

THE MESSENGER

Official Organ of the Swedenborgian Church

A.N.C.L. HOUSE PARTY



Story p. 18

FEBRUARY 1968

ANCL HOUSEPARTY IN BOSTON

During the Christmas vacation period, December 27th through December 30th, 1967, the Boston New Church League sponsored a Houseparty. It was attended by the Leaguers of the New England States and the Detroit League. There were about fifty Leaguers in attendance. This was a workshop under the direction of the Reverends: George McCurdy, Randy Laakko, George Dole and Robert Kirven.

Each day we had discussions on diverse subjects: Thursday morning, The dope problem; Thursday evening, The Youth and the Church; Friday morning, Special Communion Service, Evaluation of two Beatle records, "Within you, Without you" and "She's leaving home". Friday afternoon, Discussion led by Mrs. Wheaton of the Cambridge Church, "Faith and Truth", Saturday morning, Evaluation period.

These discussions did not take up all of the time, some time was spent socially. Wednesday evening was "get acquainted night", Thursday afternoon was sightseeing time. Friday evening we had a dance. This was not too successful as far as dancing was concerned but the teenagers enjoyed a camaraderie that only teenagers can enjoy, all

this with the dance music in the background. Saturday after lunch, we broke up and each group left for home at various times.

The discussion periods were interesting, more so as we look back on them. At the evaluation time on Saturday morning, we decided that the next time we would break



our discussion groups into smaller units, so that everyone would be able to participate.

Another plus feature of this houseparty was the experience of living together as a family twenty four hours of the day. It taught us things we would never be able to learn by just attending Church. The lessons the

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Vol. 188 No. 2

February, 1968

Whole No. 4907

Published monthly, except for the one double issue in July-August, at the office of the Editor, c/o Swedenborg School of Religion, 48 Sargent St., (P.O. Box E) Newton, Mass. 02158.

Application to mail at second-class postage rates is pending at Boston, Mass.

The Messenger is the official organ of the Swedenborgian Church, founded 1817, incorporated as the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America.

Printed at Thomas Todd Company, 14 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. 02108. Incorporated publisher: the Swedenborg Press, 79 Orange Street, Brooklyn, New York, 11201.

Subscription free to members of the Swedenborgian Church; non-members, \$3.00 a year; foreign postage, 25 cents extra. Gift subscriptions, if from a member, \$1.50. Single copies, 25 cents. Address subscriptions, checks, changes of address to the Publisher, 79 Orange Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201.

Contributions toward the cost of publishing should be sent to:

The Treasurer, Swedenborgian Church
Chester T. Cook, Box 215, Deer Isle, Maine

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Address all editorial correspondence and manuscripts to the Editor, *The Messenger*, P.O. Box E, Newton, Mass. 02158. The opinions of contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or the Department of Publication, or represent the position of the church.

BEHOLD THE LOWLY TURTLE

Some sage has said: "Behold the lowly turtle, he never makes any progress until he sticks his neck out!" Well, I am going to stick my neck out, in the hope that, as a minister of the Swedenborgian Church, I may help my Church make progress. My Church has been "sticking its neck out" and I think it has been moving, but perhaps it has been doing something analogous to what is going on in our Air Space Program -- sending rockets to the moon, hoping to gain some valuable information for purposes as yet not clearly defined for the average person down here on this lowly earth. Oh, I am certain that eventually it will all "pay off", but what concerns me, and I think many other faithful citizens of the land, is: "How do we keep a sense of balance? How do we maintain a semblance of orderliness? What things have values that are safe and secure?" And I can imagine that someone might say to me: "My friend, have you forgotten how the pioneers who settled the untamed West left everything behind and went out into the unknown? Can't you see what has been accomplished because they dared to pioneer?" Yes, I can. But they knew even while they were "unconnected" with the old traditions and the centers of civilization, that those centers were still there, and that they would return to them some day. They knew that someone was "at home" and busy about the task of maintaining the status quo. They would have been very badly unsettled if they were bothered by the thought that while they were out there in the West opening up new areas, anything should happen that would dissolve the established centers of human activity and government from which they ventured forth. They knew that Uncle Sam was still Uncle Sam, that the flag was raised and lowered in certain places upon the occasion of every sunrise and every sunset. And it must have been a warm feeling just to know it. Furthermore, if while they were out in the adventuresome wilds they had received information that the nation was under severe attack and threatened with extinction, they would have been deeply concerned and many would have re-

turned home to come to the defense of their beloved country.

I think it is time we recognized that many among us in the Church have the feeling that our "established centers" are under siege, and that certain things need to be maintained.

We are acutely aware of the impact of the changes which are happening in the universal Church on earth. We seem to be swimming in a tumultuous sea of change. Because of it there are many expressions coming forth from our people which express the need for change in our own Church.

What I would like to do is to point out what I see happening and to suggest for your consideration a framework of solid reference. I see some of us suggesting one thing and then another as a panacea for whatever we think ails us. One suggests that "sermons relating to present day life situations" are valuable, but that our "liturgy has no present day meaning." Perhaps one says that Prayer Groups are "fine for others, but not for me." Another person suggests a "focused ministry", the idea being that each church must surely have something special to offer to its surrounding community. Still another projects the idea that it might be best to let the Swedenborg Foundation do the work of publicizing the teachings of the new dispensation. He thinks that the Church Universal in the world is reacting to the new theology and that's all that matters. Therefore, why should we struggle to keep up the maintenance of a church institution? Then there is the "way out" idea that we don't need church buildings anymore. They are too expensive. Some think our buildings are "temples built to the vanity of man."

