

The Messenger

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH
SEPTEMBER 1975

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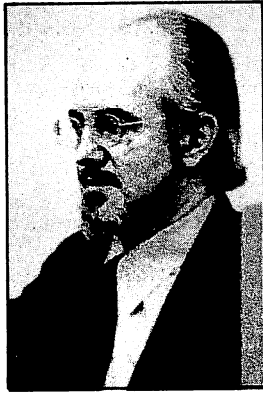
MESSENGER EDITORS 1945-1975



Leslie Marshall
1945 - 1953



Bjorn Johannson
1953 - 1965



Robert Kirven
1965 - 1975



Paul Zacharias
1975 -

A TRIBUTE

For the past nine years the Rev. Robert H. Kirven has served Convention faithfully and well as editor of the MESSENGER. We will remember the Kirven era of the MESSENGER for many reasons: his finely honed scholarly touch... the superb Convention issues... the outstanding camera work. But most of all we will remember his concern for people, as expressed in editorials, in his choice of articles, in the goals he was aiming for in the MESSENGER. We are all indebted to you, Bob, and we salute you.

I might add that Bob is on sabbatical from S.S.R. this coming year, during which time he will be writing a book that, from first reports, could well add a new dimension to Swedenborgian scholarship. We wish you every success in this labor of love, Bob.

I've been glancing through some of the old MESSENGERS — 20, 30, 40 years ago. What a host of memories they evoke! The general excellence of material and format is somewhat threatening to this novice editor. Perhaps the Revs. Marshall, Johansson and Kirven had some of the same feelings when they first picked up the reins of editorship. Each era was quite different, which is as it should be. Each man contributed his unique gifts, and the MESSENGER took on a special, personal flavor. More on this in the following editorial. Again, Bob, many thanks for everything; we look forward to hearing from you often.

P. Z.

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Paul B. Zacharias, Editor

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MY CREDO

As mentioned above, personalities shine through paper and ink. It is impossible to be entirely objective and impartial in any area of life. We all cherish certain values, convictions and feelings; the sum total of these spiritual states constitutes our personality, our character. Our values and beliefs shape and color everything we do and say. So it is with an editor. There are a number of things that are very important to me, and they will undoubtedly influence the style of the MESSENGER over the next few years. Let me share some of my beliefs with you. This will help you to see what the MESSENGER is going to be like. I hope we aren't too far apart in what is important to us.

I BELIEVE in an open, democratic, responsible press. The MESSENGER belongs to all of Convention, thus it should strive to reflect the many shades of opinion within Convention. The rights of both minorities and majorities will be protected. *Responsible* is the key word here. Always the overarching question remains: "What is in the best interests of the Church?" This will be the main factor in selecting material for the MESSENGER.

I BELIEVE that the New Church, in its highest and best sense, is much bigger and grander than any man-made organization. Its theology will reign supreme, world without end. This being the case, I feel I can afford the luxury of enjoying the journey. Everything doesn't depend on me, or on the MESSENGER. So, let's have a good trip, together.

I BELIEVE that a new religious era is dawning. New Church people have been saying this for the past 200 years, and it is still true today. In recent decades the pace has quickened; the rate of change has speeded up considerably. The New Church is an integral part of this new epoch. I appreciate the privilege of being part of this NEW LIFE more than words can say.

I BELIEVE in the future of the New Church. I also believe the Swedenborgian Church, in one form or another, is here to stay. There is so much that is healthy and good in Convention. Certainly we have weaknesses, and there are many serious problems confronting us, but we need to be more conscious of our strengths and more hopeful in our Church efforts. Essentially, I'm an optimist. To express a belief in God and the workings of His Divine Providence, and at the same time entertain feelings/thoughts of despair, bitterness and gloom, is a contradiction in terms. If we really believe that

the Lord God is in full charge of His Universe and His Church, then we will have an affirmative approach toward life. The MESSENGER will reflect this view.

I BELIEVE that no one individual, or no one Church, can have a monopoly on Divine Truth. Only the Lord Himself is the Way, the Life and the Truth. We are all more or less walking in appearances, in the shadows of life. This belief has many implications, which I leave you to think through for yourself.

