

THE MESSENGER

Official Organ of the Swedenborgian Church

SEPTEMBER 1972



CONFERENCE ON "THREE STORY MAN WITH A BODY"

During the week immediately following Convention—beginning June 26 and ending July 2—a group of sixty Swedenborgians met at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly in Maine, for a heavily-programmed session of study and planning for the church. Conceived at an enlarged meeting of the Board of Education last January, which had been called to study the theory and theology which lay behind the work of the Leadership Education Institute, this post-convention conference was planned to be a kind of combination of an "adult LEI" in which theoretical in-put and personal community building were wedded for a fruitful program, and a work session directed at planning for the future of the church.

A planning committee met regularly for five months, with some rotation of membership, working toward a stimulating and productive week. Out of this committee, Dr. Calvin Turley was over-all program director, Marilyn Turley was in charge of arrangements for facilities, and Marian Kirven was in charge of meal-planning and food purchasing.

A Self-Supporting Conference

The conference was advertised in *The Messenger*, and open to all applicants within the accommodation limits of the site, and was entirely self-supporting as to costs. A most generous contribution by the Board of Directors of the Fryeburg New Church Assembly, making its grounds and build-

ings available to the conference, plus an all-volunteer kitchen staff, kept the cost-per-person down to \$40.00. All conference expenses were paid from the fees collected, however (except the expenses of the Board of Education sub-committee that planned it). Thus the conference didn't require any financing from Convention funds and represented a commitment of money—as well as time and effort—from all participants.

"Turn-Around" Time and Community Building

The conference's first day-and-a-half were devoted to "turn-around" time—airline talk for the time it takes to unload from one trip, re-fuel, and load up for a flight in a new direction. This period, in which participants "shifted gears" from the busy convention schedule just completed, was combined with a relaxed beginning on the process of forming a close inter-personal community out of the sixty participants, and simultaneously beginning a division into a number of smaller personal-interest groups. These groups were to form the spearheads of any forward thrusts or on-going accomplishments to come out of the conference.

FRONT COVER: Nearing the end of a week's work, the conference relaxed for a Saturday night party and dance. The cover shows up left: Sharon and John Billings; up right: Jana Carpenter and Edwin Capon; down left: Jana Carpenter and Randy Laakko with his daughter, Kristina; down right: Sue Flagg, Ross Woofenden, Bob Tafel, Kristina Laakko, Carole Rienstra, and Jerry Poole.

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Vol. 192, No. 9

Whole Number 4955

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

Second class postage paid at Boston, Mass.

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

Printed at Thomas Todd Company, 14 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. 02108. Incorporated publisher: the Swedenborg Press, Box 143, Madison Square Station, New York, N. Y. 10010.

Subscription free to members of the Swedenborgian Church, non-members, \$3.00 a year; foreign postage, 25 cents extra. Gift subscriptions, if from a member, \$1.50. Single copies, 25 cents. Address subscriptions, checks, changes of address to the Editor, 48 Sargent Street, Newton, Mass. 02158.

Contributions toward the cost of publishing should be sent to:

The Messenger
48 Sargent Street
Newton, Mass. 02158

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Highlight of the evening's activities was a square-dance led by Jerry Poole and Bob Kirven.

These two goals were pursued through a good deal of unstructured time, and a variety of activities led by Marilyn and Cal Turley, Bob and Dick Tafel, Randy Gutfeldt, and Dorothea Harvey—who led the daily informal and meditative worship experiences called “Soul Sessions.”

Background Lectures

The central segment of the week-long program was a series of lectures, called “In-Put Sessions,” designed to be interesting and informative in themselves, but especially to provide background material on human nature that would afford some new perspectives on the people who are—and who are to be served by—the church, and stimulate thinking and planning in new directions.

Cal Turley, Randy Gutfeldt, Paul Zacharias, Bob Kirven and John Billings made presentations on half-a-dozen different subjects. Among the topics were “Swedenborg’s Concept of the Psychic Structure of Man” (elaborating the conference title, “Three-Story-Man-with-a-Body”), “Love—a Dynamic Reality,” and “The Grand Man.” The In-Put Sessions alternated with meetings of the smaller work groups, with in-put more frequent at first, and the work-groups dominating the schedule toward the end.

The Working Groups

The real point of the conference was the work done and planned-to-be-done by the Working Groups. They varied in size, and some merged with others, and some divided, as their focii became more precisely defined in their working. There were about six separate groups at work throughout the week.

The way in which the groups formed and developed affords an interesting perspective on the process of recruiting a self-motivated working cadre, and also some insights into the vitality of the conference. At the start, each participant wrote a card indicating his or her primary goal or interest in being at the conference, and these cards were used by the staff to define tasks for half-a-dozen working groups. These tasks, as titles, headed “sign-up” sheets posted on the wall, and everyone was free to join any group posted (whether it matched his original card or not), or put up a new sign-up sheet describing a different task. The sheets stayed up all week, and everyone was free to shift groups or start new ones until the last couple of days, when some attempt at finalizing had to begin. Only a couple of the staff-defined groups were actually formed, because the formation process stimulated new and more specific interests on the part of the

participants. Although some people wanted to be in more than one group, everyone was in a group that involved a live interest (and in most cases, real capability).

Results

The forward-looking nature of the conference makes a final evaluation impossible at this time. In written evaluations, everyone who attended reported that the meeting was valuable—worth the time, effort and money they invested in it; and many commented verbally that the experience should be repeated. Some did feel that the in-put sessions were too frequent, too long or too much—especially so soon after the rather exhausting week of Convention. (One evaluation, more detailed than the others, follows below). But the results of the work groups excited almost everyone.