Under a constant barrage of this type of suggestiveness, the average person begins to develop fears to the point of sickness. Someone has said there are three ways in which people react to crisis. They can adjust, they can maladjust, or they can, and often do die. Some of us are adjusting to present conditions, some of us are maladjusting, and some of us are still barely alive enough to be able to say that we are dead.

We are a little too fond of telling ourselves

that "the Lord never gives us more than we can bear." Perhaps it is time to see the reality that the Mental Hospitals are full of people who had more than they could bear, and that the cemeteries are also full of people who couldn't stay alive because they had more than they could bear. That is small comfort to a troubled people, especially in view of the fact that the whole idea of the Lord's purpose is toward LIFE, sanity, wholeness.

It is possible that the affliction of confusion about what has value and what doesn't is at least a part of the cause of so many men of the cloth leaving their posts to become what they think is "more actively engaged" in the world of social change. The constant nagging and unhealthy fear that the institution of the church is dying, along with the impatience engendered by the confusion of change, tends to urge men to move into other areas where their frustrations can be alleviated in greater activity. And while this does contribute to eventual constructive change, it also speaks to us in terms of the need to fall back upon resources of clearer thinking, the need to "sail a steadier ship," and to sail it forth from known ports into the open seas, and back again to known ports. After all, Columbus believed there was a Port of Spain to which he could return and did.

Marilyn Turley, in writing in a recent letter to the Messenger, while urging what she refers to as a focused ministry, also urges us to face reality, and that when we finally do, we will wonder what took us so long to find the meaning of our common ministry. I like that. But I can't forget that there again some people who simply need the Church as a point of reference and are in their present state of development incapable of another's idea of a focused ministry. But they are good parents, good grandmothers and grandfathers, they are doing their life's work usefully with a heart and a will. And they all are comforted in knowing there is a place where people gather to be filled with the spirit of God as they worship together at some altar of God. That place is a church building. The Word of God has many references to the fact that even in the wilderness men built an altar, maybe no more than a pile of rocks, to be a point of reference, if

you will. They hoped to remember a Peak Experience which took place there, and hoped others might ask what did happen there and could be told the story. Men do live and go forward on the memory and in the faith that others have encountered God along the way. That's partly what the Bible is all about.

It isn't practical to think that we don't need church buildings anymore. I would ask where fifty or a hundred or two hundred people might gather on a winter morning with the temperature at zero and a stiff wind blowing. Jesus, they say, preached in the open air, so why do we need church buildings? Jesus would not have expected people to sit in that kind of "open air" to worship under those conditions. Granted, the reality is that some of our churches are over-built, too expensive to maintain. But the remedy is not to do away with the whole idea of the need for a building. If change is called for, perhaps it might be best to sell the old and build one more adequate, dependent upon overall evaluation procedures. I suggest that a group of believers needs a building to meet in the same way that the spirit of man needs a body to be at home in so long as he is in the world.

I would suggest that the Church is all things to all people, but that the individual may reflect in his life only a part of the meaning of the "total church." Each person has a different need. But to fragment the structure in favor of some present day notion about the meaning of the Church is a dangerous concept. The "total Church" should at least attempt to meet, as best it can, the needs of all. We still need that valuable physical point of reference, a place set apart for the corporate Holy Acts which men perform in the Name of God. Ministers may be humble enough to acknowledge that they cannot individually perform in a satisfactory manner in ministering to the needs of all the members of a given parish. But there are ways for lay people to become involved that will enhance any clergyman's ministry.

A part of the ministry itself is to lead people more fully into the meaning of the larger ministry to the world, be it from the standpoint of group ministry or individual minis-

try. Some churches may feel a greater urgency in the ministry of publishing abroad the knowledge of the Second Coming through books and written materials. Fine. Other churches may have a different focus. It may be in the area of social conditions. Perhaps group counseling or prayer therapy best fills the need. Whatever it is, the whole point is that behind, within, around, and above the people who are engaged in being the Church on earth, hovers the Spirit of God, leading men to express His Life in a multitude of activities. The real Church of God is His Life actively expressed in the everyday lives of his people. Or we might better call it the "spiritual church" thusly described. However, spirit acts upon and within material. The material reflects that Spirit. The church on earth is both spiritual and material. We might remember that even in the heavens there are "places" of worship or there were in 1770! I don't think heaven has done away with its temples built to the honor and glory of God!

I conclude that the church is best thought of as a very complete entity, more than any one ministry, more than humanly conceived varieties of ministries. There is great good news abroad in the world today. The mighty structure of an outdated Church is disintegrating. That is true. Witness the great changes in the Catholic Church in Holland. (Look magazine, Jan. 23) They are changing their concepts of liturgy. There are many expressions about past and present values coming from those who are engaged in the process there. Some will remain and some will be cast aside. But it is obvious to this observer that everywhere the focus is on a re-evaluation of Christ's redemptive work in human life. Their liturgy is changing and from where this observer stands it appears to be reflecting more and more what the Swedenborgian Church has been teaching and trying to practice these many long years. The act of Communion is becoming central with them, along with a greater emphasis upon the reading and teaching of the Word of God. Let us, along with them, carry on the great work.