I BELIEVE that the vast majority of Convention members basically share many of these same aims and goals in life. This belief makes my task as editor much easier. *We all love the New Church and that for which it stands.* This is, at once, our common heritage, our present reality, and our inspiration for the future.

P. Z.

This is the first of, *The President's Column*, to appear written by the undersigned. It is our hope and intention that this Column become a part of the *Messenger* each month. The purpose is two-fold. First, the President is provided an opportunity to inform the membership of our Convention of his activities and, secondly, and most importantly, it affords the President a way in which to share with his fellow New Churchman those mutual concerns that make life within the Church the stimulating and satisfying experience the Lord intends it to be for all of us.

We strongly endorse an 'Open Door' relationship with all of Convention. The Church is the Lord's. It is also ours. Letters and telephone calls that speak to any and all phases of life are encouraged.

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Eric Zacharias, President

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

"Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen." Isaiah 43:10

"As to the spiritual significance of 'bearing witness,' it is predicated of the Truth, because, in the world, the Truth must be borne witness to; and (then) it is acknowledged." R.6

The use which our Church, the Swedenborgian Church, is to serve is to be given stature by our understanding and it is to be embraced by our affection. We are to be a witness and a servant of the Lord in His Divine Humanity. "For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand." This commission is to burn within us as a consuming fire, it is to stir us in our search for and the discovery of that truth which dispels darkness, it is to hold before us a vision of a world in which the "Kingdoms are become the kingdoms of our Lord", it is to be the bond that holds us together in His Oneness and in so doing leads us to ever expanding uses that encompass the wider society of which we are a part. How infinitely great - how humbling is this work to which the Lord has led us!

"Ye are my witnesses and my servant whom I have chosen". The call to a mature, responsible life in the Lord's New Church is powerful, indeed.

TEMPTATION

i wasn't doing anything to provoke it
just minding my own business, i was
then suddenly it clutched at me
grasping me firmly but gently at first
then gripping me with all it's strength
and i looked it dead in the eye
i struggled for a while at first
'till i realized i couldn't take on this monster
all by myself
So i cried out in despair to God and his angels
for a little slack, please
and sure enough
i felt unearthly strength flowing into my veins.
i felt my attacker fearfully shrinking away
and i smiled up at God and said, thanks
and he smiles back and said,
anytime.

terrie crenshaw
detroit, mich.

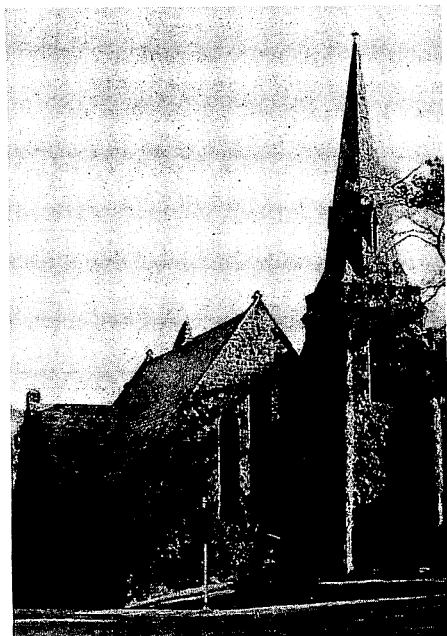
* * *

It is a sham to pray to God to "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts," when all too often we want nothing of the kind and resent concrete approaches toward accomplishing this end. Do we really want to know the truth about ourselves?

A. Pardue

* * *

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY CITY, WILMINGTON, DELAWARE



Our church has been a legal body for 118 years; its roots are far older. Swedenborg knew of the town. Its Holy Trinity Lutheran Church was a mission in his father's diocese, his cousin was rector, his brother taught here, and Emanuel himself was by proxy a baptismal sponsor of a relative's child. Knowledge of Swedenborg's religious writings reached Baltimore and Philadelphia in the 1780's. Wilmington, with close ties to both, may have had readers even that early. It is certain there was a group meeting in homes for study before 1825.

