

THE MESSENGER

Official Organ of the Swedenborgian Church



MAY 1968

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

This issue inaugurates a new column in the Messenger, "Trends and Comments." Readers of the New Christianity will realize that the title is not original. Actually, I hope to continue the tradition of the "Trends and Comments" column in that journal. The trends to be noted will include both the Church, and the Church's Environment. Initially, the comments will be mine, but in future issues it will be a form for guest columnists and (hopefully) correspondents. The use of excerpts and full sermons in a "From the Pulpit" department will be continued from time to time. Both ministers and laymen are urged to send sermons or sermon quotations for this purpose.

THE TIME WHEN MAN GROWS TALL

BY KENNETH KNOX

There are times when all seems hopeless,
There are times when all is sad
And the joyful strains no longer sound
And the heart's no longer glad.
But when the Lord seems far away
Is the time when man grows tall.
For He fights as if alone he stood
And the choice of good and evil falls
On his own shoulders
And he has the right and the privilege
To go or not to go
To stay or not to stay!

NOTED AND QUOTED

"Let us picture for a moment what a reborn church would be. A life, not a creed, would be its test; what a man does, not what he professes; what he is, not what he has. What the world craves today is a more spiritual and less formal religion. I plead not for a modification of form, but for its subordination to the spirit, not for the abolishing of ordinances, but for their voluntary rather than statutory observations." John D. Rockefeller Jr. "The Christian Church," The Saturday Evening Post, Feb. 9, 1918, Vol. 241, no. 3 (2/10/68) p. 58.

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Cover story: The cover picture this month is a statue of Johnny Applesseed in the Spring Grove Cemetery, Cincinnati, Ohio.

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CONVENTION 1968

A CHANCE FOR THE LAYMAN TO LOOK AT HIS CHURCH AND FOR THE MINISTER TO HEAR WHAT HE SEES

The theme of Convention this year will focus on the layman, his concerns, his hopes, his experiences as a Swedenborgian. The theme which was decided upon by the Convention Program Committee, has been placed in the hands of the Board of Education for implementation. At an all day meeting the Board worked out the following plan for Friday afternoon and evening of Convention week.

The program will be kicked off by a speaker who will help us to begin to think about the layman and the church. Following his talk, adults and Leaguers will meet in discussion groups with leaders and recorders. There will be five areas of concern from which to choose.

One or more groups, depending on the number of people interested, will meet to take a look at the church as a spiritual home. Starter questions for this group will include: What is this church I belong to? What is it for? What experiences mean "church" to me?

Other groups will be set up to take a look at the ministry, at education in the church, at social responsibility, and at worship. The groups will have the greater part of the afternoon for their considerations. No ministers or ministers' wives will be allowed in these groups but will be meeting separately in their own groups.

In the evening, the recorders from each of the groups will meet as a panel to report and to discuss the substance of what was talked about in each of the groups. It is hoped that these discussions will be similarly forward looking and will be of help to Convention as a whole as it seeks to plan for the future. It is hoped also that the groups will provide greater opportunity for the layman to be heard than is possible in our formal business meetings. Perhaps also there will be some real value in providing an opportunity for the ministers to hear what the layman sees when he looks at the church without a minister looking over his shoulder.

DISPLAYS AT CONVENTION

Persons planning to have displays at Convention at the University of Windsor should send them to Convention of Swedenborgian Churches, c/o University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada. Robert Locke of the Detroit Church is chairman in charge of displays.

DR. REID SPEAKS TO

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Dr. Clyde Reid, Associate Director of the Institute for Advanced Pastoral Studies, will be a guest speaker during the sessions of the Council of Ministers. He is expected to speak to the Council Tuesday evening, June 25.

Dr. Reid has had experience in pastoral ministry, seminary teaching and denominational work with the United Church of Christ. He taught at Union Theological Seminary in New York for four years and spent a year on a fellowship at the Menninger Foundation. He is the author of *THE GOD-EVADERS* and *THE EMPTY PULPIT*, both published by Harper & Row.



C O N V E N T I O N 1 9 6 8

"THE LAYMAN SPEAKS"

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Convention Committee
576 West Woodland
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- NOTICE -

CORPORATION OF THE NEW CHURCH THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Corporation will be held at the School, 48 Sargent Street, Newton, Mass. on Friday, May 24, 1968 at 5:30 p.m.

SWEDENBORGIANS' COUSINS

J. Stillson Judah, *The History and Philosophy of the Metaphysical Movements in America*. Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1967

There are a number of churches — or church-like religious movements — which started in this country in the middle of the 19th Century, with philosophic roots if not actual headquarters in New England. The National Spiritualist Association and other branches of Spiritualism; various branches of theosophy, including The Arcane School and Astara Foundation; New Thought; the Divine Science Church; the Church of Religious Science; The Unity School of Christianity; and Christian Science; these are the groups which Dr. Judah identifies as "metaphysical movements" in his thoroughly documented, readable and fundamentally important book. Having followed some of these movements while in his 'teens and being appreciatively sympathetic to what he feels is the best in them, Dr. Judah makes the best use of detailed and documented information and scholarly objectivity in describing the history and philosophy of each group.