"42" QUINCY DESTROYED IN FIRE

42 Quincy Street, the brown shingled house which served as dormitory for the New Church Theological School, and was the home of several faculty members -- the Robert Kirvens, the Everett Brays, the Franklin Blackmers and others -- caught fire the night of Jan. 14th. The house is part of the property purchased from the school by Harvard University and was being used for offices, so no persons were endangered by the blaze, and a few of the more important papers were recovered by Cambridge fireman, James Nagel.

The structure was completely gutted by the fire, which damaged the structure to such an extent that it had to be razed immediately as a safety precaution, and it was erased from the landscape by the end of the week.

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young people learned at home and in their local churches were put to use in the close atmosphere in which we lived. No one had their own way, it was give and take all the way. The other person's viewpoint had to be recognized. It was a joy to see the spirit in which everyone cooperated. This alone made the houseparty worthwhile.

In these troubled times it seems that teenagers too often are looked upon as delinquents. Teen-age delinquents -- how often have we heard this? It is refreshing to note that the need was recognized and a positive approach was taken to help our Leaguers have a better understanding of themselves. With this knowledge there is no need to become delinquent.

So a special thanks to you Boston and Rev. George McCurdy for having this Houseparty. We enjoyed it and met a lot of nice people. Let's have more of them by other Leagues.

Ruth Brandau

Sponsor Detroit League

A note from one of our Leaguers:

The experience of working and worshipping together with so many other youth in our church is a wonderful thing especially under the supervision of truly interested people.

Betty Jean Johnson

OPEN LETTER FROM KENNETH KNOX

*A reply to many responses
after the announcement
of his resignation.*

In my letter of resignation to the Los Angeles Society, I simply said, "Marjorie and I are convinced that we are just not equipped for, nor suited to, the parish ministry and to remain here would not be fair to you nor to us." And, in a letter sent to: - the President and President-elect of Convention and the Presiding Minister of the California Association, I said, "Marjorie and I have not had the proper background and training, nor have we had sufficient education, to do what apparently needs to be done in the parish ministry today. In addition to this, I have a recurrent health problem and continually mounting debts. This seems best for all concerned." Admittedly, this did not say very much but, at the time, there did not seem to be any purpose in trying to explain further. However, letters and comments in response to my sermon, published in the November Messenger, and about my resignation indicate that a more detailed explanation might be in order. I hope that this will help you to understand.

I was born in England in 1916 and came to Canada in 1919. During 1932-34 things happened to me that led to an earnest examination of the claims of Christianity, as I found it presented in the New Testament. Under the circumstances, I felt I had absolutely nothing to lose and everything to gain by taking what I found seriously and, in 1944, after 12 years of preparation, during a depression and a war, I was privileged to experience the 'internal sense' of the Bible. In 1945, while in the process of trying to communicate my 'discovery', I was made aware of the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. I found them to be consistent with my own experience and they provided me with a sound basis for further study and research.

During the past 21 years my efforts to apply the principles expounded by Swedenborg have been rewarded by a continuous unfold-

ment growing out of and based firmly upon Swedenborg's teachings. I have made repeated efforts to share the results of my studies and experiences with both ministers and laymen but have found that, in most cases, either the basic and essential principles underlying my experiences have been rejected, or the possibility of anyone going 'beyond Swedenborg' is not even entertained.

Over the years I have talked to each of the Presidents regarding my study and research. I have also written to several of our Church organizations (i.e. Swedenborg Foundation, Swedenborg Scientific Association, The New Church in Australia) but received no encouragement. Because there has been no response to my efforts in this direction, I no longer feel the obligation to try to communicate 'within the Church'. It appears that they are either not interested or are not in a position to comprehend.

It has been difficult to understand actions and decisions made by the governing bodies of the Church which, at times, seem to ignore completely the Principles of the Church. It is possible that our lack of education is the stumbling block. In any case Marjorie and I have decided that we would rather be guilty of ignorance than to wilfully act contrary to what we believe is the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We find additional strength in the fact that the basis for our decisions are confirmed and supported by everything we can find within the Bible and the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. Also in the deep spiritual growth we both have experienced.

My convictions regarding the teachings of the New Church have not changed! I am fully aware of the content of Swedenborg's writings -- from The Principia to The Coronis -- and I accept, without reservation, what I find developed and expounded throughout these writings. In fact the validity of Swedenborg's methods and principles have been confirmed in terms of my own life and experience and a whole new dimension has opened up for me and my family.

I am being forced to leave the Church (not

the Ministry), because there is no outlet for my talents and interests. And because I find no real conviction within the Swedenborgian Church, as a whole, regarding such things as: -

1. The gift of the 'Holy Spirit' which we are told will 'guide us into all truth.'
2. The 'internal sense' of the Bible and our ability to communicate with the Lord and the heavens by means of it.
3. The actual 'Presence' of the Lord in His Divine Human.
4. The reality and the nearness of the 'spiritual world' and its influence upon us.
5. The possibility of establishing a legitimate and orderly method of communication with the spiritual world, based on an understanding and an application of the laws and principles expounded by Swedenborg.
6. The importance of the 'science of correspondences' in understanding what is going on in the world today.
7. The concept of 'discrete degrees' which is unique in Swedenborg, and its meaning in terms of our own spiritual experience.
8. The 'conjugial' principle, also unique in Swedenborg, and found expressed throughout his writings, particularly in his book Conjugial Love.