Three members were sisters, Margareta duPont, Mary Hounsfield, and Eleanore Gilpin, granddaughters of an early Maryland convert. Their father, Daniel Lammot, Jr., was a leading Swedenborgian nationally, before he moved to Wilmington in 1855.

The informal New Church society of some twenty members received a church lot from Edward Gilpin in 1856. In July, 1857, they started construction and adopted a constitution. Before incorporation was completed on February 10, 1858, they had called a minister, Abiel Silver. The small, handsome stone church was dedicated and first used April 29, 1858.

Mr. Silver, in separated tenures 1857 - 1860 and 1864 - 66, proved a notable founding pastor. He early attracted an attendance ranging from 70 to 200. Between his terms the congregation floundered, then in 1863 suspended under the stresses of depression, Civil War tensions in a border city, and three unsuitable ministries. He revived it for a prosperous quarter century.

Several Wilmington ministers of 1867 - 1890 spoke and preached widely in the whole area. Other features were a Sunday school peaking at over 250, a church magazine for children pioneered here, a congregational library, placing Swedenborgian volumes in Delaware libraries, and helping support a travelling ministry for the Maryland Association.

The 1890's saw a slow decline as early members died and there were few replacements. Several left the church substantial legacies, but their absence told in leadership and operating budget.

In 1904 the longest pastorate, that of the Rev. George H. Dole, began. A feature of his ministry was a weekly sermon in Wilmington papers, later syndicated. Another was revival of Sunday evening study meetings. About 1917, at the urging and with the financial assistance of Coleman and Pierre duPont, cousins descended from Daniel Lammot, Jr., the original sanctuary was rebuilt on the present site with a more handsome parish hall, but unfortunately over opposition that sharply reduced membership. The building was rededicated October 19, 1919.

In more recent years the congregation has fluctuated, always below the highs of 1860 - 1890 but above the lows of the early 1920's. Programs have varied in response to different age levels and interests. Groups discussing doctrine or religion in life have been a consistent feature, variously as "bring your supper" Sunday evening services, weeknight meetings in homes or parish hall, or on Sunday mornings. For several years our service was broadcast. Three years without a regular minister gave us wide contacts with other Convention clergy as supplies. Our ministers and several lay leaders have been active in Association and Convention. We have long participated locally in the Council of Churches, and since the 1950's in other ecumenical activities.

The current programing of the Wilmington church is of the traditional nature. In our church school we have an adult Bible discussion group and

one children's class. The children study Bible stories. Our worship experiences are most often of the traditional style, using the first two orders of service in different seasons. We also draw widely from the broad range of worship material in the Book of Worship. Occasionally new services are offered. Lay people have designed services and assisted or conducted them.

Each week following the service we have a fellowship - coffee hour. This provides an opportunity for conversation and meeting visitors. People stay an hour and more, giving strong indication that this time serves a genuine need.



In the past year, a series of discussion evenings was resumed. These meetings focused on Swedenborg and contemporary religious issues. This series will continue.

Other programming includes square dances, occasional luncheons, and special worship services in the Christmas and Easter seasons. We have tried a film forum series (well attended). Yokefellow and personal growth groups have been held at the church with leadership by the Revs. Randall Laakko and Jerry Poole. Members of these groups came primarily from other churches and the community at large. Within our own congregation there has been interest expressed by a few for a Prayer and Spiritual Healing group. This has yet to be formed.

The image that best describes our church's human dimension is an extended family. There is a strong feeling of caring and affection among us. To be sure there are degrees of closeness. We have our differences, individual needs and wants, our own loves and opinions. There is a growing sense of

acceptance and freedom to be. In the past year our family grew as fourteen persons joined the church, giving us a total of fifty - two members. We have an average Sunday morning attendance of 25 - 30. We hope to continue our extension.

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ASK YOURSELF THIS!

1. What age would you like to be for the rest of your life?
2. If you lost everything you own, what would you do?
3. If you were caught in a fire and could salvage only one object, what would it be?
4. What do you think heaven and hell are really like?
5. If you had just 24 hours to live, how would you spend them?
6. What sorts of things give you the most satisfaction and enjoyment?