The work of the work groups, however, could not

be finished during the conference. Really significant plans for the future could only be begun: goals were beginning to jell into precise definition, ideas for methods were beginning to dawn. The real, concrete results of the conference, however, will be the work that is done by members of the working groups, or by the groups themselves finding ways to continue meeting. The conference cannot be finally evaluated until 1975-78. If nothing significant comes out of it in three to five years, then it failed in its primary purpose, no matter how exciting or valuable it felt at the time. But if the working groups bring new life or growth into any areas of the church—in the framework of traditional parish programs, or in work with new structures and new focii—then the “three-story-man-with-a-body,” the man who truly is the church, will have been successfully re-vitalized by the 1972 post-convention conference.

Robert H. Kirven



Young children of couples who attended the conference provided unexpected entertainment Saturday night as, under the direction of Diana Kirven, they played hand games. . .



and to the accompaniment of Jerry Poole's guitar, had their own sing-along—adults occasionally joining in.

Post-Convention Conference

AN EVALUATION

by Susan Flagg

After six years of almost total estrangement from the New Church and from many people very important in my life connected with the church, I found myself very excited when I received several personal invitations to join a post-convention session in Fryeburg, Maine. Because of my despondency over church problems at this particular time in my life, I questioned whether I would be able to make any valuable contributions to the group. As it turned out, none had any expectations of me and I had no expectations of the group, so I was able to feel quite comfortable in utilizing the observational and listening skills I have tried to develop over the past few years.

I was not at all surprised to find the same struggle occurring now which I had observed many years ago when I was more closely connected with the church. Issues have changed, people have changed, the world has changed; even the terms for expressing “we” and “they” have changed from “liberals vs. conservatives” to “personists vs. doctrinalists.” (I despise labelling people!) However, the basic problem still remains, *we have a very difficult time accepting our differences*. Many times one position is not better nor worse than another, just different in varying degrees from the other.

Anyone with the superior attitude that his position is always the best and only way will only intensify the conflict. I feel very strongly that we need each other for growth, but we cannot grow unless we can accept our differences and acknowledge our strengths and our weaknesses.

At Fryeburg, I heard people sharing their ideas about the church and its future and its *present* situation, about Swedenborg, about L.E.I., about Fryeburg Assembly, about retreats, about new forms of worship and about a variety of other interests. I realized that to survive our church must be flexible and open enough to greet change with ease, not with bitterness and shock. Swedenborg's writings are very much alive and they are providing many guide lines to help us cope with change.

At Fryeburg, I heard people sharing ideas about human relations in the church and with each other. There was a spirit of love and acceptance in the group which hopefully can be extended to create a new openness at Conventions and gatherings in the future. In the past there have been far too many closed-door parties and secret caucuses, which only serve to bring about uncomfortable division between potential friends.

I feel that the post-convention session was very productive in building a foundation for changing attitudes and developing understandings which are essential for better human relations in our church. My only hope now is that the people with personal conflicts in the church (and we all have them) will commit themselves to communicating directly and honestly with the people of opposing views. There has been far too much pressure on some individuals to be swayed in directions which they cannot accept.

The session at Fryeburg was a very beautiful experience for me. Although I am still very much removed from the mainstream of our church, I again feel in contact and close to many people and I am quite open for more experiences and involvement. Many New Church people have an incredible amount of insight and love to share with others and I am very happy to be so affected by the spirit of genuine warmth throughout the week at Fryeburg.

THE THIRTY GREEN VOLUMES

*A Series on the Writings of Swedenborg
by Brian Kingslake*

11. Charity and Faith, and the Index to the Arcana

Running parallel with "Earths in the Universe" through the last four volumes of the *Arcana Coelestia* is a much briefer monograph entitled "Charity and Faith." This has become by far the most widely read of all, because Swedenborg used it later as the basis of his best selling book, *The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine*, which has been issued in more language translations than any other of his works. It is partly philosophical and psychological, partly practical, and even one might say ecclesiastical since it includes a discussion on the church as an organization: the sacraments, the duties of the priesthood, and so on (and even kings in a kingdom.) The N.J.H.D. consists of 23 chapters, each very short—too short, perhaps, to be meaningful to the uninformed reader. They cover such topics as good and truth, the will and the understanding, the internal and external man, love, faith, piety, conscience, freewill, repentance, the remission of sins, regeneration, heaven and hell; also the church, baptism and the holy supper, the Sacred Scriptures, and ecclesiastical and civil government. (The *Arcana* version contains also a section of Conjugal Love, A. C. 10167-10175, which for some unknown reason Swedenborg did not include in N.J.H.D.) In fact, the work we are considering is a kind of baby version of *True Christian Religion*, not yet grown up!

When Swedenborg came to rewrite "Charity and Faith" as "The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine," he added copious *Arcana* references after each little chapter. These *Arcana* references occupy two thirds of the entire bulk of the book; that is to say, they are, on an average, twice the length of the chapters to which they are appended! This has caused some embarrassment to the editors of later editions, for our busy 20th century readers are not likely to want to track down thousands of *Arcana* references. Yet, to throw all the references out, as has been done in many modern editions, reducing the book to one-third of its intended length, is to emasculate it. The *Arcana* references in the chapter on the Sacred Scriptures, for example, occupy 17 pages, and constitute a veritable treatise on the subject. (We shall return to this later on, when we come to consider *The White Horse*.)

What a modern editor might do, I think, would be to retain the *Arcana* references, but omit all the paragraph numbers, recasting the whole as a grammatically consecutive statement of the doctrine under review. Phrases merely referring to some number in the *Arcana* for information would have to be omitted, of course, but there are comparatively few of these. Suitable finite verbs would occasionally have to be added; several phrases could sometimes be run together into a compound sentence. The result would be a succinct statement entirely based on Swedenborg, which could be read through with pleasure and profit by the most casual of readers, and would add immeasurably to the scope of an otherwise rather slight little work. The passages could be headed: *Summary Statements of Doctrine extracted from the Arcana Coelestia*.

