American society has been without class systems in the European sense. In America, there is no such term as one class of the poor and one class of the rich, as Plato set up for his country. There is only one society, one state, and that was not founded by conquerers who subjected others making of them slaves. It has been a free society that we can explain only by the social contract and not by social violence as is the case for most other countries in the world. Her founders were persecuted and discontented members of the Old Continent. Imbued with the ideas of religious and political freedom, they left the Old World carrying in their hands the Bible, that being the greatest treasure possessed by this world, but never fully appreciated. They began with the true and veracious convictions that all human beings are equal in rights and power, and that there is only one Master, that in Heaven. This is a concept never reached nor realized by the people of the Old Continent. In the New World there are no monstrous, ego-centered ideologies -- all men are sheep of the same flock whose shepherd is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Those were my feelings and my thoughts when I listened to the service in a church and looked at those innocent and well-meaning faces which worshipped the common Father.

Meanwhile, I not only went to church, but had many opportunities to watch the everyday life, how people work for a living. And what I observed instantly was that the Americans do not get tired as do Europeans, for they do not work as hard. Their machines help them. But more than the machines, it is the sociable and family-spirit ruling in the offices and factories and penetrating all human interrelationships. One feels the work in this country is originated from the consensus and not from swindle or coercion. Everyone who comes to America to live and puts his signature to the social contract that was never false but palpable truth.

By such work, the American has raised his standard of living: they have cars, the homes and offices are well heated. They enjoy all the delights of the modern comforts, but these delights are not privileges, but the possession of the whole nation. In other words, the technical means of the comfortable living belongs equally to all members of the society, as they are available for most of the population. This way it cannot be the cause of envy and hatred among the people.

And what I enjoy the most is the feeling of authenticity of people's decisions. Also the number of problems one cannot resolve through the classic democratic methods is still increasing, but everything that is settled in these meetings is true democratic relations. Behind these decisions there is no secret and dark power. I have not the feeling of the worthlessness and fruitlessness of my participation in it. God poured many benedictions on this nation in which I am searching for my place.



STEVE KOKE

THE PROBLEM of SWEDENBORG'S "EARTHS"

One attempt to do this seems to be made fairly often:

Swedenborg did not speak to any of the inhabitants of other planets but to spirits of the spiritual world. Hence, any particular planet he wrote about may have lost its inhabitants long ago.

There are two fairly serious objections to this idea. One is that Swedenborg wrote about the inhabitants of each planet in the present tense as if they lived when he wrote. He also reports his conversations with spirits from these planets as if they also referred to the inhabitants in the present tense. (See e.g. nn. 12, 35, 49, 52, 90, 103, 108, 109, and 112) And in one of his strongest references to men on the Moon, he writes, "That there are inhabitants on our Moon is known to spirits and angels, as likewise that there are on the moons or satellites around the earths Jupiter and Saturn." (n. 112)

The other objection is that the spirits and angels who come from each planet remain "near" its inhabitants (or associated with them) in order to be of service to them (n. 47). Since these are the spirits and angels with whom Swedenborg spoke, and since conditions in the spiritual world reflect the activities of those who are there, would they have been "near" their planets if their planets were no longer inhabited? Swedenborg seems to be unaware that anything unusual had happened. And I think that even if they were still there, their functions and organization would be radically different from the functions and organization of spirits who were associated with a still existing earthly population. For one thing, there would be no societies attached to an uninhabited planet in the World of Spirits, where people go immediately after death.

The absence of such an important group of societies would be noticeable in itself. But there would also be a general change in those parts of heaven and hell which had been related to the planet, and I find it difficult to believe that Swedenborg would not have noticed all this even if other spirits did not tell him.

This is a more technical objection than the first one, but there seems to be material for a strong argument here.

Sometimes pure logic seems to offer a way out of the problem:

We can still think of ways in which men may exist on the Moon and other planets in spite of science's arguments. And even if science could show that men do not exist there in these ways, we could always suggest other logically possible ways in which they could exist, and so on indefinitely.

