

# ***THE MESSENGER***

**Official Organ of the Swedenborgian Church**

**SEPTEMBER 1971**

## **A QUESTION ABOUT THE MESSENGER**

Do larger, "special" issues of *The Messenger* increase its value to you, as a member of the Swedenborgian Church? Were the biographies of Convention nominees, and other notices, worth a double issue in May? Was the publication of "Advance Reports" from Convention committees and constituent bodies worth a double issue in June? Most important, did the big July-August Convention issue bring the event "home" to you in a way that makes *The Messenger* worth more to you?

This is an important question right now in a very concrete way.

### **A FINANCIAL CRISIS**

The Department of Publication and the General Council, feeling that larger *Messengers* with more information and other material would be valuable to Convention, increased the printing budget for this fiscal year (April '71 to March '72). The special issues in May and June were in line with this policy. However, the Convention issue, including practically all reports available from the event, with the extra costs of getting photo-ready copy to the printer twenty-one days after the close of Convention, has created a crisis in *The Messenger's* budget.

Unless there is new income not anticipated in the budget, there can be no more "special" issues until after next March, not more than a couple of regular (16-page) issues, and none at all in November.

### **AN APPEAL FOR HELP**

Several expressions of appreciation for the July-August issue have been received; but if the larger issues are worth more, more concrete help is needed. Will you contribute money to the cost of publication? The money is urgently needed—publication of a November issue depends on it—and your gift will indicate what you want in "The Official Organ of the Swedenborgian Church."

**Cont'd on back cover**

## CORRECTIONS TO THE CONVENTION ISSUE

**P. 151:** The third paragraph, first column, should have reported that Convention President and Mrs. Martin's reception was in honor of retiring Vice-President and Mrs. Stewart E. Poole.

**P. 158 and 161:** The article "The Swedenborgian Church of the 70's" begins on P. 161 and is continued on P. 158.

**P. 173:** The italics code (defeated candidates in italics) was wrong in four places. The Rev. Erwin Reddekopp and Wilfred C. Peck were *not* elected to General Council; Herbert Young was *not* elected to the Nominating Committee, and Mrs. John C. King *was* elected to the Board of Managers of SSR.

**P. 175:** Picture captions were scrambled. Upper left was Urbana College exhibit, upper right, Swedenborg House, Deland, Fla; middle left, Board of Missions, middle right, Swedenborg Press; lower left, Almont Summer School, and the last picture was correctly identified as ANCI exhibit.

**P. 178:** The middle picture depicts the reception in the home of Urbana College President and Mrs. Zehner and the lower right picture was taken at the reception in the home of Dr. Dorothea Harvey, and does not show the Martin family.

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## THE THIRTY GREEN VOLUMES

(In this new series, Brian Kingslake will lead us on easy explorations into the territory of Swedenborg's Theological Writings.)

### 1. "Take a Duster!"

If you are so fortunate as to possess, whether by inheritance or purchase, a set of the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, you have an inexhaustible treasury. What a tragedy that so many of us leave our thirty green volumes undisturbed on the dusty shelf, merely pointing them out to visitors as proof that we are members of the New Church in good standing, or maybe that our parents or grandparents were! If only we could get inside the covers of these forbidding tomes, we should find ourselves in a new world, a continent of indescribable wonder, variety and beauty, with mountains and hills, forests and rivers and waterfalls, and (let's admit it!) some obscure jungles and sandy deserts. . . enough to challenge the most intrepid explorer, but with sufficient ready interest for the ordinary sight-seeing tourist. There is, undoubtedly, a great deal of repetition in the writings, which some readers find tedious. But there is repetition also in nature: the same old trees—oaks, pines, redwoods, repeated over and over again. Swedenborg's writings are like the great wide open countryside, not a botanical garden.

In this series of essays I shall assume you are fairly familiar with the main scope of Swedenborg's major works: *Arcana Coelestia*, *Heaven and Hell*, *Divine Love and Wisdom*, *Divine Providence*, *Apocalypse Revealed*, *Conjugal Love*, *True Christian Religion*. Can you say which is your favorite? Try! It is a revealing experiment! If I knew which was your favorite, I could say something about your character. You would be an *Arcana* man, a D. P. man, a T. C. R. man. For myself I must confess a preference for *Conjugal Love*, which is surely the most poetic and beautiful of all the books on theology, philosophy and morals ever written, with the most delightful pictures of life in the spiritual world; yet withal it is a practical, down-to-earth book on sex, as up-to-date as any of the books on that subject now pouring from the publishing houses. Next to C. L. I would choose D. L. W. The *Arcana* I find rather overwhelming. I only once got really under the skin of it. On a long sea voyage, I read a chapter every night in my bunk before going to sleep (using a paperback edition)

and it raised me up into a higher ether. Looking back on that voyage, I cannot remember for certain whether I was at sea or among the angels in the sunny realms of heaven.