Considering the number of groups, their involvement with American history and the contemporary religious scene, and their present rates of growth, it is surprising that such a work has been so long in coming and stands so alone in the field. The kind of parochialism which assumes that everyone can be classified as either Protestant, Catholic or Jew, has much to learn from this work; as does any serious attempt to understand the place of religion in the inner needs of individuals of our culture.

This much may be said in general about the book. For a Swedenborgian, however, it has far greater and much more specific interest. Swedenborgian ideas — as interpreted and used by Emerson, Andrew Jackson Davis, E.P. Quimby and others are a part of the philosophical background which all these groups have in common. Therefore, there is a section on Swedenborg near the beginning of the book and references to his teachings in every chapter. Furthermore, since one of the primary foci of the book is an examination of the similarities and differences of these movements and the Christian tradition, every echo of Swedenborgian thought in the various philosophies provokes consideration of Swedenborgianism's place on the continuum between church and cult.

The section about Swedenborg at the beginning of the book where Dr. Judah summarizes the

elements of philosophical background of these groups, is somewhat disturbing. Everything that is attributed to Swedenborg has documentation — either from Swedenborg's works themselves, or from one of the familiar biographies — but the picture painted is somehow strange: it gives the feeling of a dream in which you are simultaneously in the house where you grew up and a place you have never seen before. It is not a question of whether Dr. Judah does or does not understand Swedenborg, for he is not writing about Swedenborg as New Churchmen know him, but about Swedenborg as he was known by Emerson, Davis, Quimby, Evans, etc. Swedenborg's concept of matter as the effect of spiritual cause, for instance, is correctly cited, but seems strange without the compensating emphasis on the importance of ultimates. Similarly, echoes and reflections of the Swedenborgian perspective, appearing in the context of spiritualism or Christian Science, seem familiar and foreign at the same time. The cumulative effect of so many encounters with such references and parallels is thought provoking and — in a vague and undifferentiated way — disturbing. An analysis of which facets of the perspective are missing, or of the degree of distortion as compared to a more congenial interpretation of Swedenborg, does not fully relieve the ambiguity of "our" relationship with "them". Certainly, oversimplified views of similarities as well as differences tend to come apart.

The basis of Swedenborg's doctrine of Correspondences, for instance, seems fairly enough stated, until it is shown that the basis would also support biblical interpretations a Swedenborgian must reject.

Something of the same feeling carries over into the consideration of Swedenborgianism's cultishness, which it shares with the metaphysical movements, and its qualities of a church which it shares with the Christian tradition. The book succeeds in complicating the question in the most constructive way: i.e., by providing new data and new standards for judgement. In both of these respects, it is thought provoking and valuable. This value, clearly a by-product of Dr. Judah's main task, is one more reason for recommending the book. If its title is forbidding in its pedantic flavor, the text is highly readable, the subject matter never strays far from what is both interesting and familiar to readers of Swedenborg.

Robert Kirven

SSR MANAGERS REPORT A CHURCH LOOKS AT ITSELF

Every now and then it seems to be necessary for a church to look carefully at what it is all about. Ten years ago, after the meetings at Fryeburg in which the needs of the church were explored, there was arranged a nation-wide series of meetings in which the people of our parishes sat down together to make clear to themselves and to one another what seemed to them the best way to be a church.

It could not be claimed that out of these exchanges of opinion came complete or even partial agreement, but something got started then that was useful. The people at the grass roots — not just their elected or appointed representatives, asked themselves and asked each other searching questions about our purposes as a church.

It may also be that nothing was accomplished then but talk, that we are still in confusion about the best direction to take to put those purposes into workable forms. It has been argued that our problems could be settled much more simply and directly if we would all accept solutions decided for us by our elected and appointed leaders and board members. But at those times when criticism gathers force it becomes obvious that the people of our church do not operate in this way. After a time of seeming acquiescence we regularly resist any plan or policy that is imposed on us without our full understanding and consent. If this resistance in the form of criticism is ignored too long, a great deal of time and energy goes into confused and confusing talk. The resulting tensions seem quite contrary to the spirit and purpose of a church.

This was the state of things that faced the Board of Managers of the Swedenborg School of Religion when the increasing criticism of the Bellevue experiment used as field work came to a head at our October 21, 22, 1966 meeting. The Board believed it must listen to criticism coming from the people. In their role as representatives of the people of the parishes and associations the Board members are ultimately responsible in their policy making to all the people. Therefore it was voted:

"that a committee of the Board of Managers evaluate the effectiveness of the field work program, and make such recommendations to the Board as may, in its opinion, enable the school to continue to provide its students with the best professional training possible for their

work in the church. The committee may contract for professional help in devising such evaluating instruments as it may deem necessary. Members of the committee shall be Carolyn Blackmer, chairman; Peter N. Greeley; the Rev. Ernest Martin; and the Rev. Edwin G. Capon, ex officio."

As the chairman of the Board reported:

The committee held several meetings, talked with the field faculty members, employed the services of a consultant from the American Association of Theological Schools, and prepared various studies. A lengthy report was compiled and distributed to Board members prior to the May meeting. The afternoon meeting of the Board on May 11 was devoted to the discussion of the report. In the evening we talked with two of the field faculty about the recommendations made by the Evaluating Committee.