This idea is not usually expressed quite so plainly, for it has a suspect air about it, like an argument which is a little too adaptable to be legitimate. Instead, one just finds it being offered. It is a very tempting maneuver to make, for it is not obvious how it goes wrong. To put it simply, it involves relying on one's imagination to provide an indefinitely long list of logical possibilities which have not yet been investigated and rejected by science. Should one or more of these possibilities come under science's scrutiny and be rejected, a little more imagination can always provide an indefinitely long list of others which one can propose, and so on without any apparent end. The conclusion one usually reaches is that science has not provided an absolute proof of its case, and therefore there is no reason why one should adopt it. Since we can still defend Swedenborg, there is no need to switch sides.

This way of arguing leaves a lot of room in which one can maneuver if he wants to avoid the thrust of an argument against his position. But it can be a two-edged sword. If we decide to rely on it in defending Swedenborg from the encroachments of science, a scientist could turn around and use it against us: What proof do we have that there

are (or were) men on the Moon? Or what proof is there that Swedenborg's spiritual experiences were not invalid or that he was not mistaken? For every argument we might give, it would not be too difficult for the scientist to find some logical way out, some possibility which we had not investigated or could not investigate. It is sometimes easy to forget that the logical procedures available to one side in a dispute should also be made available to the other side. Consequently, we cannot ask the scientist to submit absolute proofs if we would not consider it fair for him to ask us to do the same thing.

But I do not want to say that one should never suggest alternatives. Any of the possibilities we suggest may turn out to be true after all. That is both the reason why we can be tempted to argue this way and the reason why we should be careful. But to justify any intention to keep on suggesting alternatives to the scientist, we have to be able to present strong positive reasons for accepting Swedenborg's statements. For we can keep on suggesting new alternatives indefinitely only if we already know that Swedenborg was right, or that one of the alternatives we may suggest is true. We may not know which one it is, but we must know, rather than merely prefer to believe, that one of them is true. The advantage always rests with the side which has the stronger positive arguments, even though it may not be able to construct a really absolute proof. Consequently, the burden is actually being placed upon us to show the scientist why we still want to defend Swedenborg in the face of science's increasingly strong positive arguments.

As far as I can see at the present time, we have to face the problem of The Earths in the Universe as a direct conflict between two points of view. I do not yet see any way of showing that the conflict does not exist or that we can ignore the whole thing until the science presents an inescapable proof that Swedenborg was wrong.

The strongest reply to the problem of The Earths in the Universe that I have heard is that it does involve a genuine conflict between Swedenborg and science, but that

we have erred in determining where our obligations should lie:

We can only be concerned with the genuine insights which Swedenborg, or anyone, gives us. If he says something which turns out to be false, then we will simply have to accept the fact that it is false. We should be devoted only to what actually turns out to be true, not to anything which happens to appear within the covers of a certain book or set of books.

In other words, we should not define what our beliefs will be in the absence of insight. There is a great deal involved in this statement, but insofar as The Earths in the Universe is concerned, it seems to say that we have committed ourselves to accepting certain statements as true before we had any insight into them; and therefore, when strong opposition to these statements arose from science, we found ourselves faced with a problem of our own making.

This attitude has a tremendous amount of validity, especially as a protest against dogmatism. But I want to make just one point: We never, in actual fact, invest our loyalty or devotion only in those ideas which we have discovered to be true. If we did, we would find ourselves believing very little. We also have loyalties and devotion which go beyond what we know to embrace things which fascinate us, excite a degree of belief in them, and make us wish or hope that we will find them, someday, to be true. Without these loyalties, we would find it difficult to carry on any investigation whatever outside the confines of what we already know. For we would be left without any strong sense of what kinds of answers or insights to look for. And new insights are rarely discovered by investigations which have no sense of direction, or which were not guided by a personal vision. Part of what makes us Swedenborgians is the fact that we have a basic loyalty, arising from some kind of personal vision, to the kind of spirituality and consciousness that typifies Swedenborgian thought. If, therefore, we find something anomalous arising within this framework, it may still present a problem to us whether our confirmed insights can tell us much about it or not. And if we

cannot show that this anomalous element does not have implications which throw a shadow over our framework of unconfirmed ideas, its presence increases the chances that we will not be able to convert these ideas into confirmed knowledge.