* * *

"By worship, in the internal sense, is signified all conjunction by love and charity. Man is continually in worship, when he is in love and charity, external worship being only an effect proceeding from the former. The angels are in such worship; wherefore with them there is a perpetual sabbath . . . Man, however, during his abode in the world, ought not to omit the practice of external worship, for by external worship things internal are excited (not created but called into activity); and by external worship external things are kept in a state of sanctity so that internal things can enter by influx." A.C. 1618

* * *

Good and evil both increase at compound interest. That is why the little decisions you and I make every day are of such infinite importance.

C. S. Lewis

DEALING WITH RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY

Controversial Religious Issues — Wow! This is “where it’s at,” as the kids say. I think this could be the most important service the *Messenger* performs for its readers. I’ll try to explain. (The June issue is a good example of what I’d like to see.)

The history of the New Church has been filled with controversy. There has been bitterness, divisions and loss of members as a result of disagreement over procedures and personnel and interpretation of doctrine. These happen in any organization, but they are particularly frustrating when they happen to us. They are in such sharp contrast to the heavenly life the writings say is easy to live. Perhaps they are on a deeper level than those of other organizations. It is amazing how quickly we can question the spiritual state or mental health of someone who opposes us or whose method we disapprove of. Also how touchy we are when we suspect our own spiritual state is being questioned.

Anyway, controversy has been part of our Church since its beginning, and I see no reason for it to cease. We are a group of strong minded and large hearted individuals. We have the courage to think and believe differently from others, or we wouldn’t be in this Church in the first place. We also tend to be radical in the good sense: wanting to root out evil. Then, too, the writings not only advise us to use our reason in freedom when following them, they impel us to by their very nature.

So why haven’t we yet learned how to cope with controversy or better still, how to turn it into a useful tool to help us understand ourselves, our society, and our place in it?

I do not presume to offer suggestions as to how this will be effected. But I do have some ideas to be thought about and some questions. One, why can’t we have free and open discussions of anything New Churchmen are interested in or concerned about? I see the *Messenger* as the open forum for this. That is why so many of us took time from our busy lives to respond to the Case Study some years back. We didn’t want to kill any program. We just thought our ideas had been solicited. Some of us must have come on too strong, but we struggle in our small society, trying

to cope with existing without a minister, and a lot of pent - up thoughts must have burst forth.

My belief that the *Messenger* should be our open forum is why I was so pleased with the June ‘75 issue. My only regret was that it was published too late. It came after Convention started. If the *Messenger* publishes any view submitted to it, the reader could study it calmly in freedom and make up his own mind. The Editor should of course confer with the writers and delete ill - chosen words and personal attacks. Some of us feel strongly about our church and can get carried away, saying things we may not realize could hurt someone.

With good discussion of the issues in the *Messenger* all year long we would be aware of the pros and cons before we reach Convention. Persuasion and all its evil would be minimized.

I have not gone to many Conventions — 4 or 5 maybe — but I have some observations about them. We go to Convention not really knowing all about the issues to be decided, hoping to get filled in as we meet and talk with friends. We find ourselves in an emotionally charged situation. We gravitate toward those who are friendly. We hesitate to intrude on circles that seem hostile or indifferent. We are grateful that most New Church people are open and friendly and are happy we are there just because we are also New Church people, even though we may have many different ideas and opinions. How can we avoid having our decisions influenced by our friends, by whether we are having a good time or not, or worse by not ever really finding out all the facts? In this atmosphere we are supposed to reach wise judgments?

A second question is: should the church take stands where the writings are not clear as to applications — abortion, divorce, etc.? Can’t we sometimes deal with controversy by accepting it as a reality of life in society and in the church? Freedom according to reason lays a heavy responsibility on the individual conscience. Study of the writings and discussion seem imperative.

Let’s study the writings and think, and let us hear from all sides!

Alberta Theriault
Cleveland, O.