What would be a minimum library of the writings, to cover every subject? You would need the *Arcana* for Biblical exposition, and the *Apocalypse Revealed* perhaps. *Heaven and Hell* for the life after death. *Divine Providence* for ethics, *Divine Love and Wisdom* for philosophy. *Conjugal Love*, of course! *True Christian Religion*. Oh, better keep the lot!

Just to gaze at these books makes one marvel at the sheer physical labor involved in the writing of the manuscripts. Swedenborg had no typewriter and no stenographer. He did not use a biro nor a fountain pen, nor even an old-fashioned steel nib. He wrote with a goose feather or quill; and if you have ever tried to do this, you will realize how awkward and scratchy it is. He used long narrow sheets of paper, 13" x 4", and on every page or so his writing got so thick he had to sharpen his quill with a "penknife" which lay beside him on his desk. (*Pen* means "feather").

Light to see by was a problem. In a northern clime such as Sweden, sunlight scarcely appears for the three winter months of the year. Lacking electricity, Swedenborg had to write by the dim light of a whale-oil lamp or tallow candles, which must have made a cosy kind of smell in the shadowy room. Warmth? A great-coat, maybe of reindeer skin, and a porcelain stove reaching from floor to ceiling. In summer time, he worked in the little square summer house, containing desk and small pipe organ, at the far end of the orchard.

Just to write these books out once would be a herculean labor, but he wrote them twice over, making a fair copy for the printer. And, as we shall see as our enquiry proceeds, Swedenborg made a preliminary excursion into each new topic before compiling his major works. These exploratory writings were not published during his lifetime, though the manuscripts were mostly preserved. Some of them appear in the two volumes of *Posthumous Theological Works*; other are included in the six volumes of *Apocalypse Explained*. It is always interesting to compare his first drafts with what he eventually passed for publication. No "automatic writing" here, or "dictation by angels," but an unremitting intellectual effort,

hammering out the metal of thought into acceptable shape.

Since it took Swedenborg such a colossal effort to produce these books, we must expect to exert ourselves a little in the study of them. It takes time and discipline before you reach the point when Swedenborg's writings begin to grip you; after that, no more effort is necessary, and the rewards pour in. Why not put aside at least an hour per week, say on Sunday afternoons, for the study of the thirty green volumes? This is about what the average person spends on *Time* or *Life Magazine*, but how much more of permanent spiritual value would you gain from such a study! I suggest you take a duster here and now, dust each volume of your set of the writings, and count them. If there are less than thirty, some research will be required to discover which volumes are missing. These can be ordered from the Swedenborg Foundation, 139 East 23rd Street, New York, N. Y. 10010. Then you will be ready to go ahead!

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## ANNUAL DINNER OF THE SWEDENBORG FOUNDATION

Dr. Wilson Van Dusen, already well known to Swedenborgians, addressed an audience of 125 Life Members and 26 Faculty Members of New York area colleges following the Annual Dinner of the Swedenborg Foundation on May 10.

Dr. Van Dusen chose as his topic *The Implications of a Psychological Theology*. We are not accustomed to thinking spiritually and psychologically at the same time, he said. The spiritual world is our unconscious. Heaven and hell are the opposite images of mind and life styles. Mind itself is a representation of heaven and hell. Personal ego identity dissolves as one goes deeper into the spiritual levels. There are spontaneous processes within mind (i.e. symbolizing) that reflect the operations of the spiritual world. Understanding one's self and the real limits of one's mastery becomes the real key to the spiritual world. "The Lord is the Very Human" unites what we are won't to think of as separate.

Animated discussion groups of members and guests lingered long after the formal adjournment of the meeting.

## PRAYER

We are given the Lord's prayer. It is adapted to the use of all citizens throughout their lives. Its largest present use appears to be when people congregate. How often is it used by an individual in preference to another prayer? Why? What is the meaning of "Thy kingdom come: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" to persons not familiar with Swedenborg's writings?

"Hallowed be Thy name" has meaning to everyone although it means different things to different people. Not only do we pray that we may refrain from taking His name in vain, but we pay respect to His divinity and all that it means. A personal duty is involved in our saying it.

