

THE MESSENGER

Official Organ of the Swedenborgian Church

NOVEMBER 1971



**SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH
IN PHILADELPHIA**

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

One of the greatest privileges of the presidency is the opportunity it affords to visit with Swedenborgians in the far-flung corners of the United States and Canada. On the week-end of October 16-17 I visited in St. Louis, gave a public lecture on mysticism, and conducted the Sunday morning worship service. I was also able to visit with Mrs. Estelle Morrissey in a convalescent home and administer the sacrament of communion.

On October 24 Perry and I attended the annual meeting of the Maine Association in Portland. Following the worship service we had lunch with Association members at a seaside restaurant. We then visited with Carolyn Blackmer at the Maine Medical Center where she is undergoing treatment.

On October 30-31 I was guest of the Kansas Association at their annual meeting in Pretty Prairie. The meeting included Sunday School and worship, business, a presentation by the Rev. Tom Reed, a discussion of Convention, and beautiful slides shown by Florence Stewart.

Ernest O. Martin

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The statement on the opposite page was drawn up by the president of Convention and the president of Urbana College. It was presented at the Urbana convention in June after consideration by the Urbana trustees and the General Council.
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CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION MEETS

Although the day was gray and threatening, the 18 members, friends and guests who gathered at Center Church House in New Haven on Sunday, September 26, for the fall meeting of the Connecticut Association of the New Church were bright and friendly and happy to see each other once again.

The business meeting was called to order at 4:00 P. M. and reports were presented. The secretary, Mrs. Martin F. Lynn of Watertown, announced that the record book of the Association's activities during the years 1853-1934 was now in her possession and would be brought to the annual meeting next spring so everyone might enjoy looking at it.

The Rev. Clayton Priestnal came from New York City to conduct the worship service and administer the Holy Supper in the chapel. The sermon, entitled "A Sad Epitaph," emphasized the importance of preserving the distinctive masculine characteristics of men and the unique qualities of women. This timely subject provided an interesting topic for the discussion hour following the service.

Good food and fellowship around the table ended a period of happy sharing, and everyone looks forward now to a similar experience next spring.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir:

I thought it might be of interest to you—or to the editor of the Alliance Bulletin that Mrs. Ruth Ebberts, R. 1, Eureka, Kansas, 67045, is conducting a class in Swedenborgian study. The enthusiasm of this small group would be a boost to Convention, and a boost from Convention might prove a boost to them.

*Mrs. Anna Raile
Scottsdale, Ariz.*

URBANA COLLEGE AND THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH

Urbana College is an independent college associated with the Swedenborgian Church. The college was founded in 1850 by church members who saw the need for providing a broad range of education on a coeducational basis. A number of ministers and laymen of the church labored conscientiously over the years on the faculty and administration of the college to carry out this mission. Others, like T. Coleman DuPont and James C. Wentz, contributed generously toward the endowment fund and operating expenses of the college.

We now stand at the threshold of a new era in the life of the college. The church and the college look to each other to help realize their potential as individual institutions. The desirability of a close working relationship is evident when we compare the goals and purposes of church and college.

The church exists to foster and nurture the spiritual life of men, to help people grow and develop into the manhood and womanhood God sees possible for them. Drawing on its teachings and heritage, the Swedenborgian Church has developed a unique perspective that enables it to commit itself to its task with conviction and hope. The church has no desire to proselytize students, control details of the academic process, require chapel or specific religion courses, or limit the academic freedom of faculty or students.

The college seeks to provide an educational setting which encourages each student to examine values, to search for meaning, and enlarge his awareness of the various dimensions of life, intellectual and spiritual, as well as historical and physical. It accepts the responsibility to offer a liberal arts education to all students regardless of future occupational roles; to do this in a small college environment which will create the best possible conditions for communication between students, faculty and administrators; and to serve as an educational center for the immediate geographic area. With an emphasis on independent thought, student-faculty rapport and inter-relating diverse curricula, the faculty and students have dedicated themselves to a learning process which motivates, rather than dictates, and enables human beings to discover their own essential values.

Because the goals and objectives of church and college are so related, a program of mutual support is

prudent and wise. Following are some of the significant contributions each can make to the growth and progress of the other:

I. Contributions of the church to the college:

(a) A philosophy of life that can undergird the objectives of the college; e.g. the church advocates a free and rational inquiry into all dimensions of education and life. It is committed to the quest of individuals and society for a sense of purpose, identity, and mission. It is concerned with the development of deepening human relationships and with the education of the whole person.