(Selected from Alberta’s response to the recent *Messenger* survey.)

Parables for Today

Matthew 13: 44, 45

GO ALL OUT FOR THE GREAT TREASURE IN YOUR LIFE

Successful people in the business of living have one thing in common. They know what is the most important thing for them in this life, and they *go all out for it*. They live, breathe, and eat in such a way that they may achieve the treasure of greatest value.

In our Christian way of thinking, the most important thing for anyone is the Kingdom of God. We are to seek it before anything else. We are told that everything else will be added, once we have gained the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is worth going all out for, because it is that state of life in which we experience the deepest, the most enduring kind of fulfillment and joy. We experience them because our entire *self* is flowing in harmony with the creation. The *self* being harmonized with the creation, our desires and actions become the healthiest kind, because they are harmonized with God's original design for man. In this way we are in a position to achieve a lot, and what we achieve produces genuine joy.

Christ told two little parables, each, translated into English, in about 30 words. The Kingdom of God is like the treasure hidden in a field. A man found it. He knew its value. He came home and sold everything he had; with that money he bought the field. The Kingdom of God is also like a merchant of pearls. He was in constant and diligent search for fine pearls. When he saw one pearl of great value, he wanted it. But he also knew that it required all he had. So he sold everything he owned; and with that money he bought the pearl.

In these two parables I see a three - point program for successful living. 1). Decide in your mind what you want the most – in other words, what is your pearl of great value. 2). Be sure your goal is consistent with God's universal law of health and fulfillment – in other words, that it will help bring about the Kingdom of God in you and around you. 3). Be determined and single - minded. Be excited about it and go all out for it! Don't spare anything for it!

Time and again I am amazed that such a great number of people are like the following child. He comes home with his usual listless walk. "Where'd you go?" one of the family asked him. "Out," said the child. "What did you do?" another of the family pursued the matter. "Nothing," said the child.

How many persons have we seen who are very much like the one in this poem?

I bargained with life for a penny,
And life would pay no more,
However, I begged at evening when I counted
my scanty score.
For life is a just employer, it gives you what
you ask,
But once you have set the wages,
Why, you must bear the task.
I worked for a menial's hire, only to learn, dis-
mayed,
That any wage I had asked of life,
Life would have willingly paid.

Aim high for your treasure in life! And go all out for it! The Kingdom of God – your deepest, most enduring fulfillment and joy – must begin here and now.



Jaikoo E. Lee

THE NEW CHURCH AROUND THE WORLD

The main weakness of our organization today, and the main reason for its decline is (I believe) that we so seldom provide facilities for *real worship*. Prayer is defined in the writings as "Talking With God", but is there room in the average church service for talking with God and listening to His side of the conversation? It is "ritual, ritual throughout", whereas true worship is non-ritualistic and personal. Between the "Hello" and "Goodby" there should be long periods of meditation and silent prayer.

Brian Kingslake
(from the New Church Herald)

* * *

Our New Church friends in the U.K. have recently purchased a sizeable property just north of Manchester which, when refurbished, will serve as the New Church College. From the description given in the June 7th *Herald* it appears to be a very attractive building — with ten rooms, spacious, well-treed lawns, and it is centrally located. It is hoped the premises will serve multi-purposes — small conferences, study groups, committee meetings, etc. Presently there are three students in training for the ministry in the British Conference.

* * *

The New Church in Berlin will celebrate its 75th anniversary from October 4 — 6. Public lectures will be presented each evening, including Prof. Ernst Benz on "Swedenborg and the 18th Century", and the Rev. Dr. F. Horn on "The Teachings of the New Church."

On June 30th the Society in Geneva vacated its premises and the church furnishings were put up for sale. (I believe this society also recently celebrated its 75th anniversary.)

The Rev. Alfred Regamey has resumed pastoral duties after a brief spell in the hospital.

(from the Swiss New Church newsletter)

* * *

In the Canadian General Church REPORT we read that a Committee has been established to study the feasibility of having a distinctive New Church High School in Canada (probably in southern Ontario.) Presently the General Church operates two Canadian elementary schools, in Toronto and Kitchener.