The problem of The Earths in the Universe is very much like that. Of course it can still be said that it is a problem of our own making just to the extent that we find ourselves committed irreversibly to Swedenborg's statements. That kind of commitment should be given only to those ideas we know to be true. (Incidentally, this raises an interesting question: Can one really be committed to something he knows to be true? Can I, for example, be committed to the idea that there is a paper in front of me on which I am writing? Commitment seems to lose its meaning unless there is a constant possibility of doubt in the air.)

But just what kind of problem is it? I do not think that it is quite what we, including myself, have often thought. Science actually contradicts Swedenborg on only one point, that certain planets are inhabited. And this point is not needed to establish any of Swedenborg's theological points. Because his theology does not imply that all planets must be inhabited, the fact that Jupiter is inhabited by people of a certain kind, or that Saturn has a particular race of people existing on its surface, has no theological value of its own. It plays only an incidental role in establishing Swedenborg's major theses. For they could be established just as easily if these people existed on other planets in other solar systems and Jupiter and Saturn were barren.

Consequently, we might ask ourselves, "Why worry about it? If science is attacking nothing theological, then nothing of religious value is at stake." Ordinarily, a problem about Swedenborg is a problem about some part of his theology and, by implication, a problem about the spiritual experiences from which his theology arose. But in The Earths in the Universe, it is the other way

around. Nothing of theological value is directly attacked by science, but the accuracy of some of Swedenborg's spiritual experiences is. Therefore, a question arises about anything, including his theology, which was developed from them.

Since it is Swedenborg's theology which has religious value, we have either to show how a possible error in the way Swedenborg interpreted his spiritual experiences in The Earths in the Universe could not have recurred in those experiences which gave birth to his theology, or we have to show that his theology is true whether his experiences were in some ways misleading or not. We could also, of course, just wait until all the planets are explored or until the trend of scientific evidence shifts dramatically in Swedenborg's direction. But I am concerned with the problem as we now find it, since it will probably stay with us for a long time.

We can therefore say, finally, that the problem of The Earths in the Universe is not a problem about The Earths in the Universe at all; it is a problem about our ability to understand and evaluate Swedenborg's theology. If we can do that adequately, then we will not have to worry about what science discovers about life on other planets.

That may or may not be very encouraging, but I think it helps to know that science is merely underlining our need to solve a very old set of problems rather than presenting us with one new one. More than ever nowadays, we need to know more about Swedenborg's doctrines than simply their content.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Protestant Ethic glitters in all its profitable capitalistic spirit like the bright lights of a seaport shining through the smog of atheistic socialism, and the communities united by their love of Christ gather to question, to hope, and maybe to cheer. Is the humanistic love for men the same as the Christian love for men? Is it based on the same concepts of reality?

Christmas Shopper

(cont'd. from p. 179)

by the sense in which Christmas comes as an intrusion in a pattern of life that is almost too busy to stand more demands on our time and attention. The real glory and wonder of Christmas has become almost covered over with the clutter of Yule Logs and Wassail Cups, and that has been all but buried in a mess of colored lights and painted balls, and the whole is virtually obliterated under the "spend more this Christmas" hard-sell line. What is there left that is worth making time for in a world we can never quite catch up with anyway?

If Christmas were nothing more than one collection of things to do -- cards to send, presents to buy, parties to squeeze into a crowded schedule -- then I would know no satisfactory answer to that question. Essentially, however, Christmas is not a liturgy of more things to do, but a new way to be. As a symbol of our Lord's life among us, Christmas is a way of living, of being, that is transparent to reality. Some feeling for the meaning of this transparency can be found in the very layers of tradition that I just mentioned. The Yule symbols and their modern counterparts in multi-colored iridescent flame-proof cordless flashing plastic, and even the nakedly commercial materialism, do not conceal the power and beauty of Christmas from anyone who has not closed his heart to it already. Rather, just the opposite happens: pagan fertility symbols, mass-produced gadgetry, even noisy money-grubbing, all become warmly beautiful at Christmas time because of this transparency. The ultimate reality of love shines through these, even these, as it can through our lives if the reality of Christmas is indeed born in us.