Since all of the above have become positively and firmly integrated into the life of me and my family, there can be no place for us within the Swedenborgian Church until they are taken more seriously. What Swedenborg presents in terms of 'the understanding' must be established within the realm of personal experience and on the level of life itself'. Surely, after two hundred years, the principles expounded so clearly by Swedenborg should be able to stand on their own merit and be able to meet the challenge of today!

There is another good reason for my resignation. I feel morally obligated to get work that will ultimately compensate me sufficiently to take care of my existing debts and to provide more adequately for the needs of my family. Since we have expended all of our personal resources in the endeavour to do what we feel is right, there seems to be no alternative now but to seek another,

more lucrative profession in order to meet moral and legal obligations. I honestly believe that I can be of more use to the Lord's Church and to my family 'outside' the organization -- at least it seems so at the present time.

In my Association sermon, I cited the 'experimental work', being carried out at El Cerrito as possible signs of new life within the Swedenborgian Church. I personally do not consider these efforts as particularly 'Swedenborgian' because it is obvious to me that they do not center around and, in fact, quite often openly deny, what I consider the basic and fundamental teachings of the Swedenborgian Church regarding Jesus and the Bible. However, I believe that, insofar as these efforts are genuine, there is a possibility that they will discover for themselves the essential nature of Swedenborg's writings and perhaps come into an awareness of the reality of the 'Second Coming', in terms of their own experience. This seems to me to be much healthier than paying homage to a 'set of books', or than interpreting Swedenborg in such a wooden manner that he is forced into a theological strait-jacket from which there is no escape.

I also mentioned in my sermon, as possible signs of 'new life', our recent admission to membership in the National Council of Churches, -- also the beautiful facilities now available at the Swedenborg School of Religion. In this connection I must admit that I was not in favour of pursuing membership in the National Council of Churches nor have I been particularly impressed with what I thought was happening at the Theological School. However, my experience this summer at the Seminar convinced me, not only of the sincerity of the men involved in these projects, but also of the possibilities that are latent in the Swedenborg School of Religion and through our now having a voice in the National Council of Churches. It also convinced me that I am not -- and probably never will be -- a 'writer' or a 'scholar'. I do not have the necessary background and training. Which is another good reason for looking elsewhere to express myself.

Kenneth W. Knox

COMMITMENT TO STRUGGLE

BY JOHN KING

Do not complain against struggle, but praise it, for without struggle, life would have no abiding significance. A struggle to find meaning in life is a necessity, because everyone of us is born into two conditions which make conflict and tension inevitable. You can look at any growing baby and watch the first condition for tension emerging. An infant is helpless at the start, a tiny animal with perhaps just a flicker of mental consciousness. The baby is a quivering G.I. tract, so the only feeling it knows is hunger. The only need it expresses with its cries is to be fed. With most babies the need for food is met almost as soon as it is expressed. There is little delay between the expression of need and its fulfillment. But as the child grows, it expresses an increasing number of needs, and some of these needs are more complicated. The child begins to experience delays between the expression of his needs and the fulfillment of those needs. This is the beginning of tension, for in the delay between expression of these needs and fulfillment the child experiences the feelings of uncertainty which we label as insecurity. The cycle of demand and answers is disrupted with increasing frequency. Life does not fit together neatly anymore.

Even before we can express our more complex needs with fluency in words, our feelings are asking the question: What does this uncertainty mean? Why can't life fit together the way I want it to? This is the beginning of our struggle to make our life all of a piece. We contend to fill with some meaning the gap between the expression and fulfillment of our needs. Howard Thurman pointed out in a recent sermon that the problem for the individual man and woman is to negotiate the delays between felt needs and met needs. This is the first condition which makes a struggle for meaning in life a necessity.

The second condition which prods us into struggle is summed up in the Christian belief that every child is born into evil inclinations. The idea is so loaded with fierce judgmental overtones that for me it requires some

interpretation. For me this Christian belief means that every child is born with tendencies which are bound to get him into trouble with himself and other people. These tendencies in the infant are not morally disgraceful desires to break the ten commandments all at once at the first opportunity. The iniquities of the fathers are visited upon the children, but not as depraved longings. Instead, I believe, every child is born hurt. The wrongs, the mistakes, the failures of his fathers are to him as bruises and scars on his person. Somehow the hurts which mothers and fathers have felt and given are passed on into the unconscious life of their children. This pockmarked image deep in our being is the seed of broken homes, the seed of all grasping for power and possession, the seed of slanders and wars. This image of destruction, which is part of our identity as man, is nourished by the hurts we get and the hurts we give as we are growing. The experience of birth is a hurt to a child. His first cry is a hurt cry because his lungs are stretched with his first breath of air. Our inherited hurts are fed by the harsh words of our mothers, fathers, and teachers and the restraints they place on us. We are bruised by the cuffs and jeers of our playmates. The scarred image in us gulps down our poor performances in school, our work failures and our sense of rejection which comes from broken friendships and loves. For all the hurts we get, we give back a generous measure. Many of our words and actions become eager messengers to mock and sting the people we can see and touch with the feelings of fear and anger we build up. Finally, in unforgiving zeal, we lash the bruised part of ourselves with blame for all the hurts we give and get. This jagged aching self is the smarting skin of our feeling and thinking life. It is the beast crying for blood that is born in all of us. But beneath the skin of the animal is the image of the angel which is born with every human life. This is the second half of Christian belief about the condition of human life into which man and woman are born. Under the skin of the tiger the lamb finds shelter. Within the human heart an image of joy and wholeness is quivering, waiting to leap out to form us into a person with an identity which has meaning to share with