(b) Essentially the church is people, and the Swedenborgian Church includes people who can serve Urbana College as dedicated and able faculty, trustees, and administration. They can also make a vital contribution to the student body of the college, encouraging their young people to attend, assisting in recruiting, and offering scholarship aid.

(c) Contributions from the church made it possible to build the Swedenborg Memorial Library. The denomination has pledged \$15,000 annually toward operating expenses of the college, and has granted loans for the construction of classroom buildings and dormitories. Finances will remain critical for some years and continued support from the church is essential.

II. Contributions of the college to the church:

(a) The college can become a community of concern where young people of the church can be a part of a living experience and develop their unique talents and endowments.

(b) The college can become a community of scholars making its resources of faculty, library, and facilities available to the church for programs of study, research, writing, and intellectual exploration.

(c) Facilities of the college can be made available to the church for conventions, retreats, conferences, institutes, and colloquia. Leadership and consulting services can also be provided for such groups and meetings.

The Swedenborgian Church and Urbana College reaffirm in this document the historical tradition relating these two institutions. We jointly celebrate the renaissance of the college and pledge ourselves to cooperative action in the pursuit of our mutual goals and objectives.

THE THIRTY GREEN VOLUMES

A Series on the Writings of Swedenborg
by Brian Kingslake

3. "A Mosaic"

The author of *Arcana Coelestia* is a new Swedenborg. He is no longer feeling his way, as in so much of *The Word Explained*. There is no hesitancy in his style now, but a calm sense of authority. "This means so-and-so, and this corresponds to such-and-such." This is not just his personal opinion, or something he has worked out for himself; it is the very divine truth expressed in human language.

Even in his comments on the literal sense of the Word, Swedenborg is original and enlightening. He was perhaps the first reputable scholar to face up to the inconsistencies of the Bible, the dual and conflicting accounts of the creation, the flood, and so on. He freely conceded that the literal sense is compounded of legend, myth and distorted history, taken from the minds and memories of men. There might be errors in it. But these were of no consequence. The Bible was the WORD OF GOD by virtue of the fact that it contained a consecutive spiritual sense placed there by God, who over-ruled the production of the text so that it would provide an adequate basis for this consecutive spiritual sense. The spirit resides within the letter as a man's soul resides within his body, or as the whole spiritual world resides within our physical universe, activating it and giving it life at every point. The Bible is in fact a complex series of divine allegories or parables, dealing with man's inner life and its relation to God.

Four years after the *Arcana* volumes had begun to appear from the press, a French physician named Dr. Jean Astruc published his "Documentary Hypothesis," in which he tried to account for the inconsistencies in the first five books of the Bible by suggesting that they had been pieced together from four ancient documents, which he called J, E, D, and P, with editorial redactions and link passages. This "scissors and paste-pot" theory led to the absolute rejection of the divinity of the Scriptures, making them a mere clumsy hotch-potch. They are not "Mosaic" (i.e., the work of Moses) but a mosaic. It happened that the learned world was longing at that time for an excuse to reject the Bible, so they eagerly seized on Astruc's Documen-

tary Hypothesis, and worked on it and developed it for a century and a half. When I was in seminary, I was shown a chromatic edition of Genesis, with different colored type to indicate the various sources. I noticed that one particular sentence was supposed to have come from three separate sources, single words apparently being cut out and stuck together! The whole thing had become ridiculous: the theory was dying from over-complexity, and we don't hear much about it any more. What a tragedy that the learned world of the mid-eighteenth century turned to Astruc rather than to Swedenborg for an explanation of the problems which a scientific scrutiny of the Biblical text was bound to raise! Only the doctrine of the Spiritual Sense of the Word can satisfactorily explain how a humanly imperfect document can provide a vehicle for the authentic Voice of God.

Nor is the Bible simply a straight-forward allegory. Swedenborg's other-world viewpoint enabled him to detect many layers of inner meaning within the sacred text, spreading out one above another like the floors of a high-rise apartment. He tells us specifically of four such meanings, running parallel with one another. Firstly, there is the story itself, the obvious meaning in terms of human language. Then, not far beneath the surface, lies the spiritual historical sense, dealing with the spiritual development of our race — Adam being not a single individual but the first "Church," which was brought to an end by an inundation of falsities described symbolically by the Flood; Noah being the "Church" which succeeded it, and so on. Incidentally, a world-famous anthropologist once informed me that prehistorians were coming round to the view that Adam represents the first *settled communities*, tilling the ground and domesticating sheep; and that the Pre-Adamites referred to in Genesis 1:27 were the paleolithic peoples who lived by hunting, fishing and food gathering. This fits in quite well with Swedenborg, since a "Church" presupposes a settled community.