The Messenger in the Mail. Between personal problems of moving, and Convention business of travelling, this issue goes to the printer at the end of November. The new format and process makes possible a very prompt printing schedule, and it should be in the mails during the first week of December. Mail service other than First Class has proved frustratingly slow, however, and with the normal delays of the Christmas rush, it will almost certainly fail to reach many of you before Christmas. This long delay beyond the printing schedule

is something I had not counted on, and am working to compensate for -- the first of my editorial New Year's Resolutions.

Convention Planning Has Begun. The committee that plans next summer's convention has held its first session in Kitchener, and the prospects for the 1967 Convention look most promising indeed. We will be meeting on a college campus again, and Waterloo Lutheran University is a large enough school to house all delegates and visitors in one cluster of inter-connected dormitories, with more comfort and privacy. Dining and meeting facilities will be spacious, ample facilities will be offered for the visiting and fellowship that is so important to us at Convention. The local committee assures us that the weather will be most pleasant!

A theme has been chosen, "Swedenborgian Perspectives in an Age of Revolution," and a text: "Do not let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within" (Ro. 12, Phillips translation). The plans for developing this theme should make this a helpful and memorable convention.

I am reporting this much now, and will be telling you more later, as part of an effort to encourage more of you to attend Convention. Most of us keep coming year after year, because the experience of true community that we find in the task of working, learning and playing together is one of the most rewarding aspects of church life. The best thing that could happen to make conventions better, it seems to me, would be to enlarge the circle of sharing and community -- in other words, for more people to attend more often. It looks from here as though Kitchener, 1967, will be a good convention; I hope you will be there.

It should be an economical convention to attend. We expect that \$6.00 a day per person will be the total cost of room and meals, and since more rooms than we will need are available, no one will run the risk of having to stay off campus, or having to pay more.

See you in Kitchener. Happy New Year!

CHRISTMAS NOW

They say a darkness we can't even see
Floats in the winds of our days' skies
And falls into our bones and genes
And we may die sooner than we might.
It may be true;
What else is new?

They used to tell (and some still do) about
A child born on a long-since night
Who lived as man and loved as God
So that no one would ever have to die.
It may be true;
What else is new?

In night so black that we can't see the dark,
When what we would be aches to bursting
To bear in pain what we must be,
He's born in us and our eyes see through His.
If this is true,
The world is new.

We see not what we want, but what is there:
No futile hopes or foolish fears,
But chains in freedom, pain in truth,
Defeat and victory, fear and joy in one.
And this is true:
Our life is new.

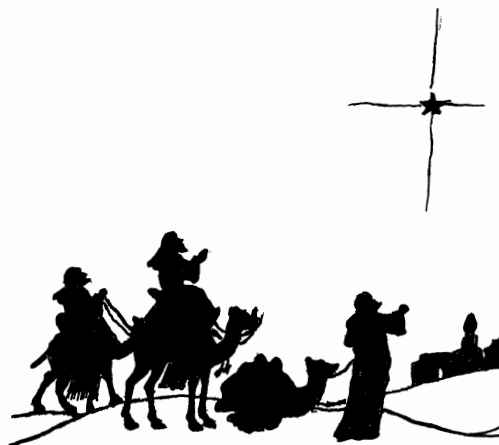
Robert H. Kirven

SYMBOL

If stars are heavenly truths, why then,
The One which shone on Bethlehem,
And hovered o'er the sleeping Child
Was twinkling bright when Mary smiled
And cradled there upon her lap,
The STAR all men would wonder at!

The Truth which led men to his feet
Will one day bring the world to meet
In Brotherhood - since Stars above
Still beam the constancy of Love,
And one component of that Light
Can turn to DAY the darkest Night!

Ruth Ebberts



PEACE ON EARTH

The angels sang of Peace On Earth.
That morning of the Savior's birth;
And through the centuries since then,
We've talked about Goodwill to Men.

Yes, much is said - but what is done?
We've swapped the arrow, sword, and gun,
For bombs so terrible and great,
They can this earth annihilate;

But weapons will not bring us peace,
However powerful : wars increase,
And always will, until we see
That peace must start with YOU and ME.