The board was appreciative of the work done by the committee studying our field work program. We voted to refer the report and its recommendations to the faculty for their consideration. In the fall the board will meet with the faculty to discuss the entire field work program of the school in the light of the report, recommendations, and faculty study.

It should be said here that the Evaluation Committee saw their task as keeping in mind the need everyone feels for the best possible preparation for our theological students in the work of the church. The fact that we as a church must operate in a changing world was taken into account as were the tensions that we all experience as a result of change. We saw clearly that as a committee we could not sidestep the very tensions that had called for an evaluation.

At first it looked almost impossible for us to take seriously all criticism (since some of it seemed prejudiced and uninformed) and at the same time honor the good work already accomplished by the Bellevue faculty. We had to look for a solution that would do both of these things and yet avoid compromise and fence-straddling. Thanks to the patience of the committee members and their willingness to think things out together as free as possible of personalities, recommendations were drawn up with full consensus.

The recommendations that were presented to the Board were first checked by the committee against all major points made in the criticism that had been directed against the Bellevue field

work program. We also held in mind the questions that the Bellevue team asked us to consider. For instance, it seemed legitimate to us for them to want to know our purposes in evaluating their work, and to question whose function it is to answer criticism. We all — team and committee members — had had to consider whether the criticism was a sign of lack of communication between the School and the laymen of our parishes. In what way is the criticism an expression of the fears and anxieties of the rank and file of people about the future of our church? How do the Faculty and Board feel about such fears? In what sense do the Board and Faculty also feel concern about the future? What are the implications for the future in the direction that the present theological training and its field work at Bellevue are taking us? What effect will it have on our parishes? Who is responsible for making decisions that deal with questions of this kind?

Here was a many-sided conflict of opinions, personal loyalties, and assumptions about the work of the church. No simple, immediate solution was possible because judgments under these conditions are obscured by strong emotions and prejudices that have their roots in past events. What we had to find was some way in which the differences of opinion could be resolved ultimately, and we were aware from growing tensions that a new start had to be made immediately.

Some way had to be found so that the members of the Board could get the kind of information to make good judgments about field work for theological students. Reports from the Faculty did not make clear enough the basic assumptions of the experiment. The Faculty asked us to have faith in the experimenters in work for which the outcome was unknown by its very nature as an experiment. The Board needs something more than faith or its decisions will be rubber-stamps and will not meet the legitimate criticisms of the people for whom we are making decisions.

The responsibility of the Board is also to the faculty it has chosen. The Evaluation Committee had to keep this in mind and find ways in which the Bellevue Team could do their work with some degree of freedom. Some way had to be found to make it possible for them to evaluate their own work as objectively as possible and without defensiveness. The experimenters, it was assumed, should be just as concerned to find weaknesses in the way they were operating as their critics are. If what they were doing seemed to others rather haphazard or on such

a scale as to make risks of failure too great, safeguards should be provided against these tendencies. The Bellevue experiment should not seem the private domain of the experimenters or the Faculty, but should be open to responsible and intelligent examination and criticism by the people of the church. The only way this kind of protection could be provided for the experimenters, and at the same time for their responsible critics, was to propose that some degree of control be set up through specified rules for carrying on experiments. The Evaluation Committee means by controlled experiments: the rules of the game are built in when the experiment is set up, and they are agreed upon and made public. Experiments by their very nature as experiments are inevitably moving into the unknown and untried, but they need safeguards or controls or we will not learn much from experimenting. We should all of us be able to ask critical questions and get answers without having to take sides for or against an experiment while it is in process. It is a way of acknowledging that no one has the corner on Truth, but that everyone should seek it with humility, working through the experimentation to remove whatever of bias and preconceptions we may find in our own assumptions. For this purpose it is important to invite a free exchange of opposing opinion. But the opposition must play by the rules also and be willing to have their own assumptions examined through experimentation.

All of the recommendations made by the Evaluation Committee were based on the conviction that experimentation at this point in our history as a church is not only inevitable but essential to our vitality as a church. We do need to learn how to make changes for renewed vitality. There are techniques to be mastered but they are not merely a matter of professional know-how; they are first of all an attitude, a state of mind. For instance, those who start with the assumption that our established parishes have very little chance of surviving should be very much concerned that experiments be set up in some of our established parishes to observe and evaluate new approaches in that kind of a setting. Assumptions are not eternal Truth, and whatever truth they have should have every chance to be demonstrated, observed and evaluated on its own merits.

The same is true of the Bellevue set-up. It should obey built-in rules of experimentation for examining its assumptions. In addition, those who watch it from differing initial

assumptions about the church, should be given the data gathered from observations made by the experimenters. And these data would be communicated to the critics whether they call into question or support the experimenters' views. It need not then be a question of proving one is right but rather that an idea had been tried out to check on its merits.

Or put it this way: our purpose in controlled experimentation is to discover what we do not yet know, to move from our present ideas about the work of the church to more effective ones, — ones that will bring us closer to our vision of the church on earth. If we are going to do this together it seems important that we play by the same rules no matter how different our present points of view. The recommendations of the Evaluating Committee propose that differences of opinion be resolved in this spirit and with the rules of controlled experimentation, so that we can learn how to prepare theological students for a ministry in the New Church. The way in which our ministers are prepared will very much influence the direction of our work as a church.