other selves. This unique human image, worked by the fingers of God, has within it the meaning which can shape each human destiny. All our capacities to love and to work creatively draw life to that image. The goals which will give our life direction are there from the beginning, ready to be our pillar of cloud by day and our pillar of fire by night. In this image of the angel is the human love of God which can forgive and tame the tigers in ourselves and in our neighbors. Here is the seed of lasting marriage, the seed of giving of ourselves and our goods, the seed of peace in the heart and in the world. This image in us which gives meaning and wholeness to life is fed on the accumulating store of experiences that bring a sense of well-being in our feelings either when we think in loneliness or when we relate ourselves to others. The warmth of hands pressed against us when we are children brings a smiling sense of security. There is joy in the jumping, laughing games with playmates. The encouragement of teachers who put humanity into their learning, the confidence and loyalty of close friends, the experience of falling in love, the satisfaction of finding of meaning in some work that we are doing; all these feed the image in us which strives to fit life together into a significant whole that is our individual identity. The real humanity from God lying inside each of us realizes itself most of all in our giving to the people around us of the capacities for love and work which are uniquely our own. This is the life in us reaching for goals, the life which is always becoming, growing to the measure of a man.

These are the conditions of existence which thrust us into struggle: the tension of delays between our hungers and their satisfactions and the tension between the images of the broken and the whole in every human soul. Through those conditions we are committed to a struggle to wrench meaning from our lives. We can resist this conflict by trying to drift but the days become dull with misery because we deprive ourselves of the meaning in life which can come only from the tension of willingly committing ourselves to struggle.

This wrestling to find a name and an identity for ourselves is not an expressway to

happiness. There is a grappling with experience which bumps us along a road full of steep climbs and drops. We descend into days of hell full of a sense of guilt or fear or anger; we fall into the depths of self-pity or self-condemnation. Again we ascend into the heaven of reaching out to someone with a love that bursts beyond self. Sometimes we can feel almost as if we were flying from the sense of release that comes on days when we are released from self-chastisement, on days when we can forgive and accept ourselves as a person who can love and be loved. Also, there are many even days of trudging along a plane of routine. If we commit ourselves to the road of grappling with experience, no matter where the road leads, we are looking for a piece of good green earth that has meaning for us, a piece of ground where we can dig our feet in so that our character as a unique person may flourish like a tree planted by the river of waters.

Part of this grappling with experience is a readiness to puzzle over the pieces of feeling, thought and event that make up our lives. Some of the pieces seem to escape us, some to be broken, some to be burned and scattered; sometimes we can find only a few bits of our life which we can put together to find a meaning we can work from. Life seems to us as we search among the shards for meaning, like a parable of waste. The seed of the sower appear to be thrown away on the roadside, and among the stones and thorns. But even a little seed falling on a patch of good ground can redeem life when it grows. A few pieces of experience puzzled together do bring meaning to life even if a great number of our days become rubbish. I would like to share a poem with you which tries to put this experience of puzzling for meaning into words:

I cannot swear by my head;
 I cannot be sure of my head.
 It is a basket of splendid rubbish,
 Torn rumpled yesterdays,
 Shuffled along by a wind of anxious
 thought:
 A part to become ashes through fear;
 A part to be slashed in anger;
 A part to be scattered,
 Jagged pieces to friends,

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

In response to your request for our reaction as per your November issue of the Messenger, may I in all humbleness submit mine?

It was a delight to see the Messenger has broadened its scope. The Nov. issue was extremely interesting and contained some thought provoking challenges. I believe a step has been taken in the right direction and there is a desperate need to step up with the times. If the retrogression of our church, as is clearly indicated, is to be arrested a searching inquiry is in order. It is not enough to blame it on the lack of spiritual awareness of our age. The intensive interest in extra sensory perception discounts that theory and it is my profound belief that an inordinately large segment of the people is seeking a new revelation. Whom but Swedenborg, the Servent of the Lord, Jesus Christ, can give us that new revelation. It seems to me the New Church must present its teachings in a more palatable form so as to make them more readily digestible for the average intellect. Let's face it, man today is more oriented towards his finite nature than to his infinite or aesthetic self. Therein lies our challenge. Up to now we have concentrated chiefly on the so-called intellectual branch of our society. May I at this point suggest that with the numberless collateral books on Swedenborg extant in the world of today can it be doubted that the Swedenborgian influence provided the incentive to Pope John to declare, "The church must open its windows and let the light in". Are not all churches, more or less, opening their windows? Rev. Laakko's article was very illuminating.

It is to be regretted Rev. Kenneth Knox found it necessary to tender his resignation. His article is a challenging one and if his arguments are valid it is a sad commentary on the causes of the decline of the Swedenborg and impugn his patriotism and love for his country if he as much as ventures a dissenting opinion as to our justification for this unnecessary war.

I am reminded of King Saul. Of Roman citizenship who, when he heard the divine

call, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me" did not equivocate nor temporize with his conscience but, listening to the Lord's plea he relinquished his leadership of an existing order, of which he was an earnest advocate and had hoped to strengthen and purify, he became Christianity's greatest crusader for Christian love. Swedenborg states in the Arcana that no nation is permitted to destroy another nation, under divine providence, but, internal decay is the mediate cause of its defeat. Is the Lord not the ruler of earth as well as heaven?