Until there's love and harmony,
In home and in community;
Unless we feel that we're akin
To ALL, whate'er their race or skin,

Our hopes for peace are bound to fade.
Before we venture to upbraid
Another Country for it's sin,
It would be well to look within.

The riots and the segregation,
Must be suppressed within this Nation,
Or we should not expect to find
A true accord with all mankind.

Teach us, Oh blessed Prince of Peace,
That warfare will not, cannot cease,
Until we overcome the state
Of envy bigotry, and hate.

Help us respect and understand
Our fellow-men in every land;
And in mutual esteem,
Create the One World of our dream.

Susan P. Holmes

(CONTINUED FROM NOVEMBER)

ROBERT CALATRELLO

SWEDENBORGIAN EDUCATION

We've heard time and time again about the problem of young people insofar as mass society, the organization man is concerned. As far as I can see, one of the few philosophers who has delved reasonably, intelligently and in a philosophically defensible manner the problem of society and the organization man is Emanuel Swedenborg. It seems that here is serendipity if this is one of the problems that's pressing man, that Swedenborg does take into consideration the organic wholeness of the individual and then his organic unity with other men. It may not indeed be a bad thing, but a good thing that we are operating as a mass society. If we operate wisely as a mass society, possibly we can exist more fully, with more individuality and organic wholeness as an individual person, in so far as we are more effectively a part of the entire organism. This is a challenge that is being thrust upon us.

If you're looking for some new time for a New Church, this is the thing. Right now in the world today we are three and a half billion people; in all the history of man up until the present time, that's how many people have lived in the world, and as we are going, we are about to double it by the year 2000. So if Swedenborg has something to say to the nature of man, to man in a mass society, it was never more necessary and never more demanded than at the present time when we are going to live as one body whether we like it or not. Whether it's going to be a sick, diseased body; or whether it's going to be a well, whole, vigorous, social body; is going to depend on the degree to which man is able to operate in freedom and rationality so that he can move to evolve socially. This social evolution which is the manifestation of divine love functioning -- not just in one individual, but

in the social body -- is reminiscent again of concept of the Grand Man. You see, if this mass society is going to hang together properly, and effectively, and reasonably, (not just in stop-gap measure, but as a real step forward in man's evolution in man's becoming more fully human), if he is going to be able to realize his existence individually and collectively, then it becomes very important to tap this type of metabolic insight into the spiritual and organic relationship of all men.

The question then that keeps coming up, is one that is usually posed poorly as "Who am I?" The real question is not "Who am I?" but "Who am us?" Yes, what it means to be human is not yet determined. It's going to be determined by what people do, by the choices they make. And the question isn't who you are as much as who we are. And, you know, the answer to this doesn't exist yet. Where are we going to go -- where are we going to go? Now you can respond to this individually or you can respond educationally. You can make little seminar groups and you can help people to the fuller realization of their own potentialities, their creativeness, but then again, you have to also consider this in the light of the whole organism because the question they're asking, implies not only who are we, but who are we when we function with others? What's our position in this organic entity? And this is intensely Swedenborgian and it seems to me that it is the responsibility of Swedenborgian education to respond to this just as intensely.

Now, we go on and look at "uniqueness" in Urbana College. This is a problem that bothers me, this continual return to uniqueness in Swedenborgian education. I deny right off the top, that to use Swedenborg's ideas is going to guarantee that you're unique, because I think that in California we've started new department in education a new approach to education, that is very Swedenborgian. No one calls it "Swedenborgian," but it's working. It's appealing to the intellectual forces on campus. It's appealing to the students, and we're getting many things in the program that are meeting the needs because they're universal needs.

Now, the uniqueness at Urbana, whatever it is, is not the general aims of Swedenborgian philosophy. If you're going to achieve a Swedenborgian uniqueness or a in a Swedenborgian educational institution, it has to be in the particular educational practices. Now it is true that the small liberal arts college and our own large multiversity are hoping for many of the same ends, but we're going at them with far different means. If you want to compete, you're lost. You just can't do it. No institution can afford to compete with another institution. We can all share the same ends, but we can't compete. We all have to play a different ballgame and no school can afford to play the same ballgame as every other school. You can't compete if you're going to use as your model of competition the processes of education in the large institution. You can't claim as uniqueness, ideas that are universally valid.