Swedenborg took pains to summarize each volume of the *Arcana* before it went to press, with reference numbers to the text for further expansion. Eventually he recast the whole Index in alphabetical order of words, names and subjects, together with a list of Scripture references, and copied them out in two parchment-bound manuscript volumes. The whole material was published in English after his death, under title: *Index to the Arcana Coelestia*. It is not included in the Thirty Green Volumes, but it is a significant piece of New-Church literature, being the author's own resume of the entire *Arcana*. You do not have to look up the reference numbers, unless you wish to; the book is fairly complete in itself, and is invaluable if you have to write a thesis on any particular subject of doctrine.

And so we come to the end of our review of the *Arcana Coelestia*, the first twelve of the Thirty Green Volumes, and we can put them gratefully back on the dusty shelf. We have gone a long way since we took them down: we have explored a continent! Looking back over what I have had to say as your guide, I realize I have devoted a disproportionate amount of attention to the several monographs running through the *Arcana* volumes, and not enough to the expository chapters, which of course constitute the main body of the work. To remedy this, I suggest you obtain and read Rev. William Wunsch's little masterpiece: *The World Within the Bible*, published by the New Church Press, New York, in 1929. Wunsch ignores the monographs altogether, but his treatment of the rest of the mighty work is so outstanding that really nothing more needs to be said on the subject by me.

Changing Purpose and Structure

ANCL NEWS

The American New Church League met concurrently with Convention in June in Cambridge, Mass. The Leaguers joined with the adults for all programs and events except the Convention Business Sessions, holding their own business sessions during those hours. In addition the young people had an outing of their own—a Saturday trip to Blairhaven, the Swedenborgian camp on Massachusetts Bay, just opposite historic Plymouth. The League business sessions were hard-working meetings, and produced some realistic and far-reaching changes in the structure and program of ANCL.



The members in attendance voted to change the basis of membership in ANCL, and also to change the focus of the purpose of the national League, so that membership is now on the basis of presence and attendance at a convention session. The membership will also be for one year, and will be established by signing a registration at Convention, and paying a \$1 registration fee. In this way, membership in ANCL is not dependent upon the presence of a local league where the person might be, and also it's not an automatic kind of membership. The person has to be present and declare his or her interest in and for that year.

This is largely in recognition of the fact that so many of the young people are isolated, off to college by themselves—with no church contact at all, yet they consider themselves part of the church and want to be part of it through their own organization of a young people's group. This situation affects the purpose of ANCL. In the past it's had a focus in service back to local leagues. Its purpose

now would change its focus to provide significant and relevant programming at Convention time.

This change in focus of the national organization reflects the fact that many are either in isolated situations, away at college, or too few in number in their local church to maintain a league organization on the local level. The change would in no way affect the activity of local leagues where there are enough young people in a congregation to form a league: but it will simplify continued national membership of individuals when their home-church numbers grow too small, and facilitate the formation of local leagues whenever enough members of league age want to do so.

The present situation, with little more than a couple of active local leagues—even in churches with a strong ANCL tradition, but with most members away at school throughout the church year, and where a number of young people will soon reach league age but are not eligible as yet—was a major factor in the considerations that led to the change in qualification for the Poole Trophy, now awarded to an individual instead of to a local league (see story, July-August, page 156).



This will all tie together: the change in awarding the trophy, the purpose, and the means of membership, so that membership in ANCL is not dependent upon membership in a local league. It's dependent upon a person's interest and declaration of intent at Convention time, and that's for one year. The paying of a registration fee is to provide two benefits for that coming year. One of course is voting privilege at that Convention session, because there will still be a need for officers to plan the coming year's Convention (and possibly some get-togethers on a regional basis during the year. The second benefit is that members of ANCL who sign for that year receive *The Messenger*. They are

off to college or isolated, and even though a copy may go to their home or their family, they weren't getting it.

The ANCL has had for many, many years a separate treasury. Because the League is now under the Board of Education, and its expenses come out of that budget, they voted this year to take their remaining balance, as well as the \$1 registration fees, and turn it over to the Convention Treasurer. That way, it can contribute to the League's expenses through the Board of Education.



Officers elected for the coming year are: *President*, Ted Bosley; *Vice-President*, Matt Turley; *Secretary*, Julie Rankin; *Treasurer*, Karen Keith; *Executive Committee member*, Trevor Woofenden. (See picture, July-August, page 156).

Co-chaplains for the coming year are the Rev. George McCurdy (Boston) and the Rev. Paul Zacharias (Kitchener).

MINISTERIAL CANDIDATES

The Swedenborg School of Religion announces that it expects three students to complete their theological training in June, 1973. These men, therefore, are presently available for candidating. They are Yuzo Noda, who is interning at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Bellevue, Washington; Matthew Glowe, who is interning at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario; and Walter Orthwein, who had his internship at the Boston Church last year and is in his final academic year. Under the School's new curriculum two additional students may complete their work at some point during the '73-'74 church year.

Graduation Address

By John Kitto Billings



John Billings delivers graduation address

Our church is seeking. We are seeking for those things which we all have in common: what is our commonality? The theme of Convention is "In Search of Oneness." In the search for ever more relevant ways to put flesh on theology, ultimate doctrines so men are led to the good of life within them, seek ways of being more relevant instruments of God's purposes, we seek for the common ground upon which we all stand. As a body, we seek our identity. Who are we as a whole? What is it we all have in common? These are very difficult complex questions, the answers of which I do not pretend to have.