Do we find a personal obligation in "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven?"

In the first place, we find here an appeal to both the mind and the heart. We recognize that throughout the Bible "kingdom" refers to truth. We pray that we may find the truth and accept it, and reject the false.

Our understanding of His kingdom involves much more. Does it not involve an understanding of His Providence which is our guide throughout our lives? (*D. P. 332*)

Are we willing to place our whole lives and our futures in the hands of Providence? Do we wholeheartedly approve what Providence provides? Can you think of anything that is more completely in the hands of Providence than the weather, and yet how many people complain of it? How often do we wish for weather which is different from what we have? But how much happier we would be if we accepted it, and how much happier the world would be if people did not complain about it?

Would this world be more wonderful if we never had bad weather; if the greedy were no longer with us; if we could never have another war? We learn that during life on earth our minds—that which lives after us—is in the World of Spirits. There it is subject to the influence of good spirits and angels, and to the influence of evil spirits and those in hell. (*HH293; TCR 475; AC5846-5854*). Between the endeavors of the good and evil an equilibrium is maintained by the Lord so that man may be in freedom, in a state of choice, and only in this way

can man be reformed. Without such freedom, man could not be reformed. (*AC 8209*) The Providence of the Lord foresees good and evil and is ever present to influence man to do good insofar as man will permit it. (*AC 6489*) Only good spirits and angels are with infants. (*AC 5857*).

With such teachings available, the Swedenborgian has an appreciation of the necessity for both good and evil in the world so that he may be in freedom and be reformed. Would that we could impart this knowledge to the world!

Thus to a Swedenborgian, "Thy kingdom come" is personal—a duty devolves on each of us to learn to rely on His Providence and we must do our part. For what do we pray with "Thy kingdom come?" Do we always search for the truth and reject the false? Do we give thanks for a knowledge of why there is falsity and evil in the world, and an understanding of our duty with respect to it? Do we avoid annoyance at the working of the Lord's providence—including the many, perhaps trivial things that occur and change our plans? As we grow in knowledge, do we pray for greater freedom from the false, and an understanding that leads to more useful and happy life?

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." In various places Swedenborg refers to heaven as a kingdom of uses.

"To perform use is to desire the welfare of others for the sake of the common good; and not to perform use is to desire the welfare of others not for the sake of the common good, but for the sake of self. (*HH 64*)

Do we make the prayer personal? Do we do our part?

The child who is brought up in the teachings of Swedenborg has an understanding of life totally unknown to those ignorant of his writings. His understanding and interpretation of the Lord's Prayer will grow with him. Would that we might share this with our neighbors!

While we believe that we are permitted to do evil instead of good, and the Lord gives us permission to do evil in order that we may always be free to act in freedom according to our reasoning, we must always remember that whatever is permitted is for the sake of our salvation. We are taught to say,

## INTEREST SEMINAR: PRAYER

Nineteen people joined Brian and Jill Kingslake to study and experience Prayer. We started from the basic definition of prayer as "anything that enables us to communicate with God," and we extended it to include communicating with our neighbor on a spiritual level. We tried to explore as many avenues of communication as possible, and soon discovered that words—whether written or spoken—were not by any means the only, nor even the best, means of communication. Claudius, in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, says: "Words without thoughts never to heaven go." But even when our thoughts are directed aright, we need the motive power of desire to lead our prayer into effective action. We must have an integration of thought, desire and action. The whole of our group's time together was spent in exploring and experiencing this. We used the Word of God as a means of directing our thoughts, and discussed the value of reading current books on Prayer, such as Malcolm Boyd's "Are you running with me, Jesus?" David Redding's "If I could pray again," Michel Quoist's "Prayers," and "To Pray and to Grow" by Flora Slosson Wuellner. The regular use of some daily manual of Bible reading and prayer was stressed, and some examples were passed round and used. The different forms of prayer used in (1) public worship, (2) prayer group, and (3) private devotions, were considered and compared. The five aspects: adoration, thanksgiving, confession, petition and intercession were studied, and we came to realize how limited is the idea that prayer is only "asking for something." The relation of intercessory prayer to love of the neighbor, and pitfalls to avoid when interceding for others, were discussed. We considered the use and abuse of ritual, and the value of various disciplines. Finally we experimented with "worship in rhythm," a program of release through physical expression, which was new to most of the group. Each of our meetings included sessions of actual prayer to the Lord; and, as someone brought up the subject of the laying-on of hands, we ended our last session sitting in a circle of chairs while each member in turn, walked round the outside of the circle laying hands on each one's head and giving a blessing. The last to do this was our dear Dolly Frederick, whom Brian took round in her wheel chair.