It is not enough to say there is nothing we can do about it because what is going to be is going to be. That is equivalent to our abnegation of our responsibilities and our spiritual commitments to our Lord to work without surcease for his kingdom in this sorry world.

Yes, Swedenborg states a man, in order to enter the kingdom of Heaven, must love his country. If a man loves his country he loves his neighbor and the broadest possible interpretation of the word neighbor includes not only one's next door neighbor but the man living in the farthest outreaches of the world.

Emar T. Zachiuson
Oaklawn, Ill.

Dear Sir:

May I comment on the last issue of the Messenger? The contents of a magazine do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor but is it wise to publish the views of such an intemperate author as Bronson Clark? I am not in favor of these political wars of no benefit to anyone but the biased and inaccurate statements in this article give a very poor impression of our judgment. I cannot approve of the actions of the Friends Society and hope that we do not adopt an attitude of disloyalty.

Henry Snow
Boca Raton, Florida

Dear Sir:

The leading article in the November issue of the Messenger is upon the subject of "Vietnam, a Way Out". This article strong-

able and, regrettably, Mr. Clark was one of them. Mr. Clark's proposals constitute, in essence, a sellout of the Vietnamese people to communism, and a sordid "face saving" formula for this country. Talking of freedom of religion and of the press, while turning the country over to communists, is hypocrisy. Or does Mr. Clark know a communist country where these freedoms exist?

The sad truth is that a peace in Vietnam can be bought, at a price, only in Moscow and Peking, and not in Hanoi. The North Vietnamese rulers are nothing but puppets in Soviet Russian and Chinese hands and will have to keep fighting as long as the strings are pulled. The tragedy of the poor North Vietnamese people is that they are told to be fighting for their own better life, while, in fact, they are only pawns in a game played by the Kremlin. They would be bitterly deceived even in the case of communist victory.

The TCR n. 80. describes a significant occurrence: When a satan approached Swedenborg's house in the spiritual world, Swedenborg closed the window before talking with him. So we have to close the windows of our mind to satanic influences to be able to see their untruths with enlightened understanding.

The "intellectual and thoughtful community in the United States" does not only open the windows to communist satanic propaganda, but also seems to be ready to open the gates and doors for the admission of the communists themselves. It seems, that communist lies are accepted at face value even by some good-willing but naive members of the New Church. I am fearful that some of them will not awake from their illusions before it is too late; before the communists have terminated every religious activity, be it Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, or any other. Will then the American Christians still have the courage to work underground?

At one time, hell, by means of the Jewish high priests, crucified the Lord Himself. Later, with the help of Roman tyrants, it attempted to crush Christianity in its beginning. Now, by the hands of communists, hell is trying it again. We can be assured

that they will not succeed, but why should we surrender, why believe in them, and why, in the name of freedom, religion, and humanism, to foster and promote their aims? This is a very dangerous game which will bring much more death and destruction than the present war. Let those, who do not believe in a real hell, argue in vain. A New Churchman must know what the origin of communist propaganda is and what master do the communists serve.

If the defence of the still free world against aggression and total slavery is what Mr. Clark attempts to brand as barbarism, then, obviously, the Editor has been caught unaware of the service which the printing of such an article has done to hell and communism.

R. Grava
Pikesville, Md.

Dear Sir:

It looks like The Messenger is becoming a communist paper. Why does it print such articles as Bronson P. Clark's "Vietnam: A Way Out", in November issue? Now, I want to ask some questions of Bronson P. Clark and similar "Christians and idealists"; why are you looking just one way, the way the communists want you to look?

Why do you call American presence in Vietnam "an intervention"? Don't you know that the Americans are there not as interventionists, but as allies, honoring the treaty of assistance to South Vietnam against Communist aggression? Maybe you think the treaties and promises should be kept only as long as that is convenient for us, and if it is not, then "to hell with them." That is good Christian thinking? A bad testimony, made by such "Christians"

Why don't you see that the real aggression is from North Vietnam? Now there are about 200,000 North Vietnamese regulars in South Vietnam, and this is just a part of the communists' plan to conquer the world. Well, according to your thinking, that is not aggression, but presence of United States forces to resist that aggression, is. Besides, nobody tried to invade North Vietnam. If that is not distortion of the facts, then what is?

ly upholds the views of those opposed to the war in Vietnam, claiming that a majority opinion in the country is now of this persuasion - which is at least debatable.

Before commenting on this article, I waited to see if in the December issue of the Messenger, any other view on the subject would be presented.

As the Messenger is the official organ of Convention, it would seem proper that it present the other side of the coin. The Kitchener session of Convention was presented with a resolution calling, among other things, for a cessation of bombing. This was widely distributed among those present; and a motion to adopt it in Convention was followed by a spirited debate, with the result that the motion was laid upon the table. As a participant in the debate, I was impressed with the fact that a number of persons later voluntarily expressed approval of the contrary view; and only one suggested that the war is "illegal".

The writer has no desire to debate the merits of this question that has drawn the attention of the public extensively, other than to point out that the course of the administration has received the approval of the past Presidents, of learned and outstanding scholars, and of several votes that have been taken in various localities. I am constrained to believe that a substantial number of our New Churchmen agree with this.

Views such as were expressed in the article find their counterpart in the record of every war in which this country has been engaged, including the Revolutionary War and the Civil War. Indeed, in the latter war, Abraham Lincoln was so strongly attacked that he was prepared for his defeat in his bid for reelection; and he was reelected by a somewhat narrow margin.