My brief remarks this evening are in response to this search we are engaged in for oneness. Before I make them, however, I want to say how I see these remarks myself: the context I see them in; how I intend their purpose.

Our church is in process: this search for commonality is part of that process. We are searching for depths and reality: answers to problems and questions, and this process is indeed that—a becoming, rather than a happening. We are becoming and growing, slowly, though deeply and definitely.

I trust this process. I trust us in response to God to deal with our own being and I see my remarks this evening as contributing to this ongoing process, rather than some kind of answer which will end the discussion; and the process. Ultimately we are moving toward the Lord, toward Life itself and Truth, and this never really ends. We are always becoming, and what I want to say I see as another

part, you might say another input into the stream of our own becoming.

My remarks center around what appears to me as one of the fundamental issues we need to grapple with in our own growth as a church; an issue which has many sides and levels of depth in it, and is—it seems to me—at the core of this convention's theme.

The issue is variety or differentness: what to do with or about it. Variety of all kinds and sizes; all levels or dimensions, whether it be how we see the Lord, *how* we know when someone is moving toward the good of life, whether it be doctrinal and purpose of worship, or especially, what the interpretations of one kind or another, the nature form of any one church should be or not be. These are but a few of some of the specific issue or questions wherein one could find a variety of points of view and approaches. There are literally a million and one questions which each of us would see in either a *slightly* different way or in ways which would be very different from how another would see them. That there is variety already existing within Convention is a fact—at least to me. Indeed, the reason the present convention's theme is the one it is, is because we sense differences and this naturally and inevitably raises the question of what we have in common.

The question I want to raise even more specifically with you is, how do we view variety or differentness *per se*? Is it O.K. to either appear or really be different, unique? In response to differentness and variety, many of us ask whether there isn't something wrong with the other guy or ourselves if we are different, or the church we belong to is different in its approach to things, or has a different form. Is sameness inherent in either the nature of man or the nature of reality generally? This I think is the larger question.

My belief at this time is that some of the ferment in the church today exists because we do not feel O.K. or comfortable about being unique individuals, perhaps somewhat afraid of our own specific being, and that we do not feel O.K. about each of the particular churches we might belong to in comparison with other churches. Is it O.K. to be unique, either as a church or as a person?

If this is one of the factors responsible for some of the current ferment, then its converse is also true: i.e., that I'm not comfortable with the way *you* are *either* as a person or as a church. You're not like me and that makes me uncomfortable. You don't see things the way I do and this *per se* causes some static. We have a difficult time just accepting that another person or church could be different from us; irrespective, it seems to me, of what the difference is or what it might mean. Just the differentness *per se* can be troubling.

Now I realize there might be all kinds of personal reasons each one of us have for feeling bothered by variety *per se*. But I'd like to briefly look at variety theologically—a light or perspective that is helpful to me—and to spell out one of the implications of this perspective specifically, there to end my remarks.

One of the things I hear Swedenborg saying is that variety, or differentness, of any kind, is inherent in reality itself, *even concerning some rather fundamental issues*. I hear him saying that God has immense variety within Himself. Each person is created in Love's Image—the common source of everyone—but nonetheless we are all variations on a theme—with God being the theme and we the variations—and to emphasize even further the variety in creation, *each* angel sees the Lord differently: each angel sees Him differently, each of us sees Him differently. The animal and vegetable kingdoms also bespeak of variety as being inherent in creation. Our Creator may be one, but His creations are various. Indeed, variety is inherent in all created reality.

This theology says something to me about the issue of variety, of all kinds, within our church; but it also raises some problems so typical and necessary to being free. It is not difficult for me to take the affirmation that variety is inherent in the created order one step further and see a denomination such as ours with many different forms of churches, different forms of ministry, as well as various views and interpretations on all issues—and to see that this variety is not bad *per se*.

Swedenborg's theology, like the realities he tried to describe, is big: immense, full and deep. Sometimes I think we're not big enough to appreciate some of the things he says. Some of the things he claims and affirms should keep us busy for the rest of our lives. It is very incongruous to me that the people who embrace this theology, or the churches which spring from it, should come out looking or being the same. There is too much for any one person to see it all—I am constantly learning and gaining insights into Swedenborg that I hadn't seen before. And, it seems to me, there is too much there to ultimate in one form—one approach. The nature of God results in variation; in variety of all kinds, and I think this applies to our church here on earth.

I know I have asked more questions by this than I've answered, but it is something I have recently seen as very significant: the practical implications of this theology are significant. It is the thought I leave with you as we continue in the process of becoming.

Commencement Address

by Dr. Charles Flynn

What is unique about the Swedenborgian Church? What is the essence of the New Jerusalem? These questions began to concern me about two years ago at the beginning of my friendship with Jaikoo Lee. Jay and I had both come to Rutgers to study under the distinguished sociologist of religion, Professor Peter Berger. The more I came to talk with Jay, the more our friendship grew. We had many common interests and concerns. Everyone he met at Rutgers liked Jay; he projected a sense of caring about people, an elusive but very definite warmth, that drew people to him. As our friendship grew, we talked a good deal about the Church, and Jay suggested that the Swedenborgians might make a

good topic for a doctoral dissertation. Plans were established, and approval was obtained from our mentor, Dr. Berger. It was thus that nearly a year ago, I found myself at the Church Convention at Urbana College, eager with tape recorder and as much interviewing ability as I could muster, to find out all I could about the Church and its people.