*Brian and Jill Kingslake*

## SEMINAR GROUP—"THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL CENTERS IN CONVENTION"

We came together as a small group but discovered that we were representative of the whole country—New England, South, Mid-West, Southern California, Northern California. We also quickly discovered that we held wide and quite diversified ideas about what a regional might be. We also had fears that the establishment of such centers might effect the ongoingness of the local parishes. But we cared enough to work together through our fears and discovered many exciting possibilities.

We started our considerations with the suggestion that a regional center might simply be a practical method for solving the problem that there are not enough ministers to serve the needs of every church. But as our discussions proceeded, we all felt that the idea of a regional center contained tremendous potential for much more. In fact, it could be one vehicle for the rejuvenation of the New Church, which we felt is urgently needed.

We felt, however, the need to be cautious. Such rejuvenation of our church life will not happen simply by changing our outer structures. Rather these outer changes must reflect a change in a much deeper inner level. And this can only come about by an objective re-examination of the fundamentals of Swedenborg and incorporating with the knowledge that we have gained since his time.

Some specific conclusions and recommendations:

1. The establishment of regional centers could be an important part of the restructuring of the church; therefore wide range discussions about them should be encouraged.
2. They should not be established to replace the existing local parishes but should complement and strengthen them.
3. Regional Centers would be a way of best using the limited resources available now and might attract new resources.
4. The Regional Center should reflect the needs of the local area it is serving—needs will differ from region to region.

5. The organizational structure and form of a Center should reflect the purpose of the Center's function and should not be limited to existing structures and forms.

The basic purposes might be:

1. Research—a rediscovery of Swedenborg and an examination of how his teachings can be applied to modern life problems, i.e. bringing Swedenborg into our reality.

2. Program Development — many of our churches are now left dangling without ministers. In the centers, programs should be developed, based on the discoveries and rethinking of No. 1 above. These programs should be such that they can be implemented in the local parishes by laymen.

3. Training—Centers can be a local place for the training of laymen who will implement the local programs. Such training will also include helping them to discover what resources are available to them in the local community.

4. Communication—a smaller regional unit below convention where ideas can be exchanged and the local parishes can learn from each other. Also provide a base for communications throughout convention so new discoveries can be shared.

*Compiled by Rich Watson  
Hillside Church, El Cerrito, Cal.*

PRAYER, Cont'd. from p. 208

"Get thee behind me, Satan." The Divine Providence continually directs, bends and disposes each individual—and without violating his freedom, doing everything possible to lead him away from evil and lead him to good. (DP 234) Never are we exposed to evil we cannot resist. "Behold I stand at the door and knock . . ."

This would not be complete without a word about disease which has its origin in the lusts and passions of the mind. (AC 5712) I do not find a clear explanation of this relationship in Swedenborg. Diseases are not limited to mankind. Dogs have colds; sheep have halt, etc. Even plants are diseased. These diseases do not originate from some wrong the dog or the sheep or the plant has done. If there were a direct relationship between the diseases which one suffers and his own wrongdoing, there would be no healthy thug, and no child crippled at birth.

*Gordon C. Mack*

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir:

The appearance of the article by Calvin E. Turley among the series of Swedenborg studies in the April issue of *The Messenger* has aroused my interest. Upon being further informed about new ideas in training ministers for the Swedenborgian Church, I thought it may be of interest to you to hear the point of view of one who has only a short time ago been outside of the Church; who found in Swedenborg's doctrines a uniqueness not to be found in today's world, and who sees the possibility that they are in danger of being lost.

We are all aware that the times we live in today are not like the days of a century ago when the New Church was established. Gone is the exuberance and the feeling of limitless possibility of those times. Twentieth Century anxiety has invaded even the Church today. The overwhelming thought I have received is that we ought not lag "behind the times," that we should use the methods and techniques of today in order to compete for spiritual customers. This I think is a mistake, and I shall explain why I think so.

Most New Churchmen seem to think that the Lord's Kingdom began actualizing as soon as Swedenborg's books were made available. But such a small number of people including the Swedenborgians of today belong to it, that it is impossible to refer to the New Church as the Church of Modern Man. This church exists in the modern world, however. It is a church without a church. While it is true that the modern world has broken the power of the Catholic and Protestant Churches, it has also rejected most spiritual values for materialism. And though it has ideals in common with Swedenborg, such as personal freedom and religious toleration, it is a far cry from the New Christianity. I was brought up in it from early childhood, and I know from experience that it is not the way to the Lord's Kingdom, but to all the ills that we know under the heading of "the rat race." The rift between the two is not simply a matter of presentation and education, but the age-old rift between the "natural" and the "spiritual."