As for the present, Vietnam is one of a number of problems facing this nation, and in particular our younger people who are growing up in the midst of this situation. A wide spirit of dissent manifests itself in such matters of faith and religion, leading to expressions of opinion, even among our clergy, that one is bound to follow his own

beliefs, and may disregard rules and laws presented by proper authority, if these are wrong in the opinion of each individual. In this connection, I have noted in recent issues of the Messenger some feelings of doubt and uncertainty (if these are the words) among our leaders in the Church, as for example the Editor's confession of "lostness"; when the young people, who lay so close to our hearts, need the sureness of their leaders in helping them to meet today's problems. One thinks of another generation, whose Julian Kennedy Smythe wrote of "Christian Certainties of Belief", with respect and gratitude. Doubtless the present generation in time will use the truths in our doctrines as the base of their intellectual and spiritual lives.

George Pausch
Baltimore, Md.

Dear Sir:

The fine conclusions of Mr. Bronson P. Clark are based on imaginary assumptions and, in a political sense, are adequately refuted by such articles as Eugene Lyons "Vietnam: the Charges and the Facts" (Reader's Digest, Oct., 1967), or Robert Christopher's "Why are we in Vietnam?" (Newsweek, Nov. 27, 1968), and by the Hon. Dean Rusk, "Our Purpose is Peace" (Reader's Digest, Dec., 1967). In Vietnam we are not dealing with a "single country", as the communists and Mr. Clark insist, but with militant international communism which threatens not only Vietnam, but also us and the entire world. The "National Liberation Front" is just one of the false fronts used by communism to hide its real ugly face. The "American Friends Service Committee" seems to be another, since it has nothing to offer but surrender to communists on terms which would have the most tragic consequences in the nearest future.

A few months ago, the communists staged a conference in Czechoslovakia in order to find dupes among Westerners who would buy peace on communist terms and spread from within, doubt and dissent among peace loving people, now in fight against communism. Unfortunately, some church and university people made themselves avail-

The country is temporarily divided. According to such logic, all the world is just temporarily divided until communist takeover. And this is pure communist logic. If it were not for communist dictatorship and terror, there would be no division. The truth is, that the North was seized by the communists, and the people in South Vietnam have chosen to live without it. Have you forgotten how the people were fleeing from North Vietnam, leaving everything behind just to escape the liberators? According to the World Almanac about 800,000 fled to the South. There would be millions more if they had the possibilities to escape. Why did they flee? Read about how the liberators treated the people in Dr. Dooley's books.

Well, there might be 10,000 buddhists and "uncounted others" in prisons, but how many are imprisoned in North Vietnam and how many have been liquidated and tortured to death? No statistics of that are available and communists are mum about that!

One final question. You have been in North Vietnam and other communist countries. What did you see there? Nothing else but what the rulers wanted. If you even thought you had the freedom to move around even that was arranged in such a way that you could see nothing else but what they wanted. They are masterminds in handling and deceiving people. Why don't you want to know that, but accept everything that the communists say, as truth and do not look behind the facade? And why you and other people do not want to believe them when they are speaking the truth? And that truth is according to Lenin and his disciples and they want to destroy the non communist world and everybody who does not agree them. Down with religion, that is poison! Down with the morals, there is just one -- and that is the communist moral. Down with God, we do not need Him! We will bury you! Remember who said that? And nothing of that has been recalled. Why don't you believe when they speak truth but believe their lies? Fifty years of communist's practice, fifty or more millions of massacred, tortured, starved to death and other-

wise annihilated victims prove who they are. Ocean of sufferings, untold numbers driven to hell, that is communism. We of the New Church should know that everyone who is fighting against God and all good and true from Him, is associated with the hell and is hell. And such are the communists. Open your eyes, discard wishful thinking, and don't fly around in the clouds!

The Lord said: Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. Be therefore wise and don't let the evil forces deceive you.

Janis Kreicbergs

Dear Sir:

In the New Church Messenger, of November 1967, on Page 174, I notice a letter addressed to the Editor, signed by Mr. Gustave J. Bischof, in which the writer, without comment, calls to the readers' attention, a resolution adopted by our General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America, meeting in Boston, Massachusetts the twenty-second of June, 1940, a resolution which accorded at the time recognition to the New Church conscientious objectors'.

As I was present at the important New Church convention in Boston, twenty-seven years ago, I well remember being concerned then, as I am now, with the thought of what would have happened ultimately to America if the majority of our young men subject to the draft calls in 1917 and 1941, had declared themselves subscribers to the philosophy of pacifism and refused to enlist in the "Armed Forces".

Today, as virile New Churchmen and New Churchwomen, let us, in a future New Church convention, accord recognition to those young men and women who are now serving in the "Armed Forces" and the "Peace Corps" of our country.

May I further suggest, that our General Convention, give serious thought to amending by By-laws of Convention, for the purpose in the future of first referring to a 'plebiscite' of all our four thousand five hundred Convention members any proposal or resolution, semi-political in nature, which may be offered by our Convention

Stray bits to passers-by;
 A part to be clutched in the hand,
 Pieces glued together to form a puzzle
 for tomorrow's work,
 An offering to God for His puzzle.
 I cannot know whether God will accept
 Until someone laughs, or cries, or grows
 strong over my struggle.