Beneath the spiritual-historical sense lies the personal sense, dealing with the spiritual development of any particular person, of you or me. We must each pass through the "days" of creation; Adam and Eve are elements in us, so are Cain and Abel; we can all experience the "Fall" and expulsion from Eden; and so on. Finally, deepest of all (or highest of all) we have the "Celestial" sense, dealing prophetically with the inner development of our Lord Jesus Christ when He was in the flesh.

When you show someone over an apartment building, you can take them up in an elevator to any of the floors; so any passage from the Word could be explained on any of these various levels. Swedenborg picks and chooses, slipping from one level of meaning to another so that samples of all are provided. For example, in the opening chapters of the Arcana he speaks chiefly of the early history of the human race. When dealing with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, he shows the prophetic application of the text to our Lord's inner development from infancy to maturity. In early Exodus we find ourselves in the spiritual world, where new-arrivals from the earth are enslaved by devils and satans, but are eventually released by the Lord. This variety of approaches explains why the internal sense of certain passages is given differently in different places, as one might speak of steam, water and ice as being all the same.

From a literary point of view, the *Arcana Coelestia* reads very queerly indeed! There is a great deal of repetition and circular reasoning. Things are declared to be "evident" which, to many of us, are not evident at all! It is easy to find passages which, taken out of their long-range context, make very little sense. The Rev. John Wesley, who was at first attracted to Swedenborg but later turned against him, makes fun of some of these passages in his *Arminian Magazine*. (He quotes as ridiculous: "By a horse is not meant a horse . . .") But have patience and read a whole chapter at a sitting, and you will find yourself, as it were, in a great cathedral glistening with mosaics, an angelic choir singing a glorification of the Lord on account of His Advent, and your heart full to overflowing with heavenly secrets . . .



FRYEBURG NEW CHURCH ASSEMBLY 1971 Session

This was one of the most exciting and popular sessions in our history. One reason was because we had friends with us from the General Church and the Nova Hierosolyma Church giving lectures and fireside discussions. Another was the attendance, averaging about 90 at meals and including friends from Cleveland, Detroit, Florida, Ottawa and St. Louis; and some thirty teenagers who admitted eleven new members into The Flames at their special service.

The very interesting morning lectures on the life and thought of Swedenborg were given by the Reverends Barnitz, Blackmer, Dole, Larsen, McCurdy and Woofenden. Mrs. Blackmer gave several most informative lectures, as well as Stephen Larsen. We were also delighted to have with us Reverend Reynolds Becherel and his wife and daughter.

This was the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Assembly. At its first session of one week in 1921 thirteen listened to lectures by the Reverends Louis Dole, Sperry, Whitehead and Worcester. In 1927 the Assembly was incorporated and 12½ acres on the Saco River bought and building begun. George Dole has been our president since 1964.

On August 15th we had a Memorial Service for Miss Florence Whitehead who was a pioneer mem-

ber of the Assembly. Her beautiful paintings were donated to the Assembly and all had the opportunity to buy them.

The Rafael Guius announced that the Memorial Fund for the Reverend Everett Bray would be used for a cedar-wood playset for the Assembly children's playyard. Ever since 1932 Mr. Bray was a lecturer at the Assembly and always showed a special fondness for the children.

Mary Elizabeth Allan (five years old) of Winter Park, Florida, was baptized by the Reverend Mr. Woofenden at a Sunday service.

One night Herb Greer and Jim Jonard from Urbana led us in most hilarious round dances for all ages, closing with a sales pitch about Urbana being one of the best colleges in the U. S.

Stunt Night with its performances and jokes for all ages was a highlight of the session.

LEI had a 9-day session under the leadership of Jerry Poole after the Assembly closed August 29th.

May we thank our many friends who remembered us with donations for the Women's Auxiliary Sales Table. This was especially appreciated because *The Messenger* had no space for a reminder about donations.

F. Marion Greene

WESTERN CANADA THE GRAND TOUR

I have always wanted to get to know as many New Church people as possible in all parts of the world, so I was delighted when Rev. Henry Reddekopp agreed to take my wife and me on the Grand Tour of the Church in Western Canada. I was particularly pleased because it enabled us to meet people who had been taking my Correspondence Course in New Church Doctrine: people so familiar to me by name and handwriting, but often so different when actually seen, from the image I had formed!