I had to go no further than the room to which I was assigned, to immediately discover that the qualities of caring, of deep Christian concern, of a sense of warmth and brotherhood, that I so admired in Jay Lee, were also to be found in the

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people I met at the Convention. My roommate at Urbana was the individual whose ordination we are celebrating here tonight. In talking with John, I soon began to obtain some understanding of the extent of his Christian commitment. Above and beyond the sociological purposes of my dissertation, my stay at Urbana began to involve a personal quest which became a search for the essence of the spirit that I had found in John, in Jay Lee, and in all my new friends. What, in short, were the motivations, the beliefs, that gave rise to the quality of Christian spirit that I found among them.



Dr. Charles Flynn delivers commencement address.

The answer, I thought, must lie in their most basic beliefs about their relation both to God and to one another. Was there something in Swedenborg's concept of God and of man that made possible such shining exemplars of the Christian spirit that I found among the people at Urbana?

One of my primary interests as a sociologist of religion has involved the relationship between the way people conceive of God, and their actual social behavior. For the greater part of Christian history, God has been pictured as "above" man and the rest of Creation. In this conception, God and thus the essence of all goodness and everything of value lies in the "higher," thus beyond man's grasp. Conversely, the lower, the more base a person or thing, the further it is from God. Thus, many speak of "higher" aspirations, the "highest" goals, and so forth, in a way which makes it clear that the higher these are, the closer they are to the divine. Cosmos is conceived as a kind of pyramid.

The source of this spatial view of God lies in a vision of the universe that most of pre-Swedenborgian Christianity adhered to. God was regarded as at the top, the Summit, of the pyramid of the Cosmos, with angels somewhat lower and man in the middle somewhere between the divine and the lowest forms of life. What was the result of the tendency to view God as the Highest point of Creation? In a very real sense, regarding God as the Apex of Creation and men (depending upon their individual natures) as beneath him to varying degrees, tended to separate man from God and also from his fellow men. God, in the pre-Swedenborgian universe, was a kind of monarch sitting on a throne, imperceptible and unknowable to us humans down below. Seen in this way, God was never really in our midst, but always above us, always separated from mankind.

What then, was new and unique in Swedenborg's thought?

With Swedenborg came a new vision of the order of the universe. Man for the first time was able to overcome his sense of separation from God and from his fellow man. God was located not high above man, but rather in the depths of men and in their relationships with one another. He was to be found in the interior, in the center of Being itself, hence in the deepest part of reality. Thus, in Swedenborg's theology, God was inherent in, indeed was the deepest, most basic element both of man and of all aspects of universal being; and the basis of a new relationship, a close relationship, between man and God and between man and his fellow man, was thereby formed.

The discovery, in Swedenborg's writings, of this new vision of God provided me with a large part of the answer to my quest for the foundations of that wonderful Christian spirit I had found among the Swedenborgians. The other, and perhaps the most significant part, of the answer lay, of course, in the individuals themselves—how they had internalized, made part of themselves, actualized this new possibility of closeness to God provided by Swedenborg's teachings and how they had allowed it to shine forth in their dealings with their fellow man. One of the most moving examples of this spirit of greater closeness to God and thus the realization of the divine in one's fellow man was provided by the statement of interest of the man whose entrance into the ministry we are now observing. I quote:

"There is nothing more important, or meaningful, or thrilling, than to be part of the experience of something beginning to happen to another human being as he struggles to grow, to change, to be."

These words summarize not only one individual's inspiring commitment; they are also a manifestation of the spirit of an entire view of the relation between man and God, and hence between the most interior, most essential, essence of man himself. In attempting to define that Spirit, I am reminded of the moving words of Walt Whitman, in one of his poems from "Leaves of Grass:"

"In the faces of men and women, I see God."

In this deeply theological, yet so essentially poetic and life-affirming vision, as well as with John's statement of purpose, we can witness the true essence of the New Jerusalem, a society where all men look upon one another, and care for one another, not in terms of superficial externals, such as high social position or appearance, but rather in terms of their most interior, their central divine nature—that common, God-originated essence of their being. Men such as John are lighting the way toward such a society, one which can be found, in our time, in the spirit of Christian love and caring which all of my Swedenborgian friends so clearly exhibit. Our task, then, is to work toward the fuller realization of the New Jerusalem, not to be seeking to "rise above" our present condition, or to bring about some supposedly "higher" goal; but to gently unfold that divine essence in ourselves, and particularly in others, which is so often obscured by the emphasis that the world places on the exterior.

Then shall truly unfold that secret essence of Christ, who has been with us, in our most interior nature, the deepest essence of our common being.

Thus, the New Jerusalem is with us, in our midst, and needs only to unfold in the lives of us all, particularly through the commitments of such disciples of Christ as John Billings. For the New Jerusalem, though it may involve a loss of many of the externals that we hold dear, is indeed a new world, a world not removed from us, or high above us, but in our midst the closeness of God and of humanity. In the words of Thomas Wolfe, the great poetic novelist,

"To lose the earth we know, for greater knowing; to lose the life we have, for greater life; to find a land more kind than home, more large than earth—

"—Whereon the pillars of this earth are founded, toward which the conscience of the world is tending, a wind is rising, and the rivers flow."

Illinois Assoc. Resolution

At the Annual Meeting of the Illinois Association in May, I moved that our Association endorse Ernest Martin's participation in the Conference on Indochina reported in the February *Messenger*.

The motion met with opposition and after a half hour of discussion it seemed a vote would be divisive and destructive. At the suggestion of Rev. J. Lee I withdrew the motion and substituted a statement to be signed by those in agreement, with the hope that it would be printed in *The Messenger*. It follows:

We, the undersigned, fully endorse and support Ernest O. Martin in his participation in "An Ecumenical Witness, Conference on Indochina" as published in the February 1972 *Messenger*.