What you can claim, I think, as unique, are the practices which are going to be reflective of these ideas in this as a distinctly Swedenborgian institution: reflective of, if you will, Swedenborg's ideas (Although I think that they, like he, belong to the ages). This is going to have to be a conscious practice. It can be a conscious practice so you can have a certain uniqueness in this. At a faculty cocktail party the professors present were discussing their successes in placing their students in remunerative positions upon graduation. The president of this large university turned to a young faculty member, a teacher of philosophy, and asked, "And what are you preparing your students for?" The answer was, "For unemployment." That's a pretty practical preparation, in a sense. It's the task of the university and the task of higher education generally, to prepare people for unemployment, for what they do with themselves when demands are not exerted upon them. The very highest concern it seems to me, and in the deepest sense the most practical, is what a person becomes and this is largely determined through what he does, not necessarily what he does in a job situation. Somehow or other this impractical education may be the most practical of all. As we know right now, without going

into more of these fantastically frightening predictions (I can't see why Swedenborgians ought to be frightened by them) -- in the present, not the future -- right now we can produce everything we produce now -- our whole gross national product -- with 20% of the work force, simply by automation. We can do the whole ball of wax right now and 80% of us can sit around and draw a check. And so really the most practical thing to do, if we do not want to spend our leisure time killing each other, or sit in front of the "boob tube" with a six-pack, is to give an impractical education in addition to a practical education. Perhaps Urbana should offer a uniquely "impractical" education.

The issue of change arises and there are those who respond to change with: "Let's have change, let's have newness, but let's not drop the tried, the true, and the old, and the reliable." Well, you know, like it or not, comfortable as it seems, semantically indefensible as you may be able to protect it and yet still get away with it, you can't do both. Now how are you going to judge this change -- this is the frightening thing. You have to have a certain amount of courage I think, the same type of courage which Swedenborg the man evinced. You have to say, here it is, let's see whether it works. Let's see if in fact it alters man for the better or the worse. Let us see whether these things work together for the good or whether they don't. There is a self-correcting mechanism I think must be built in, whereby you can maintain a continual metabolism with the world around you, with this social organ of which all of us must be a part, whether we have a theological conviction or simply a social conviction, how are you going to plan change? How are you going to plan change and know that the plans you make are really going to be congruent to the future you can't predict? It's just running around talking and making noise and hoping maybe you're going to be lucky and hit it. Now, if you want to gamble on being right, call it that. If you want to follow the safe and sure path, do what everybody else is doing -- if you want to get on the fourth team, you see, and play the game that the universities are playing -- there's always a spot in the sandlot. We're an affluent

society. We can afford people piddling. You might even get to be, you know, a reasonably good liberal arts college and do a rather good job at this. But don't delude yourself that you've got Swedenborgian education.

You've got a nice little school and there's nothing wrong with it, and you won't go to Hell for it, and people will not criticize you for it. It's a nice thing, it's fine but don't call it Swedenborgian because that isn't really very honest, you see. You can say Swedenborgian-supported. How would that be? Hopefully you could say that. And if you play the game right, you can get support from other places. But if you're going to have the name, play the right game. The right game it seems to me is a game that has very important rewards to it. This is the education that Swedenborg is talking about -- the adult mind, the adult intellect given freedom and given rationality.

The question, then, you see, of how can Urbana compete, of how Urbana can be unique, is in a sense answered by how can Urbana be Swedenborgian, because Swedenborgian philosophy does give you some clues. It is true that you can not build reasonably in the near future, a cyclotron; that you cannot have the facilities to teach quantum physics. But you can have on your faculty men who can take this research and do something intensely Swedenborgian with it which has not yet been done, and that is to discover its rational uses.

This is the great tragedy of the world. This is the great need of man. Here is a unique use, a unique precept to follow in being Swedenborgian: help determine, help analyze, help bring together, synthesize the scientific knowledge, the research which is being done -- oh, in piles and piles and piles of publication -- and somehow make a meaningful pattern out of it all. Help sway the uses of these things because it is by man's uses -- how he is used socially -- that will be determined what he will become.