After the Convention meeting at Urbana, Ohio, we left our car with friends at Cleveland and flew to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Here we were welcomed by Henry and Susanna Reddekopp into their hospitable home, which became our base of operations for the next three weeks. Our first trip was to Roblin, Manitoba, for the Western Canada Conference on Saturday, July 3rd. Several cars met at Henry's house, and we travelled as a kind of convoy 260 miles due east to Roblin. Jill and I were with Vince and Ann Almond and their young son and tiny dog. Straight roads, wide green horizons, clumps of trees, and brilliant yellow rape fields. The Conference (equivalent to an Association meeting) was held in a large hired hall just outside the little town of Roblin, which, like other towns in the Canadian prairie, was dominated by a row of giant square grain elevators. Lee Sonmor occupied the chair as President, Vince Almond was Vice President, Rev. Harvey Tafel Secretary, and John Bennett Treasurer. I was introduced to the meeting as representing Rev. Ernest O. Martin, President of the General Convention, and I conveyed Convention's greetings. It seemed necessary to stress that the Convention includes Canada as well as the U.S.A. (the flags of both countries were flying outside the Community Center at Urbana). One speaker urged as a goal the eventual independence and autonomy of the Western Canada Conference; but this plea had no substantial backing, and the fact that the Convention has been invited to meet in Edmonton, Alberta, in 1973, proves that the general feeling in Canada is one of solidarity with the central body. All the discussions throughout the day were active and lively, and revealed a keen interest in the Church; there were a few scenes of discord, even acrimony; but these were probably produced only by over-zealousness. There were touches of local color, as when it was reported that the Conference owned several hun-

dred bushels of wheat, stored in a grain elevator somewhere, which they were unable to sell! In the evening I showed slides of Africa, and spoke, in the style of a dialog with Jill, on our experiences on the South African Mission-field in 1950-1962.

The Conference Service on the Sunday morning was conducted by Rev. Harvey Tafel of Edmonton, and I preached the sermon. Three beautiful teenage sisters-triplets-were confirmed into the Church; their names in alphabetical order were Charlene, Darlene and Marlene, but which was which only they themselves knew! In the afternoon, another worship service with sermon had been advertized; but, as no arrangements had been made, Harvey Tafel began organizing a discussion group. Objection being raised to this, there were some moments of confusion. "Can't one of the ministers preach a sermon without having had previous notice to prepare it?" someone asked; "Perhaps that is what is wrong with our ministry!" In this somewhat hostile atmosphere, Rev. Harold Taylor of Vancouver rose magnificently to the occasion, and preached a fine extempore sermon which satisfied everyone. In the evening, I gave a talk, with slides, on the Holy Land.

On the Monday morning, after bidding goodbye outside the motel to our many new friends, we joined Henry and Susanna Reddekopp in their big green Pontiac, and began our memorable tour of outlying New Church centers. The dead-straight road north of Roblin took us through empty prairie, with square patches of mustard-colored rape, loose forest areas, and occasional lakes. The further north we proceeded, the denser became the forests: white poplar and birch, with undergrowth rich in wild flowers. Mafeking; the Pas, Cranberry Portage; then fifty miles of winding road among wooded lakes to Flin Flon. Flin Flon, on the border between Manitoba and Saskatchewan, might have been designed by Walt Disney in collaboration with Al Capp, who actually did design the giant figure of the mythical character, Flintabatey Flonatin which confronts you as you enter the town. Basically it is a copper mine, though gold and potash are also mined; and the two smoking stacks on the skyline provided the only air pollution we saw of the clean fresh air of Western Canada. The wooden houses, painted in bright colors, stood precariously on great masses of bare rock, all at different levels, with wooden steps and ladders leading to wooden verandas, and wooden ducts carrying the sewage down to the lake.

(Water pollution!) We visited two delightful families in the Flin Flon area, and felt very much at home with them. Next day we returned to The Pas, zigzagging around the lakes, where we visited a New Church home; and from that point left the hard-top and plunged onto the gravel road, 450 miles back to Saskatoon, completing a round trip of a thousand miles.