There are two points growing out of this poem with which I would like to conclude this morning's struggle. First, this effort to piece experience together to have it make some sense is a search for healing. The Bible calls this salvation. We do not want our lives to look like the ragman's heap. We want to sort life out to find the pieces of our experience which will fit together to tell us who we are and who we want to become. This is the diligent longing and striving for salvation. It is the search to become healed, to be a whole person. This effort for wholeness is a lifelong process with significant experiences of finding healing in at least some parts of our being along the way.

Healing experience comes whenever we sense a meaning emerging from the fitting together of some of the pieces of our lives. But often we cannot be sure whether we have found the experience of meaning unless we can share what we have found in such a way that we bring a response from another person. This is the second point coming from another person. This is the second point coming from the poem. I cannot know whether God will accept until someone laughs or cries or grows strong over my puzzle. I cannot define the experience of sharing, but most of us know the minute we feel we have shared something precious. A word from you or me which released pent-up grief, or joy or courage in another heart tells us that we are sharing. A handclasp or a kiss, the work or prayer of two or three together are witnesses to sharing.

The experiences of healing and sharing are the purpose of our commitment to struggle. This is the same purpose for which our Lord Jesus committed himself to struggle. We strive to shed the skin of the animal to become man or woman touched with the humanity that is in Christ Jesus. Our kin-

ship with Him, with ourselves and with our neighbors is in the struggle to give life shape and meaning. Whenever we find that shape and meaning, it is like the joy of a child being born into the world. The sorrow of struggle drops away and the joy remains. It is the joy which sustains us in the days of struggle to come. God thrusts himself into the struggle and thrusts us in after Him. Do we complain and hold back? or do we follow in his train?

*The last sermon written by
 the late John King was
 suggested as particularly
 relevant for Convention at
 this time.*

continued from page 25
 President or the Council of Ministers.

Thus we would be guided by the sentiment of the entire New Church body, rather than a minority of delegates in Convention, thereby insuring the peace and harmony of our Convention.

Herbert W. Toombs
 Boston, Massachusetts

Dear Editor:

Convention's new mood of severe self-criticism seems to me a healthy development. They are coming at "Swedenborg" from an angle very different from that usual in the General Church and even more divergent from the attitude of the Nova Heirosolyma.

These younger men cannot use the old correspondences and symbols in their sermons or teaching as an older generation of New Church Preachers used to use them.

The material needed for practical application to current circumstances is ample in "Swedenborg" once the painful reaction against quoting him is overcome. Also sufficient personal acquaintance is needed to know where to find what has been written for the New Church now being established anew by the Lord.

This is my reaction to Kenneth Knox and the others. All three branches have their USE. If Convention can learn to be useful to the world - that is good - and its USE.

Cornelia Hinkley Hotson

STATISTICS

DEATHS

Joseph Cronkhite of Wilkie, Sask., passed into eternal life on August 29, 1967.

Resurrection services were held on Dec. 8 for Clayton M. Chapman of Brownfield, Me.

Resurrection services were held for Henry A. Shaw of West Lovell, Me., on Dec. 30.

Melitta Turner, member of the Philadelphia Church, died in December. A memorial service was held for her on January 21 in the Philadelphia Church.

Resurrection services were held on Nov. 16 with the Rev. Richard H. Tafel officiating for Edith Alexander.

Resurrection services were held for Theodore T. Dutt on Nov. 22 with the Rev. Richard H. Tafel officiating.

Miss Lena A. Brackett of the Boston Church passed away on Dec. 16th. Rev. George McCurdy held a resurrection service for her on Dec. 19th in Somerville, Mass.

Mrs. Marian (Burford) Perkins of West Dennis, Mass. passed away on Dec. 19th in Hyannis.

BIRTHS

Lori Ann was born to Jimmy and Lida Reed on December 3rd in Fryeburg, Maine.

Michael Earl was born to Walter and Pamela Bassett on Dec. 15th in Fryeburg.

Terrienne was born to Carroll, Jr. and Peggy Day on Dec. 15th in Fryeburg.

Steven Allan was born to Mr. and Mrs. Norman and Margaret Dyck of Calgary, Alberta on Oct. 25, 1967.

David Lloyd was born to Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd and Loretta Latimer of Calgary, Alberta, on Nov. 3, 1967.

Tricia Bright was born to Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Bright on Jan. 1 in Pretty Prairie.

BAPTISMS

Christopher Alan, son of the Rev. and Mrs. Harvey A. Tafel, was baptized on the 5th of November in Edmonton Church by the Rev. Richard H. Tafel, Sr.

James Redmond, son of Mrs. and Mrs. John Shoemaker, was baptized on Nov. 19 in the Philadelphia Church with the Rev. Jerome Poole officiating.

Received into New Church membership by adult baptism during a worship service at Roblin Manitoba, on Dec. 10 were Mrs. Edna Martin and her daughter Beverley. Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiated.

MARRIAGES

Linda Legare and Philip Shewchuk were married on Nov. 25 by the Rev. George McCurdy.

Gerald Stephen Foster married Paula Jean Seavey on Dec. 30 in the Fryeburg Church.

Antony L. Tafel and Ruth A. Ernest were married on December 2 with the Rev. Richard H. Tafel officiating.

DAY AFTER CONVENTION
PLAN TO ATTEND

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July 1, 1968
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The Swedenborg School of Religion is interested in locating tape recordings of lectures by Dr. Howard Spoerl and would appreciate being able to borrow any available for copying. Information should be sent to: Swedenborg School of Religion
48 Sargent St. Box E
Newton, Mass.

THE MESSENGER

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