By using the tools of the modern era, such as psychoanalytical technique, there is the certainty of putting Twentieth Century limitations on Swedenborg. Though the method may have certain applications when properly handled, there is the tendency to cast an individual into a preconceived role which does not give a true picture. I have been given a "snow job" of this type by a trained psychiatrist, and can see how far conclusions can be from the truth and how badly they fit. The more people involved in this group therapy, the more error is likely to creep in. There is danger that when it finds itself in the driver's seat, the group will take the place of God. Who alone knows the state of the person being analyzed. Filled with good intentions and half truths, a person can perish spiritually. The downfall of modernism is in its failure to BE God.

The idea to disperse worship services likewise has its roots in the limitations of Modern Man, who will accept only what the senses reveal, and who collects experiences eclectically, secular and sacred alike. To him, a slap could teach as good a lesson as Isaiah, Chapter 53. It is easy to see how one could lose the spiritual meaning and could decide that all the meaning was in historical significance. Even worse than that, Swedenborg has a good deal to say about those who mix sacred with profane.

There are now indications that all is not entirely well with the Church of Modern Man. There is an ever increasing group of malcontents; political events in recent months have pointed toward a confirmation of falsity where there was once truth. Modern Man is not to be established forever on earth, but like the others before it, will have a last Judgment.

And what of the Church that replaces it? Will it be the New Church or will the New Church be "left in the field" playing the games of Modern Man when its time comes? If the New Christianity is to live forever, it must be able to lift itself from the errors of humanity and the traps of thinking therefrom, which arise in new forms in each age. And as Swedenborg has taught us, there is only one way in which this can be done—with the Lord's help. We must look neither to the past for our answers, nor to the present, but to the future.... to Emanuel Swedenborg.

*June Fine*

## DEATHS

Mary Spear Hunter, wife of William Howard Hunter, whose father, Rev. John Ramsey Hunter was pastor of the Los Angeles Society for many years, passed away on May 25th. Memorial services were held in conjunction with worship services on June 6th, the Rev. John Spiers officiating.

Albert S. Olsson of the Boston Church passed into the higher life on May 29th.

W. Harold Trussler of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, passed away on May 31st. Resurrection service was conducted on June 2nd by the Rev. Paul B. Zacharias.

Mrs. Marlene Ahrens of the Church of the Good Shepherd died on June 14th. Resurrection service was conducted on June 18th by the Rev. Paul B. Zacharias.

Glenn A. Baxter of Alameda, Cal. passed into the spiritual world on July 25th. Resurrection service was held on July 28th with the Rev. Erwin Reddekopp officiating.

Warren A. Elam of the San Francisco Church passed into the higher life on July 30th. Memorial service was held on August 2nd.

Mrs. Sydney Hall of the St. Petersburg Church passed away on July 26th. Interment was in Los Angeles, Cal.

## BIRTHS

In the Boston Church, Bryan Michael Forrester, son of Mr. and Mrs. Peter J. Forrester was born on February 11th; and Christian Michael Davis, son of Mr. and Mrs. Rodney F. Davis, was born on February 12th.

A son, Christopher Dale, was born to Mr. and Mrs. Garry Loewen of Calgary, Alberta, on February 23rd.

A son, Christopher Roy, was born to Mr. and Mrs. Leon Saluk of Edmonton, Alberta, on April 6th.

Two babies were born in July to members of the San Francisco Church; to Larry and Jeannine Brown of Vallejo, a son, Kurt Robert, on July 12th; and to Fred and Marilyn Stark of Pacifica, a son, Christopher Philip, on July 13th.

Cont'd. from Front Cover

If enough contributions are received to allow monthly publication, and more "regular" or even another "special" issue, then fullest possible reporting of future conventions, as well as special issues on other subjects can continue. If not, *The Messenger* will be sharply curtailed this fall and winter, and no more extravagant issues will be planned.

Please indicate your support of *The Messenger* with a check—as large as possible—payable to

The Messenger  
48 Sargent Street  
Newton, Mass. 02158

Thank you.

*Robert H. Kirven, Ed.*

## THE MESSENGER

SEPTEMBER 1971

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