After a night's rest at our Reddekopp headquarters, we set off for Rosthern, 50 miles to the N.E. of Saskatoon, where there is a sweet little clapboard New Church, rather like the one at Almont. After visiting three New Church families in Rosthern, we held service in the church (25 present) and Jill and I again spoke about the South African mission field. We returned late to Saskatoon under a full moon. On the next evening we held a meeting in a hired hall in Saskatoon (20 present) and the following day set out N. W. for North Battleford (100 miles), and after visiting several church members, held a meeting in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Klassen following a memorable dinner party. With their own seven children and two nieces and a number of local members, the large room was well filled.

Next day we were on the road again, still travelling N. W. for another hundred miles to Meadow Lake. The prairie had turned to woods. Many Indians were in evidence. (Some New Church families in these areas have adopted Indian children.) The large Sawatzky family is in evidence also, and we visited several of them in their farm homes, and saw log cabins in use, which took one back to the pioneer days. There is a little clapboard New Church in Meadow Lake, like the one at Rosthern, and we held Sunday service there next morning (July 11th) with about 35 people present. I played the reed organ for the hymns, and preached the sermon. It was now raining heavily, and the journey westward from Meadow Lake to Ashmont (for Paulhaven) was on rough gravel, with potholes and corrugation and mud, and a dirty splashed windshield if another car passed. It was a relief that the last part of the 150 mile journey was on hardtop. The journey did not take so long as it seemed to do, however, as we put our watches back one hour on entering Alberta. Ashmont consists of a grain elevator and a railroad depot, a post office, a couple of stores and a hotel, with just a few scattered houses; but to a New Churchman, it has immense significance, as it is the jumping-off place for Paulhaven Camp. You walk along the

grass-grown railway track through fields of clover and wild pea, then strike to the left into the woods, gathering unusual specimens of wild flowers if you are interested, and eating plump wild strawberries and raspberries; and (unfortunately) being yourself eaten by hungry hordes of enormous mosquitoes. Then a painted board nailed to a tree: "Welcome to Paulhaven," and a steep slope down among the cabins to the lake.

The Paulhaven New Church Camp combined for one week some of the best features of Almont and Fryeburg, in scenery more wild and romantic than either. We had 40 children this year and 20 adults, and half-a-dozen little ones; mostly they slept in cabins, with a few tents. Lessons were held every morning (Jill and I took ten very bright boys). The subject for the week was the Correspondence of sun, moon and stars, water, rocks, precious stones, the numerals, etc., using lesson notes prepared by John Jeffery. In the afternoons, boating and swimming and water-skiing (though the water was too green to be very inviting), and some expeditions and organized games. Camp fire in the evenings, and worship services to begin and end each day. Paul and Gertrude Tremblay and Mrs. Anita Dole were, in a sense, our hosts; Harvey Tafel was the very able and hard-working camp director. I told a few of my parable-stories during morning and evening devotions, and gave a public lecture in a hall in Ashmont on the New Church in South Africa. I also preached at camp on the Sunday morning, to a congregation augmented by visitors, some from quite far afield.

Harvey Tafel drove us with his wife and three children from Paulhaven to Edmonton (about 120 miles to the west, along very straight roads) and here we enjoyed the hospitality of John and Agnes Jeffery. Edmonton is a new city, but is growing rapidly into a great city, full of skyscrapers of dazzling modern architecture; and it is one of the most beautiful cities I have seen. Certainly the "Church of the Holy City" in Edmonton is one of the most beautiful and functional churches in our whole organization. We held an open meeting of church members at the Tafel's home on the Monday evening, and talked through the long luminous Canadian summer evening into the small hours of the night. Then, the following day, a comfortable train journey back to Saskatoon, and so by air to Cleveland to collect up our car and drive home to hot, muggy Washington, D. C.

The heart of the New Church in Western Canada is sound, and the Rev. Reddekopp's method of working (visiting members in their homes) is probably the kind of thing that most of us ministers will be doing one day. As we face up to the shape of things to come, Western Canada may have experience in dealing with widely scattered New Church families, which it will be able to share usefully with the rest of the General Convention.

Brian Kingslake

ON COOK AND COOKWORTHY

An interesting piece of New-Church history has come to light in the fact that upon the evening before the start of his great exploration trip on the *Endeavor* in 1768, Capt. James Cook stayed with William Cookworthy of Plymouth. This New-Church worthy translated both *Doctrine of Life* and much of *Heaven and Hell* in 1763, while Capt. Cook is known to history as having discovered several unknown inhabited areas in the South Pacific, including the island later named for him which struck off postage stamps in his honor, 1923 and 1931.

Leslie Marshall

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