* * *

One of the most significant New Church missionary efforts in our history is now occurring in the small West African country of Ghana. Last summer Dr. Sig Synnestvedt, on behalf of the Swedenborg Foundation, spent almost 3 weeks in Ghana, talking with hundreds of enthusiastic new readers. In one recent year, over 12,600 New Church books were shipped to Ghana. (*Heaven and Hell* and *My Religion* are the most popular requests from Ghana.) Dr. Synnestvedt feels that many Ghanians are genuinely interested in Swedenborg's writings and he recommends that the New Church bodies in the world explore various ways to sustain this interest. It's a truly fascinating report, available at the Swedenborg Foundation, 139 E. 23rd St. New York, N.Y. 10010

* * *

A letter in the June issue of the *New Church Life* begins, "Our friends in the General Convention always twit the clergy of the General Church as being too stiff, too unyielding, too wrapped up in the study of abstract doctrine, when the great need of the New Church is love." This editor readily concedes that an occasional twit is heard in the Council of Ministers. Indeed, if the truth were known, we probably have some of the best twitters in the land. But most of our twits are reserved for "in house" affairs. (The word "twit" is like eating salted peanuts — once you start it's difficult to stop).

The writer goes on to say "The learning and understanding must come first, and only according to this can living follow". But doesn't some element of love, affection, desire, motivation precede and accompany this initial learning and understanding? Love and truth must be united in every phase and facet of living; they cannot be separated. What is the question?

P. Z.

CHURCH NEWS FROM WESTERN CANADA

About forty delegates and friends from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia met at Winnipeg on July 4-6 for the Western Canada New Church Conference. A number of forward looking actions came out of the business sessions: priorities were established for the ongoing development of Camp Paulhaven; the Lay Leader program, thus far centered in Edmonton, was discussed at great length, with the hope that it will eventually benefit all of the western provinces; the need for New Church study material, for both individual and group use, was expressed; the recommendation that Harold Taylor and Henry Reddekopp be inducted into the full ministry was adopted; and a new editor for the Western Canada Conference magazine was appointed. During the closing minutes of the session, a generous gift was presented to the Rev. Henry Reddekopp, for his past, present and future services, by his many appreciative friends in the Conference.

During the next week my wife and I visited all of the New Church centers in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The first night we stayed with Mr. and Mrs. John Shellenberg in Transcona. Then on to Roblin, Man., where we were welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sawatsky. About fifteen people participated in the discussion that evening. The next meeting was held at the YMCA in Saskatoon, where again we explored the realities of the local situation with a group of dedicated New Church men and women. In Rosthern, Sask., about twenty people attended the evening worship service and discussion in their lovely, white frame prairie-type church. In N. Battleford we met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. Sprecker, with sixteen adults and six children present. Again, a worship service was held followed by discussion and lunch. At Meadow Lake, Sask., thirty people attended the Sunday morning service, with dinner and meeting following. A good visit was enjoyed that Saturday night with Mr. and Mrs. Hank Froese.

What a delightful and uplifting trip this was! We came to minister and were ministered unto. Everywhere one finds such enthusiasm for the teachings of the New Church. Parents are concerned that their children will be brought up in the light of the New Evangel. The children eagerly anticipate this summer's experience at Camp Paulhaven. The

older people exemplify a beautiful religious faith, and an unshakeable trust in the Source of that faith. One senses great spiritual strength and integrity in these small prairie groups; for them, religion is still the primary concern of life.

In about eighteen months their beloved pastor, the Rev. Henry Reddekopp, plans to retire. The Board of Mission requested us to look at the religious needs and opportunities in the Western Canada Mission Field, and a full report, with recommendations, has been sent to all B.O.M. members.

P. Z.

RELIGION IN TODAY'S WORLD

Evil - spirits debate concerns Anglicans

A revival of occult mysticism has touched off a fierce row inside the church of England.

The movement, attributed to a growing sense of alienation, has been given a powerful endorsement by the Archbishop of Canterbury. To the astonishment of rationalist theologians, Archbishop Coggan has given his blessing to exorcism, the rite of expelling demons from "possessed" worshippers.