Isabel Carpenter	Martha Mason
Agnes Cowern	LeRoy Morgan
Andre Diaconoff	Hilda Morgan
Evelyn Diaconoff	Ethel Romare
Alfreda Gale	Florence Smallwood
Alix Graves	Thornton Smallwood
Jaikoo Lee	Beatrice Smith
Paul Maring	Valerie Truax
Mariada Mathias	Jessie Wheeler
Alice Mason	Ida Zibell

This was indeed a mild statement which did not necessarily support Rev. Martin's position or the position of the Conference, only his being there.

I was motivated to make the motion by the recent attacks on both Rev. Martin and *The Messenger* that appeared in letters to the Editor.

Is our church really against our leaders, ministers, and members showing active concern for world conditions and participating in ecumenical meetings to determine what a religious position toward these conditions should be? Do we believe that world states have nothing to do with religious states? If so, then there must be little of the New Church in our organization.

I hope and believe our church does support such activities, activities, and supports *The Messenger* for printing reports of them. I just wanted to let those taking such actions know that the letters of a few do not necessarily reflect the opinions of all. Keep up the good work.

Paul Maring

SERVING THE LARGER NEIGHBOR

by Alice Sechrist

More than once in the writings given to the world through Swedenborg we read that the neighbor is the *Good* in man—man individually and collectively. We are given a rising concept of the neighbor, beginning with the individual, on through small groups with which he may be affiliated, then through city, state, country, the church (defined as the Lord's Kingdom in heaven and on earth), and finally the Lord Himself, who, as the Source of all *Good* is our Prime Neighbor. Coming down the Ladder, we begin with the Lord, and continue in discrete order down to the individual who has good in him from the Lord, and ending with our personal selves—with the same qualification! Tonight, the Larger Neighbor about whom I would share some thoughts with you is the Common Good of all mankind, for we learn that this is implied in the Church to be, the New Jerusalem—a point which has been sadly neglected among us. For have we not been content with the idea that our little body, called a church, is the New Jerusalem—and even tended to seek escape from responsibility in that thought?

First, however, we must recall a number of pertinent doctrines, emulating the angels, who think in ideas rather than in words; for these Heavenly Doctrines are ideas which should be within every truth we learn, and long to perceive truly and to put into practice. Here are some of them: Discrete Degrees, which we have already touched upon in the steps up and down the Ladder of Neighbors; then Revelation and its Inspiration, with the kind of *authority*, if any, it carries; the doctrines of *As If*, of *Power in Ultimates*, the *Maximus Homo*; of what it means to be a *Church*, etc., and of course what is taught about the Lord's *Second Coming*.

This last is especially pertinent just now, for certain sects are again anticipating a personal return of Jesus in the near future, while others at least feel that great changes are in process on our planet, and that still greater things are pending and imminent, or even threatening. (*AC* 9836^{2,3}, 10044¹⁰; *AE* 726⁵, 806³).

As to Revelation and its inspiration: the writings state that revelation today is made by "enlightening the internal sight, that is, the understanding, when one who is in the affection of truth is reading the Word" (*AC* 8780²); I believe that this is the kind of inspiration vouchsafed to Swedenborg.



Alice Sechrist, Swedenborg Foundation speaker.

In *The Word Explained*, he says a great deal about his experiences, and we learn there that inspiration is also in discrete degrees, and so differs with every person, although there are distinct classes; and he was allowed to experience several of them. He wrote many pages under one or another type of inspiration, and thought them wonderful—was thrilled and deeply moved at what was being given to him—only to be asked thereafter to destroy all the pages thus written, because (as he explains later), the Lord wished him to write only what was addressed to his interior rational through angels of the Second Heaven. So he seemed to select his own words *As If* of himself, but was given the perception which enabled him to determine whether what he received through the angel was from the Lord or not. To quote: "The angel who inspires words into those who speak inspired things is only in spiritual things, and so acts into the mind of him who is inspired, and excites his thinking, by which the spiritual things emerge into the customary words of the person who is inspired" (*WE* 2/6965).

Swedenborg does occasionally say things about his inspiration that seem contradictory, but I think that they can be resolved by a process of collation which we shall consider later.

The Writings speak of communication, revelation, inspiration, and influx as being mediate and/or immediate. In both Latin and English *immediate* is an ambiguous word: it may mean *at once*, or it may mean the opposite of *mediate*, i.e., refer to what takes place between two factors directly, without an intermediate factor. I feel sure that when the word is used in the Writings, it nearly always means *simultaneous*, or *at once* in all planes from Firsts to Lasts, or from *Good* on a higher plane to the corresponding *Good* on the next plane, and so on to the lowest, where it does flow

into truth from good; whereas *mediate* influx is a slower step by step process of good *through* truths—truths being the mediators on each plane. While this seems abstruse, it is really quite important if we want to understand in some degree the nature of Swedenborg's inspiration and what kind of authority the Writings have.

Now to Revelations given through the Ages. You will recall that when Moses came down from Mt. Sinai with the Commandments, his face shone so brightly that the Israelites could not look at him, and he had to veil himself. Most of us have assumed—and I judge from the way the word is used—that revelation means something new about spiritual things; but what was its original import? The word is Latin, of course, and the concept originally conveyed was: *To veil again (or over)*. TO VEIL AGAIN! TO COVER OVER! Then how are we to regard the various revelations given to mankind through the ages?

We have been told that the world has passed through several distinct epochs or dispensations, each characterized by a special church—which means a particular type of spiritual life and worship, or its representative. The people of the Golden Age, or the Most Ancient Church, are said to have enjoyed *immediate* communication with the Lord and His angels, and so had no need of a written word (*DeV* 11; *Inv.* 521). But that was in the beginning. Later, self-love became dominant, as you all know, and so increased that most of the people destroyed themselves, spiritually and physically by the flood of evils and falsities which engulfed them. But a new church always arises when a former one reaches its consummation.