If these recommendations can be worked out at the School to help solve the problems of a period of transition, it is possible that the people of our parishes will be encouraged to try out new ideas at the local level. In such a case we will all need to learn to look very carefully at what we are now doing and what is possible for us to do in our churches. If we can see more clearly what it is we are doing that is in accord with our stated purposes as a church we will have better ways of assessing how effective our work is in relation to those purposes. This is the way we can set up standards or criteria for our own evaluations. And when we try out new methods for improving our effectiveness we can learn how to watch for weaknesses and strengths with some degree of objectivity. Out of the resolution of inevitable differences of opinion we can create new forms of church life rather than waste our energies in conflict of personalities and opinions. This kind of control for trying out of new ideas could become one of the techniques that charity develops in our church life.

*Prepared for The
Messenger by the
Chairman of the
Evaluation Committee
at the request of SSR
Board of Managers.*

NEWEST DEVELOPMENTS IN BELLEVUE

FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM

In their mutual concern for the vitality of the church and its ministry, the Faculty and the Managers of the Swedenborg School of Religion keep the curriculum of the school under continual review. Currently, attention has been focused on the Field Education segment of the curriculum, and the work of the Evaluation Committee and its outside consultants have produced fruitful suggestions for significant further improvement.

While several further developments are being considered, six can be reported as in effect now as policy or practice.

A MAJOR STUDY, involving outside specialists and careful checks on objectivity will be made under the direction of Dr. Kirven. The finished book will include a complete report on the history and activities of the program and careful evaluation of several aspects.

A WIDER VARIETY OF EXPERIENCE for students is being included in the Field Education at Bellevue. Mr. Jaikoo Lee, who began his Field Education experience while the Evaluating Committee's Report was being studied, has been the first to benefit from the change: he has become deeply involved in the Seattle Ecumenical Metropolitan Ministry — an inner-city project (See The Messenger, Dec. 1967).

A NEW PLACE IN THE CURRICULUM will move the Field Education Experience to the third year for most students, instead of the fourth. The final year will be devoted to academic work in Newton, providing new opportunities for the student to develop relationships between his studies and experiences in the curriculum.

A DIVISION OF FIELD EDUCATION EXPERIENCE will utilize a part of the time formerly spent in Bellevue for diversified experiences in the Boston area.

ALL CONVENTION PARTICIPATION in the Bellevue program is being coordinated administratively by SSR, since all Convention involvement there is related to the work of the School.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPLORATION are being increased, to help each student realize consciously his deepest personal interests, aptitudes and drives in connection with his calling.

TRENDS AND COMMENTS

TRADITION AND CHANGE

At the 1966 Convention in Urbana, "Change" was an unofficial Theme, almost as central as the programmed one. The Messenger noted, "The word was used by almost everyone who addressed the Convention. Again and again men spoke of change in relation to every topic that concerned us as a church. They spoke of change in the world around us, change in education, change in the church, change in ourselves. Different speakers had different attitudes toward Change, but the varying attitudes found a basic consistency in the universal recognition of its present and ever-increasing reality. From the President's Address that opened the session, to the Convention Sermon that closed it, everyone talked about Change: Change so radical that (as former Urbana College sociologist Philip Schlechty told the ministers) there was more similarity between the times and cultures of Socrates and Thomas Worcester than there is between Worcester's time and our own."

Since then, change has proved itself more than a topic of conversation in the Swedenborgian church. Succeeding issues of The Messenger have carried news of pews being taken out of a church so the space could serve other functions, of a church sanctuary and parish rooms being built into a skyscraper apartment building, and of the inauguration of a research and development program to seek and test new directions for the church at large.

And with the happenings, still more changes are being talked about. The Messenger has carried the suggestion that we do not need church buildings any more, that the parish structure of the church is dead, and that the church's future lies more in the inner growth of individuals than in institutional forms.

There is another side to the picture, however. Where the pews were taken out of the church, people now sit on chairs for worship every Sunday morning; the church in the skyscraper accommodates the traditional activities of one of the oldest congregations in Convention; and the program of research and development is as much committed to revitalizing traditional forms as to discovering new ones. The Messengers that reported all these changes and suggestions also reported building and expansion programs in more than half-a-dozen traditional churches or church activities.

It may well be, as in Thornton Wilder's Skin of Our Teeth, that "Everything not nailed down is coming loose," but some things are nailed down, and a good many of the nails are holding for the time being.

Both momentum for change and resistance to it are increasing, however, so decisions between change and tradition will get harder and more frequent in the times immediately ahead. The balance of evidence yields no clear and distinct trend in the Swedenborgian Church right now — it is hope (or fear) that makes one kind of evidence appear decisive.

Whatever decisions the church makes about which visions to hold, surrender or pursue, changes outside the province of our decisions are continuing and accelerating. The physical, political and cultural world to which our church relates is changing; the education of children and young people changing; the needs, the values and the contributions that members bring to the church are changing. In the midst of all this, there is no question of whether or not to change, but only a question of how.

The "how" includes many alternative goals to seek in the changing conditions, and many more alternative means for achieving those goals, so the shape of the church's future is by no means pre-determined; but change, and the necessity of decisions to meet it, is inevitable. Changes that are forced upon us do not have to be accepted as "good," but they must be faced as real if we are to remain in control of our lives.