"I think it has done some good," Dr. Coogan has said, "in that it has forced many people to think positively about the powers of evil and how to deal with them."

His stance brought an anguished appeal from 65 theologians who uphold what one of them calls the Church of England's "sober, rational, common sense tradition." In an open letter they protested that formal recognition of exorcism would move the church back to medieval times and weaken the "moral responsibility" of its members.

(The Washington Post)

* * *

Stifling in South Africa

The South African government has taken steps to silence the strongest Christian voice for racial justice.

The Christian Institute of Southern Africa has been declared an "affected organization", which means it can no longer receive money from outside, its chief source of support.

In addition, its leaders are on trial on charges arising from a secret commission report, and churchmen expect they may be "banned" — forbidden to write for publication or to meet with groups.

The South African Council of Churches has supported the Institute with so strong a statement that churchmen in Canada believe a church - state confrontation may be building up. (United Church Observer)

* * *

The Meaning of Orthodoxy

Orthodoxy is one among many Christian virtues, not an isolated immunity to be clung to at all costs. You are a Christian by your whole being, and not just by an effort to think things out for yourself. "To say the right words" with neither mistake nor hesitation is no ideal. You have to make clear the *value* of what you are saying, by living as a "new Man".

But you can't live as a Christian without thinking as a Christian — and in union with the Christian community.

from Theology Digest
(a Roman Catholic publication)

PEOPLE AND PLACES IN CONVENTION

From Cleveland — About twenty New Church members and friends gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. **Norman Bester** in Bay Village on July 13 for an informal worship service conducted by lay leader **Frank Theriault**. A delightful picnic luncheon and good fellowship followed. The bulletin continues: "Alberta Theriault gave a run down of the program of visiting ministers she has contacted . . . and we are eagerly looking forward to our "minister a month" visits beginning in September."

From La Porte — Some improvements and alterations are being made in the La Porte church sanctuary this summer; the work will be completed in time for the opening service on Sept. 7. The first meeting of the La Porte monthly Discussion Group will be held at the pastor's home on Sept. 11th, with the Rev. Richard Teed's "Sermon On the Mount" being used as a study guide . . . The Women's Alliance Johnny Appleseed Bazaar is scheduled for October 16th at the La Porte Church.

From Kansas — Not to be outdone by La Porte, the Pretty Prairie Society has also redecorated its sanctuary interior, and the exterior of the building has been painted this summer. But what would the hardy Kansas pioneers say about pew cushions! . . . Another radical departure from the traditional in Kansas: their Fall Association meeting will be held at Camp Ninnescah from October 10 — 12, which will allow expanded opportunities for study, fellowship, recreation and worship. Sounds great! . . . A number of New Church young people in Kansas participated in a 4 day camp session near Branson, Mo., in the latter part of July.

From the West Coast — The Pacific Coast Association is scheduled for August 29 — 31 at the University of Redlands . . . This spring the San Diego Society voted to stay open all summer, with lay leaders **Al Hodges**, **Jack Brooker**, and others assisting the **Rev. Ivan Franklin** . . . Worship services are also held every Sunday of the year at the Lyon St. church in San Francisco . . . On May 18 about 200 members of the California Historical Society toured our beautiful church in San Francisco.

From St. Petersburg — Most of our Societies conclude the church year with a picnic, but in St. Petersburg they give it a special twist — there is a theme for the day. This year it was "Hawaii", and in the afternoon each of the children presented a talk on some facet of the 50th State. A relative newcomer to the Society, **John Little**, spoke on the topic, "What the New Church Teaches". Splendid nourishment here for both body and soul.