While the Ancient Church is sometimes called the Tenth in the Writings, it was the Second Dispensation, the Silver Age. A generation ensued which could no longer face the light their remote fathers had enjoyed, because evil remains of the fallen state of their more recent ancestry were still with them. So the light had to be veiled for them, as the face of Moses was. We find that very word in the *Arcana*, as translated in the Standard Edition: "Then correspondences and representatives somewhat *veiled* the former things; but heaven flowed into them and enlightened them as much as they could be enlightened in freedom." (*AC* 10355). The Ancient Word was given, from which Moses is said to have taken the early chapters of Genesis. It began before the Flood, we are told, and was

still extant in his time.

However, this period, or Church declined also, reached its consummation, and was followed by a Third Dispensation, the Copper Age. This spread through many kingdoms and nations, varying in each; but it gave the world, particularly the Israelitish or Jewish Church, the Old Testament; and this was again a revealing of profound truths, while also a presentation of such things as could be externally observed. The Ancient Word was in correspondences, but expressed in a language more rhythmic, poetical, and flowery than that generally found in our Old Testament, although this is not without examples of it. The spiritual messages to the Ancients were more open than they are in the Old Testament with its symbols involving all the kingdoms of nature, and its rather sordid history of a small tribe or tribes of "Abraham's seed." Yet each of these Words had inner meanings.

Now the Church of the Copper Age, like the previous ones, degenerated in its time. We are told that it began as a representative church, but fell into the mere representation of a church, not a real one. Perhaps this is why it is sometimes called the third church, and then again omitted entirely from the lists recorded in the writings, being included with the Ancient Church. Anyway, there was further degeneration, and in the fullness of time another consummation.

With this fullness of time the greatest event in the history of *Universal Man* took place. We think of it as a great light coming into the world, and so it was; but was it not also a further revealing? Could the perfect Love and Wisdom of the Lord of the Universe be more completely veiled than by clothing Himself in finite flesh and blood and bone? No one on earth, then or now, could face Him as the Sun of Heaven without being consumed; but men could receive Him as the Son of Man—at least some could! And we are told that unless He had subdued the hells to order, and also driven the usurpers out of certain "fictitious heavens," the whole human race would have been utterly lost.

Then the Iron Age ensued. This really had several beginnings: it is even stated (*AC* 2995) that it began after the Golden Age; but it appeared in effigy, at least, whenever during the subsequent generations, merely natural and sensuous truths prevailed in men's minds. Eventually it merged into the Age of Iron Mixed with Clay.

STATISTICS

BIRTHS

Born to Kenneth and Beckie Ela, Tracey Leigh on November 20th last; to Kenneth and Brenda Coan, Matthew Thomas on April 17th; all of the Fryeburg Church.

John Michael 3rd, was born to Jack and Kristine O'Rourke of the Fryeburg Church on April 5th.

Robert and Gay Laaback of San Francisco are the proud parents of a daughter, Jennifer Jackson, born on May 1st.

Born to Richard and Sharon Clough of Springfield, Ohio, a daughter, Jennifer Dawn, on May 7th.

Mr. and Mrs. Randy Laferte of Kensington, Cal. are accepting congratulations on the birth of Lisa Renee on May 23rd.

A daughter, Cora Lynn, was born to Mr. and Mrs. George Funk of Roblin, Manitoba, on April 20th.

BAPTISMS

Bradford Cushman Peck was baptized in the Boston Church by the Rev. George McCurdy on March 19th.

Chin Tong Kim was baptized on April 9th at the Los Angeles Church by the Rev. Chungsun Lee.

Jeffrey John, infant son of Mr. and Mrs. John Ogens, was baptized by the Rev. George McCurdy of the Boston Church on April 9th.

On March 26th, William Daniel and Monica Bridgetta, infant twins of Mr. and Mrs. Fritz Haas were baptized by the Rev. Erwin D. Reddekopp of the San Francisco Church.

The Rev. Erwin D. Reddekopp baptized the following children during the morning worship service: April 2, Karen Louise Edrington; April 30, Brandon Lang MacInnis and Jeffrey Donovan Walsh; May 21, Michael Scott Meyer and Christine Eugene Hassold; May 28, Michael Patrick Pearson.

In Fryeburg, Maine the following were baptized on Easter Sunday: Christopher James, son of Jimmy and Jane Dutton; Travis Lee, son of Lawrence and Beverly Perry; Steven Jay, Jr., son of Steven and Candace Smith; Craig Philip, son of Allen and Cynthia Ela; Vicki Lyn, daughter of Ronny and Brenda Ela; Angela Rae, daughter of Ronny and Mary Holt; and Dana Paul, son of David and Martha Richardson. And on April 9th, Tara Jean, daughter of Terry and Muriel Lord.

On Sunday, June 11th, the Rev. Erwin E. Reddekopp baptized the following infants: Amy Elizabeth Schlink, born February 3rd, daughter of Clifford and Marjory Schlink; Tarhn Moonan Koerting, born May 12th, son of Wayne and Anna Marie Koerting; Sean Kenneth Traylor, born May 21st, son of Jerry and Doris Traylor; Robert Louis Kohlhardt, born January 18th, son of Albert and Sylvia Kohlhardt. On Sunday, July 2nd, Stephen Barry McSherry, born September 16, 1971, son of John and Susan McSherry.