Decisions of this kind are not made easy by realizing their inevitability, but they may be helped by recognizing some other factors: 1) other churchmen's love for the church can be trusted, even when their vision for it seems to be the wrong one; 2) postponing or compromising decisions will not serve to "keep everyone happy" because discontent with the present is too strong; 3) with its theology, its loyalties and its coherence of loving relationships, the Swedenborgian Church has sufficient strength to feel free to consider bold plans of action without fear of failure.

If we can escape from that last paralysis, we can begin to plan in the manner of Richard Kean, facing parallel issues in the Journal of the Council for Higher Education:

"Let us take the optimistic step. Let's pretend that we have taken control of our Spaceship. Let us assume that our future is very much a function of our present imagination." With that attitude, the tradition-change tension becomes

exciting rather than fearful.

ANOTHER SILENCE

The Minister's Quarterly has concluded publication. Since it circulated among an even smaller circle of friends than the Messenger, the significance of this fact should be elaborated. MQ published competent and controversial articles of interest to ministers of the Swedenborgian Church, and intended to serve as a forum for the sharing of views within that group. Stencil-duplicated (appropriately for its circulation), it was carefully and attractively put out; edited with creativity and real distinction, it was readable and rewarding. Ave atque vale.

Paul Zacharias conceived MQ, and invested much time, industry and imagination in it. He is investing no more, not because he has run out of those treasures (though he has as little time as anybody, and industry and imagination as fruitful as his is rare), but because the investment produced too little return. He wanted to produce a forum for the interchange, cross-fertilization and fructification of ideas. Baiting his hook with challenging articles, he caught by his report, "in four years two notes and one postcard.... That is something, but not quite enough." He had "hoped for a more lively interchange than that."

This seems part of a trend. The New Christianity lasted longer for a wider readership, but fits the same pattern. Like Paul Zacharias, Howard Spoerl, William Wunsch and their colleagues produced distinction. The lack of response that discouraged continuation cannot be attributed to the quality of the journal. In times when there seems to be more than ever for Swedenborgians to talk about (and in reality there is not any less than ever), another new silence continues a trend.

The Messenger has frequently pointed out the need for more active communication between members and viewpoints of the church, and therefore sees this trend as one to be resisted — and if possible reversed. The evidence indicates that "trying harder" will not be effective — that is, the answer to the problem is not a "better journal," since it is hard to conceive a better publication than the two just mentioned. It would be easy to say that the solution lies in more response from churchmen, but wishing for a goal does not bring it any closer. The relevant questions would seem to be, is there a satisfactory substitute for a kind of communication that the Minister's Quarterly and The New

Christianity hoped but failed to stimulate; and what means or medium would most effectively stimulate such a substitute or such communication itself?

The Messenger has no answer. It is whistling in the dark to ask for ideas. However, "taking the optimistic step," suggestions will be welcomed and may be addressed to the Messenger, Box E., 48 Sargent St., Newton, Mass.

NEWS FROM ST. PAUL

The Rev. John F. Williams and the Rev. Andre Diaconoff, meeting often on the street, became acquainted last winter and their friendship has expanded to include their churches. Andre Diaconoff reports to the Messenger:

The Virginia Street Church — Swedenborgian and the Shiloh Negro Baptist Church, a neighbor Church in St. Paul, have made friends this Spring. We have had many hours of happy and inspiring worship and fellowship together.

On Ash Wednesday we had a joint evening service of prayer in our Church. Rev. John F. Williams of the Shiloh Church spoke. There was a good number of people from both Churches present. We had an hour or two for conversation and friendship after the service. The Shiloh Church opened their doors to us for an evening service of prayer and for fellowship the following Wednesday, when Rev. Andre Diaconoff gave a talk. There was a time for meditation and for silent and spoken prayer following.

Our two Churches have had Sunday dinners together. On one of those Sundays the choir of the Virginia Street Church had sung a "Choral Service of Psalms," under the direction of Mr. Dale Lange. They were by different composers who had set the Psalms to music in recent centuries. On that Sunday our Shiloh friends gave us some beautiful "spirituals."

Our most recent time together was on Easter Sunday afternoon when the Shiloh Church invited us to a delightful program featuring their little children.

Our two Churches are planning a joint Choir program in the near future. Several personal friendships are being formed.

REPRESENTATION AT CONVENTION

The following figures, as of December 31, 1967, are from the Reports of Associations and Societies.

Associations, Etc.	SOCIETIES		MINISTERS		MEMBERS			Delegates	
	No. of Societies		No. of Ministers		Society-Related	Isolated	Total	A	B
	Active	Inactive	Active	Lay					
California	8	-	8	1	295	-	295	7	11
Canada	1	-	1	-	199	28	227	6	2
Colorado Springs Society ****	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Connecticut	0	0	0	0	10	0	10	2	2
Illinois *	5	3	3	1	286	100	386	9	14
Kansas *	4	1	2	-	193	-	193	5	8
Maine *	3	-	1	2	205	48	253	7	10
Massachusetts	10	2	4	2	377	142	519	12	19
Michigan ***	1	-	1	-	157	-	157	5	7
Middle Atlantic **	5	-	5	-	442	5	447	10	16
New York	2	-	1	1	96	45	141	4	6
Ohio *	6	-	4	-	191	-	191	5	8
Western Canada Conference *	9	-	3	-	407	-	407	10	15
Southeast	2	-	2	-	84	80	164	5	7
Gulport, Miss. Society	1	-	0	-	33	17	50	3	3
Totals	57	6	35	7	2975 (incomplete)	465	3440 (incomplete)		

B I O G R A P H I E S

One biography and two nominations reached the Messenger too late for the April issue. They are included here and should be appended to the Report of the Nominating Committee that appeared in April.