This is part of the rationality which is an element of Swedenborgian education and

then with it arises the issue of freedom. I heard a speaker say that "What is needed is a high degree of academic freedom."

A high degree of academic freedom is a little bit like a high degree of pregnancy. You either are or you aren't. You either have it or you don't. You can't limit it. Now this is where one of the dangers of being Swedenborgian come in. You simply have to trust, as did Swedenborg, in the nature of man to exercise freedom with rationality and consider that education is the process of loosing the intellect to this rational exercise. And you have to run the risk of letting people do what they will and giving them the opportunity to be wrong and to evaluate it, and to perhaps then later be right.

Maybe this is the whole of higher education -- freedom and rationality. If it is indeed the whole of it, the essence of it, it's something we all share; but for which we have to find the particularly appropriate forms, the particularly appropriate modes, for expressing these two elements.

There are things to be considered I think as you leave this convention: whether you really mean what you say as Swedenborgians. If you do, you are committed to education as a manifestation of divine will. This is a part of your theology. Like it or not, it's a part of the philosophy you bought when you bought the faith. And either you're going to buy all of it or you're going to send part of it back and you have to make this decision. Certainly in terms of higher education, in terms of social need, we're at the crest of the tide. This is pointed out time and time again to you. The swelling college population, the explosion of knowledge. There's no better time, the time is right. Relevance to the times was at once Swedenborg's problem and his greatness. We look back and ask, "Why didn't people recognize this fellow?" The fact was the man was ageless and he was living in an age which was not ready for him. He was ready for it, and in a rather cavalier manner he took the time that he lived in and then he extended, as (cont'd., p. 191)

STATISTICAL NOTICES

DEATHS

Pearl N. Pausch, wife of Mr. George Pausch of Baltimore, passed into the full consciousness of the spiritual world on Friday, November 4 at 2 p.m. at the Shady Nook Nursing Home. Resurrection services were conducted by the Rev. Thomas Reed on Nov. 7 in the Jenkins Funeral Chapel. Friends of Pearl and George Pausch in the Baltimore Church and throughout the Convention that they both loved and served so long (Mr. Pausch was Vice President of Convention until 1957, and still is a warm hearted friend to meet at Convention or on the committees he serves) extend love and sympathy to Mr. Pausch.

Mrs. Josephine Boese, member of the Pawnee Rock, Kansas Church, born Sept. 13, 1884 in Dundee, Kansas, passed away May 3, 1966. Resurrection services were held in the Pawnee Rock Church on May 5, with Galen Unruh officiating. Interment in Dundee Valley Cemetery.

Mrs. Boese was a life long member of the Pawnee Rock Church and taught Sunday School for many years and was an active member of Ladies Aid until her illness in later years.

Clark S. Nichols, son of the late Hon. Malcolm E. Nichols, former mayor of Boston, and the late Edith Willaims Nichols and brother of Mrs. Melvin Gale (Marjorie Nichols) of Cambridge, Mass. Church. He had been a bombardier in World War II and was decorated a number of times for his service with the Army Air Force after flying numerous missions over enemy territory in the European theater. The resurrection Service on Sept. 15 was conducted by the Revs. Everett Bray and George Dole in Cambridge Chapel.

Henry W. Fiege, a recent member of Hillside Chapel (Baltimore) passed into the spiritual world on October second at Union Memorial Hospital. His resurrection service was conducted by Rev. Thomas A. Reed on Oct. 6th.

Mrs. Sherman Eddy (born Marion Spamer in 1896) of Avon, Connecticut, died on July 28, 1966. A devoted Swedenborgian all her life, she attended services in Springfield, Mass., and New Haven, Conn., as often as they were held.

For the past several years Marion Eddy brightened and inspired the lives of seven other New Church women with her fine Round Robin letters.

Those of us who knew Mrs. Eddy remember her as a quiet, radiantly affectionate person, well-versed in the teachings of Swedenborg; one whose pleasure it was for many years to bountifully supply the flowers for our services. A good show of lilacs is quickly obtained, but how long does it take to gather a dessert-plate-sized bouquet of lilies of the valley?