CONFIRMATIONS

The following were confirmed in Philadelphia at the Palm Sunday Service on March 20th: David Anderson, Donna Anderson, Karen Anderson, Wendy Ashbridge, Martin Kline, Jayne Parris, Christian Pitcavage, John Pitcavage, Berri Shutt, Donna Stevenson, Edward Tafel and Joyce Tafel.

Chin Tong Kim and Miss Hak Ja Im were confirmed on April 9th in the Los Angeles Church.

The following people were received into membership by the Revs. Dick and Bob Tafel at Kemper Road Community Church on April 2nd: Walt Steidle, Joyce Steidle and Brenda Hacker; on April 9th, Fred Hurlburt, Minnie Hurlburt, Howard Hudson, Alice Hudson, Penny Steidle and Roger Hurlburt.

On Easter Sunday the Rev. John Spiers confirmed the following two persons at the Riverside, Cal. Church: Miss Judy Clinkingbeard and Mr. James Dungan.

Alice Friesen was confirmed into membership in Montezuma, Kansas on March 19th.

The Kansas Association reports the following confirmations: Robert Bowman, Todd Bright, Anita Loving, Linda Kraus and Sandra Siebert, all on Palm Sunday, March 26th.

MARRIAGES

Robert L. Reynolds and Linda S. Evick were united in marriage at the Wedding Chapel, Kemper Road Center, on November 17th. The Rev. Richard H. Tafel, Jr. officiated.

John M. Dienesch and Darlene Amlinger were married in the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario on April 1st.

On April 8th, Glennora Neudorf became the bride of Ralph Martin, at the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Abram Neudorf of Rapid View, Sask. The Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiated.

In the Philadelphia Church the following marriages took place: George Eakle and Lois Hubbard on April 9th; Maurice Constanzo and Vittoria Romano on April 15th. The Rev. Richard H. Tafel officiated.

On April 16th Chin Tong Kim and Hak Ja Im were married in the sanctuary of the Los Angeles Church by the Rev. Chungsun Lee.

Mr. Ronald E. Manning and Miss Janice D. McAmmond were married in the Edmonton, Alberta church on April 29th. Mr. John Jeffery officiated.

In Fryeburg, Warren Aubrey Richardson and Lorraine Ann Thurston were married on May 12th; and on May 13th Roger Alan Kiesman and Rosalie Johnson were joined in marriage.

Harry Nederpelt and Yvonne Vokey were married in the Kitchener church on May 20th by the Rev. Paul Zacharias.

Kenneth Schaffer and Heather Wunder were joined in marriage by the Rev. Paul B. Zacharias of Kitchener on June 3rd.

DEATHS

The Boston Church has notified us of the deaths of the following members recently: Mrs. Elsie Hight Bishop on January 22nd; Mrs. Ada J. Chapin on February 18th; Mrs. Lillian Schneider Gillespie on March 28th; Miss Susan P. Holmes on February 21st; Mrs. Jennie T. Fowler on April 17th; and Miss Sylvia Bateman on April 20th.

The Rev. Paul D. Hammond passed into the higher life on March 20th at the age of 71. Surviving are his wife, three sons and six grandchildren.

Mrs. Mabel Riener, member of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, passed into the spiritual world on April 11th. Resurrection Service was held on April 14th with the Rev. Paul B. Zacharias officiating.

Miss Mary A. Copeland died on August 1st, her 107th birthday. She attended the New Jerusalem Church of Bridgewater and was a former member of the Sewing Circle and the King's Daughters of the church.

Miss Sylvia Bateman of the Boston Church, passed into the spiritual world on April 20th after a long illness.

A memorial service was held on May 7th for Mrs. Constance Keck of McClennon, Florida. The Rev. Ernest Frederick officiated.

Winthrop Sargent III of the Philadelphia Church was interred on April 24th, the Rev. Richard H. Tafel officiating.

Resurrection Services were held in Fryeburg for the following: on April 4th for Bernard Hutchins; April 5th for Blanche G. Palmer; and April 13th for Willis Thomas. All services in Fryeburg were conducted by the Rev. Horace Briggs.

Joseph H. Salmon of the San Francisco church, beloved husband of Louise, passed into the spiritual world on May 6th. Memorial service was held on May 9th.

Charles Cupp of Palm Desert, Cal. passed into the spiritual world on May 20th.

Resurrection services were held on May 2nd for Laura B. Harnden of the Fryeburg church.

Resurrection services were held in the Boston church for William E. Weeks on June 4th.

David Mack of Concord, N. H., well-known in New Church circles, died on April 27th, after suffering a stroke the day before—on his 62nd birthday. He is survived by his wife, Gwynne Dresser Mack, two daughters and a son, and five grandchildren; also one of his four brothers, Gordon, and his sister, Cornelia. A memorial service will be held at the Fryeburg, Maine New Church in August during the Assembly session there.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

Anyone wishing to take Brian Kingslake's Correspondence Course in New Church Doctrine should apply to him at 3900 16th Street, N. W., Washington D. C. 20011. Please do so at once, so that the 25 lessons can be completed before he leaves the U.S.A. in July, 1973.

SERMON SERVICE

Apply to Rev. Kingslake also, at the above address, if you wish to receive mimeographed copies of his sermons or cassette recordings. No charge is made but voluntary contributions towards the cost of the service will be welcomed.

BOOK WANTED

The SSR Library is interested in obtaining a copy of the following book and is willing to pay for it: *Autobiography of the Rev. David Powell, A Minister of the New Church Signified by the New Jerusalem in the Apocalypse: Together with Eight of His Sermons.*

THE MESSENGER

48 Sargent St., Box E
Newton, Mass. 02158

THE MESSENGER

SEPTEMBER 1972

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Pictures of Post Convention Conference by Steve Koke.

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