A: Delegates authorized (or estimated on basis of available figures) for Convention, 1968.

B: Number of delegates authorized (or estimated under proposed constitutional amendment) see The Messenger, March 1968, p. 42. Associations may wish to appoint alternates to complete this quota to be prepared if the amendment carries to take effect this year.

Marjorie Barrington
Convention Secretary

* no report: Dec. 31, 1966 figures used
** partial report: includes some Dec. 31, 1966 figures
*** no report: Dec. 31, 1965 figures used.
**** no report or available figures
a dash (-) indicates an unreported figure

VIRGINIA BRANSTON

Virginia Branston is a New Yorker by adoption, having lived longer in Fun City than any of the other ten states in which she resided for a time. She earned a degree in economics from Hunter College and did graduate work at the Bernard Burach School of Business and Public Administration.

Mrs. Branston has four children and three grandsons. She is a member of the New York Society of the New Church. She serves as Treasurer of the New York Association of the New Church; Treasurer of the Swedenborg Publishing Association; Secretary of the New Church Board of Publications; and Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Radio and TV Department of the Protestant Council of the City of New York.

For many years she held an executive position with the Marconi Company, a British firm that are the pioneers of the communications field. Just six years ago she was appointed to the post of manager of the Swedenborg Foundation and finds the work highly gratifying.

HERB YOUNG

Herb Young, President of the Miami Society and Executive for Eastern Airlines, has been nominated for General Council for the term expiring 1969 (replacing Albert Rado).

RICHARD H. TAFEL

For term expiring 1969 (replacing Ernest Martin), the Rev. Richard H. Tafel retiring President of Convention, has been nominated for the Board of Managers.

FROM THE PULPIT

*Preached at Trinity Church,
Boston on Palm Sunday,
April 7, 1968 by the
Rev. Theodore P. Ferris.*

Once again the church is being cleansed; the fine wind of events is sweeping through it. There will be a new church. What will it be like? No one knows. One can only speculate. These are my speculations.

The new church will be smaller in membership. It will be open to all, but there will be no nominal members. There will be no perfunctory baptisms simply because baptism is the thing to do. There are, so far as I know, no nominal members of the Peace Corps. Those who are accepted in it believe in it, are trained for it, and are prepared to accept the discipline of it. The new church will be smaller, not because anyone has been excluded. They will be excluded only by the cost of belonging to a community which expects more than their casual interest and occasional support.

Two. There will be fewer buildings. We need a building, we need a place in which we can gather together; where we find not only the people, but our associations, the hopes and fears of all our years. What would we do without a place like this, at great moments like this? I can remember when Franklin Roosevelt died, and people poured into this place to remember him. I can remember how people came here when the Second World War was over. I can remember it more vividly when John Kennedy was assassinated. People poured into it from the time a funeral service ended until it was closed at midnight.

We need a building, a place; but we don't need as many as we have. In one suburb of Boston there were once thirty-four churches. There are now twenty-three. It needs ten. In the meantime thirteen buildings are being kept up, staffed. Money that might be spent for other things is being spent on buildings that are not needed.

People like us become attached to buildings, and you can't blame people for that. You get to love a church you've lived in all your life. The trouble is that we sometimes become so attached that we mistake the building for the thing itself, and when it comes to let the building go, we cannot do it. We may have to do it.

Third. The machinery will be simpler in the new church. In the church as it is now the organization increases year by year, the overhead structure grows by leaps and bounds. It seems to keep pace with business, advertising and all other prosperous occupations which men pursue. Mail pours in to all of us from every direction, as directives from the top and criticism from the sidelines. If half of the time that is now spent on promotion and publicity, statistics and surveys, were spent with the people, the church would be new even now.

Fourth. Some of the mistakes of the past will be acknowledged and left behind. The grievous mistake of separating the Christian community into racial groups, saying this is a church for white people, this is a church for colored people, this is the church for poor people, and this is the church for well-to-do people. That will be acknowledged as a terrible misunderstanding of the meaning of the Gospel, and it will not happen in the new church.

Fifth and finally, the purpose of the church will be plainer than it is now. It will not look like a social service agency, or a political action group, or an entertainment center. It will be a community of those who love for the sake of those who suffer; and those who love will be held together, not so much by their love for each other, but by their love for God in Christ, which then binds them together in a community from which they will then move out to people in trouble, wherever they may be, whatever the nature of their trouble may be.

They will not all express their love in the same way; nor will they make judgments on those who differ from them; and they will return to this place, places like this, to learn the way of truth, to confess and acknowledge their mistakes, to give thanks, and to catch once again the vision which for the moment they have lost in the clouds of their failures and frustrations. They will come back again and again to a place like this to be strengthened and renewed.