Mrs. Eddy is survived by two daughters, Mrs. Ernest Machabee of East Hartford and Mrs. George Zondiros of Cohasset, and five grandchildren. For the service in her memory the small chapel was well-filled with people who lovingly gathered to honor Mrs. Eddy on that October day.

Rev. Robert J. Strong, ordained into the ministry of the General Convention in 1917 died Feb. 22, 1966 in Ouckland, New Zealand.

MARRIAGES

Patricha Hejmy of Otis, Kansas, and Richard Thill of Great Bend were united in marriage on Nov. 19 with Rev. Galen Unruh officiating. They will make their home on Bissell Point northeast of Great Bend.

Best wishes to Sandra (Rankin) and Bill Lewis married on October 28, 1966 and to Dorothy (Stone) and Ralph Libby who were married on Oct. 23. Both ceremonies took place in the Fryeburg Church.

BIRTHS

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Iacopi (Mrs. Iacopi is nee Peggy Parsons) announce the birth of their first child, a girl, Heather Marie, born on Oct. 22, 1966.

BAPTISMS

The Rev. Othmar Tobisch baptized during morning worship in the San Francisco Church, the infant son of Robert and Judith Langstrom of San Carlos, to the name of Eric Robert on Oct. 9.

Gay Elaine, infant daughter of Dale and Joan McDonald was received into the church by baptism on Nov. 20, 1966, at Montezuma Kansas.

CONFIRMATION

The Rev. Othmar Tobisch confirmed into the Faith of the New Church, Mr. Paul Azadian, during the Worship Service on October 2nd.

Jacob Unruh and Dale McDonald were received into full membership in the church at Montezuma, Kansas, on Sunday morning Nov. 20 during services conducted by Galen Unruh.

(cont'd. from p. 189)

Emerson said, "beyond the times." But you see, the times are catching up now and it would be a shame -- if there can be historical tragedy this would be an historical tragedy -- if somehow or other at the crest of the time, when the times are beginning to catch up with the scientific concepts and philosophical extrapolations of Swedenborg, if those who have taken his name, give up the game. We meet in a tent today and there's sort of an allegorical significance to this. The late Jan Smuts, the famous old Boer statesman made the statement that humanity has struck its tents and is on the march. And in a few days you will strike this tent and I think the question then is -- are you just going to put it in storage? As a church are you just going to have it here for the next time? Or are you going to pick up the tent and march with humanity?

REPORT FROM "GREEN GABLES"

The preliminary notice ran: "We are most happy to announce that Rev. Brian Kingslake and his wife Jill will lead a two-day Retreat at Green Gables Retreat House, Twin Oaks Road, Akron, Ohio, on Friday and Saturday, Nov. 18-19. Their theme will be Sharing Swedenborg's Insights Won't you come and meet this delightful, talented and dedicated couple?"

Of the twenty-two people who registered in response to this invitation, only one had had any previous acquaintance with the Writings of Swedenborg; most of them had never heard of him. The organizers of Green Gables had met the Kingslakes at the Ohio "Camp Farthest Out" (an interdenominational religious camp) and had had their curiosity whetted sufficiently to want to have the New Church Doctrines explained more fully.

Brian did most of the talking, giving five addresses of one hour each, covering most of the principal teachings. But Jill was by no means in the background. She interrupted her husband and took over whenever she thought he had failed to make a point clear, or that the audience were losing their grip. In fact, there was often a kind of dialogue, if not a duologue! She also helped answer the questions, which came out in a steady stream, revealing great interest, even amazement, at the ideas presented.

Between the addresses were periods of joyous hymn singing (with Brian at the piano) and Jill even led "Devotions in Motion" (a kind of spiritual eurhythmics). Also there were wonderful prayer groups, and periods for meditation and quiet reading.

During the course of the two days, a deep fellowship and strong group feeling developed. People asked, "Why haven't we heard these teachings before?" and another comment was, "We have always felt this kind of thing must be so, but have never heard it expressed so clearly and completely." Many were astonished to learn how small the New Church denomination still is, and that there is only one Swedenborgian Church in the whole of northern Ohio! About fifty books were distributed, mostly Spalding's "Introduction"; and "Heaven and Hell."

The Messenger

December, 1966

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