All of this may sound to you like idle speculation. I said at the beginning that it was speculation. Actually, I think it may not be. I can't help thinking at a time like this of the words that come at the end of the Old Testament, just before the New Testament begins. "The Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to his temple. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap."

He did come, and he cleansed the Temple. He is coming now to cleanse the church once again.

*Preached at the Church of
the New Jerusalem in
Manchester, N.H. on Palm
Sunday, April 7, 1968 by
Frank Shaw.*

.... Dr. Martin Luther King lived in the world of mortal men, and was himself a mortal man. He too lived without honor in his own country; yet, he continued to sing, "We Shall Overcome." Not only did he sing, but he taught untold numbers to sing with him and to believe what they sang. Others took up the song but not with the truth of brotherly love of which they sang, but with the great supremacy of might and force that now "we shall rule the world," not with the unity of all men as one, but with the vengeance of tyranny and despotism. You have been shown first hand the same vengeance, the same greed, and the same perversion and twisting of truth which Christ faced in his ministry on earth. Are you content to sit back and let those who would subject you to their despotism? Or, are you willing to help the truth of God rule the world in love and charity? The choice is yours.

Jesus predicted his own persecution. He predicted his betrayal, the denial of Peter, his condemnation by the people and his death on the cross. And while they lived in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, "The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of man: and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again." The survival of good and truth cannot fail, even unto death, when faith is steadfast upon the rock of truth.

There is no power in man to keep truth locked up in the tomb. Instead, man has the power to seek, to know, to accept the truth of God, and to live his life in accordance with the commandments of that truth. He can know and do that truth; demonstrate the Word of God in deed and act; and suffer the persecution of ungodly, natural man; or, he can know those truths, tuck them away in some remote corner of his mind, and escape the persecution and ridicule of men. He can accept what is as it is and become lost in the crowd. Did Dr. King do this? Is this what you do with the world around you? Are you without honor in your own country because you have dared expose the real you?

IN MEMORIAM

REV. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

*Preached at the First New
Jerusalem Society of
Philadelphia on Palm Sunday,
April 7, 1968 by the Rev.
Richard H. Tafel, President
of Convention.*

Palm Sunday should be a happy and holy day in our religious calendar, but for us today it is a time of mourning and sorrow. We have suffered a most grievous loss. One of the truly great souls of our generation has been struck down by an assassin's bullet. A great leader, who might have pointed our nation — and yes, the world — to a brighter tomorrow, is gone. The cause of freedom, of justice, of the dignity of man has suffered a deadening blow, and our world is darker and emptier because of this senseless tragedy. We mourn with a desperate sense of loss Martin Luther King, Christian, Prophet, Leader, Martyr. We mourn as we honor this man who dared to believe the sacred teachings of his Lord in this age of violence, hatred, prejudice and injustice: who dared to believe that love can conquer hate, that compassion is mightier than prejudice, that weakness is stronger than violence and that there is a mighty reservoir of goodness at the heart of man awaiting to be released by a Christ-like example of witnessing and enduring in the name of the Master of Men. For testifying to his faith, this man is killed! Are evil, injustice and wrong to be forever on the throne?

As we ponder the tragedy, the suffering and the violent death of our Lord and of his followers, what is this demonic force of evil unleashed in our world which can so easily snuff out godliness and holiness and righteousness and all that would make for a truer, nobler humanity? We are heartsick, appalled and overcome with fear and misgiving at the mad violence which stalks our land and our world of this Twentieth Century: the lawlessness which characterizes so much of our civic and social life; the lack of restraint, the "couldn't care less" attitude, the disrespect for authority on the part of young and old alike; the breakdown of discipline, law, order and morals; the quick recourse to force, the shooting in our streets, and this present loss which is so heavy on our hearts this day.

What is this demonic power that is sweeping our land and possessing us body and soul? Is

this mass of evil generated within the heart of man, or is it an invasion from without? We of this church, who are so conscious of the World of the Spirit which bathes us about mind and heart, know that a part of that spiritual world is demonic and hellish, and that it is bent on the de-humanizing and destruction of our world and everyone in it. But we also know that unless hell and the realm of the demonic has a base within us, it cannot invade, possess us and cause us to do its bidding. A part of our Christian duty is to build a dam against our own evil inclinations so that, as far as we individually are concerned, the inflowing demonic tide will be walled off. Let us therefore use this day of mourning for an honest and prayerful searching of our minds and hearts, and for looking within ourselves for an answer to this tragedy. Then this man shall not have died in vain.

Let us look within ourselves deeply and bravely to see all that might be an operating base there for the enemy of mankind. What we find, may we humbly confess! With the Lord's help may we determine to free ourselves from its grip knowing that we are freeing our world from the downward pull to destruction by just that much! Pride, the unspoken feeling spawned from hell that we are somehow better than other people: that we have special rights and sacred privileges because of the color of our skin, the neighborhood we live in, the education we have been privileged to receive, the kind of work we have been allowed to do.

Let us remember the man whom we honor this day who gave himself for all America, and who championed the cause of the oppressed and disenfranchised of all classes and races. "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

Prejudice, intolerance, exclusiveness and the fantasy of superiority which erects fences between individuals and which builds walls between people with God-given differences; which betrays the principles upon which our Democracy is founded, which denies the privilege of citizenship to every citizen, and which divides this our native land.

Let us remember this day Martin Luther King: saint, citizen and man of God who preached his greatest sermons by demonstrating the power of love, by turning

the other cheek, by resisting not evil: this great American who, only incidentally, was a Negro and who now "belongs to the ages."

As we join in paying homage to him, let us come to grips with the spirit of apathy, indifference, callousness; with the attitude of "couldn't care less;" with the selfish clinging of the status quo, to "things as they have always been and don't you dare change them!" Surely something of all this must be in us, too, for it hangs like a deadening cloud upon our land perpetuating injustice, inequality, poverty, hunger, slums, disease, human indignity and a despairing hopelessness.

We pay tribute this day to one man's effort to life this cloud from off the hearts and minds of men, and to answer with his life the age-old question of the human race, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The hero in the greatest Parable of Human Concern was a man of a despised race. It was the "Samaritan," you will recall, who did not "pass by on the other side." And the humanity which God took upon himself when he came to save us was that of a Jew.

It is recorded of our Lord Jesus that when he went up to Jerusalem for the last time, foreseeing the Passion and the Cross, he nevertheless "set his face as flint" toward his destiny. Of such a full measure of devotion is our humanity capable! At the same time, when face to face with that destiny, our humanity shrinks back and prays that it may be spared the final bitter cup, only to drink it with the full surrender of commitment, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done!"

Martin Luther King did not want to die. Some time before that fatal shooting, he had a premonition of what was ahead of him. But he did not shrink back from his destiny. He said, "If I die, I die happy, knowing that I have given my life for that which is good! I have been up on the mountain, and have seen a vision of America." In that vision, he tells us, he saw the poorest boy on the poorest farm in Georgia endowed with the privileges held out to every citizen as his "inalienable rights" in the sacred writings upon which this country is founded: "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Can we, who would honor the memory of Martin Luther King, do less than help to make that vision become a reality? Even though it means setting our face like flint toward our Jerusalem ...and the Cup...and the Cross? Even though it means dying as to everything within us and around us which would hold us back from that Vision of America, so that a new humanity, a new society, a new America may rise from the Tomb of Sacrifice?

BOOK REVIEW

Sex Incorporated - A positive view of the sexual revolution. By Hans Hofmann. Boston: Beacon Press, 1967, 129 pp. \$4.95.

Hans Hofmann is already well known for his books, The Ministry and Mental Health, Making the Ministry Relevant, and Religion and Mental Health. Like these books, Sex Incorporated is about mental health. It is about incorporating one's own sexuality into one's life for total life awareness. Hofmann defines sexuality as the "incompleteness" of man which drives him into relationships with others. He discusses sex as a part of normal development from birth to death of the spouse, and in this discussion he deals, in a very "broad-minded" way with many of the problems which frequently arise at different levels of development. His treatment of these problem areas is unusually good. For he treats them all in such a matter-of-fact way, as though these are all very normal problems (everyone has them) that the reader tends to breathe a sigh of relief as his guilt feelings decrease. This is especially true in the area of fantasy, which Hofmann deals with more than other counselors this reviewer has read.

This is not a "marriage manual" for those who are married or about to be. It is a book for any individual from adolescence on through life. It deals as much with how to become a whole person though unmarried as with becoming whole in marriage. My teen-age daughters read this book, while I had it at home to read, because it has an intriguing title. I am glad they read it. I asked them how they liked it. They said it was OK. It would be a hard book to talk about with them. It might be possible to discuss this book in youth groups; it may be that it delves into regions that are too intimate to talk about. However, I think it would be a good book for the minister to have in his personal library to make available to his parishioners, and it would be a good book to have around for your teen-agers to pick-up for casual reading.

Marian Kirven

STATISTICS

BAPTISMS

On March 10th, the Rev. Othmar Tobisch baptized the infant son of Joe and Esther Coopman of San Francisco to the Christian name of Jon Kenyon.

On March 17th the Rev. Othmar Tobisch baptized Tanya Lisa, daughter of Allan and Jennifer Deal of Walnut Creek, California.

On March 24 the Rev. Othmar Tobisch baptized the infant son of James and Carol Lindquist of Pacifica, Calif. to the Christian name of David Matthew.

On March 31, Nathan Unruh, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Unruh was baptized and confirmed. The service took place in the Montezuma Church in Kansas.

James Christopher, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Smailer was baptized on March 3rd in the Philadelphia Church with the Rev. Richard H. Tafel officiating.

Steven Joseph, infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Joe and Edna Charzewski of Winnipeg, Manitoba, was baptized on March 24th, with Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiating.

Perry Beckford Young was baptized March 31 in the Pretty Prairie Church by the Rev. Eric Zacharias. Perry is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Steve Young of Wichita.

CONFIRMATIONS

Judy and Joyce, daughters of Mrs. Doris Friesen were confirmed into the faith of the Swedenborgian Church during a service in the Montezuma Church on March 31.

MARRIAGES

Bertrand Chombeau married Muriel Miller on Feb. 11 in the San Diego Church.

DEATHS

Resurrection service was held February 20th for Kenneth M. Lingo with the Rev. F. Robert Tafel officiating.

Mrs. Irene Lister passed into the higher life on March 5th. A Memorial Service was conducted by the Rev. Richard H. Tafel.

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May, 1968
The Messenger

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