From Des Plaines — Last May about 10 of the members got together and gave a party for the senior citizens at the Plaza Nursing Center . . . The Sunday School in Des Plaines will resume classes on September 14th at 9:30 a.m. . . . Our hearty congratulations to the **Rev. Jaikoo Lee**, who became an American citizen on March 25 . . . **John Townes**, President of the Des Plaines Society, was briefly hospitalized at Urbana, Ohio, during our recent Convention . . . **Why Not? We Can! We Will! We Did!** Under this theme 27 members met at the church on June 17, where Rev. Lee presented goals and programs for church growth. His goals outlined 6 major areas in which the Des Plaines church will strive to achieve excellence over the next 5 years: music, religious education and spiritual growth, youth, missions, counseling, and pulpit. It all sounds very exciting and we look forward to hearing progress reports from our friends in Des Plaines.

FROM CHURCH RECORDS

BAPTISMS

Epp — Glen Peter, son of Mr. and Mrs. Don Epp of Laird, Sask., was baptized at Rostern, Sask., on April 20, 1975, the Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiating.

Holmes — Rena Elaine, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Holmes, was baptized at La Porte, Ind., on May 25, 1975, the Rev. Matthew Glowe officiating.

Taylor — Cathryn Suzanne, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Taylor of Grand Island, Neb., was baptized at the San Francisco New Church on May 11, 1975, the Rev. Erwin Reddekopp officiating.

Wendorf — Timothy Andrew, son of Mr. and Mrs. Alex Wendorf of Des Plaines, Ill., was baptized by the Rev. Jaikoo Lee on April 13, 1975.

CONFIRMATIONS

Buckmaster — Kenneth Allen Buckmaster was confirmed into the faith of the New Church on March 23, 1975, the Rev. Matthew Glowe officiating.

Little — Michael Allen Little of St. Petersburg, Fla., was confirmed on June 8, 1975; his brother, Jon Alden, was confirmed on June 15, 1975, the Rev. Leon Le Van officiating at both services.

Penabaker — Alan Penabaker and Greg Penabaker were confirmed into the faith of the New Church in Royal Oak, Mich., on June 2, 1975, the Rev. Walter Orthwein officiating.

Rosenbach — Carmen Rosenbach of San Diego, Cal., was confirmed into the faith of the New Church on June 22, 1975, the Rev. Ivan Franklin officiating.

DEATHS

Lynch — Mr. W. Alderson Lynch died on January 30, 1975, with the resurrection service on Feb. 1, 1975, the Rev. Randall Laakko officiating. Smitty was an active and devoted lay leader in the Wilmington, Del., Society for many years.

Scott — On January 19, 1975 Mrs. Emmet (Louise) Scott of La Porte, Ind., passed away. A private resurrection service was conducted by the Rev. Matthew Glowe on January 21, 1975.

MARRIAGES

Jones - Haggard — Eric Jones and Tamara Haggard were married at Urbana, Ohio, on June 28, 1975, the Rev. Paul Zacharias (uncle of the bride) officiating.

Herron - Hryniowski — Richard Herron and Adrienne Hryniowski were married at Kitchener, Ont., on July 26, 1975, the Rev. Paul Zacharias officiating.

NEW ADDRESS FOR CONVENTION SECRETARY

Mrs. Wilfred Rice
983 Fellsway, Apt. 8
Medford, Mass. 02155

YOUR COOPERATION PLEASE

We need to revise the MESSENGER mailing list. If Convention members in your area are not receiving the MESSENGER, or if MESSENGERS are incorrectly addressed, ask your Society Secretary to send a current, accurate list of all local Convention members to:

Mr. Roger Paulson,
Central Office, Box 66,
Newton, Mass. 02158

"No one in the other life suffers punishment for evils which he had done in the world, but on account of the evils which he then does. Yet it amounts to the same thing . . . because every one, after death, returns into his own life, and thus into similar evils; for the quality of the man remains the same as it had been in the life of the body."

H.H. 509

* * *

BOOK REVIEW

Wunsch, William F. *Outlines of Swedenborg's Teachings with Readings from his Theological Works*, 2nd edition, edited by Richard H. Tafel. Swedenborg Publishing Association, New York. \$3.95, pp. 281, paperback. 1975.

This memorial reissue of William F. Wunsch's comprehensive study guide is a most welcome addition to the current literature of the church. Those familiar with the 1926 edition will agree that the editing and modest rewording done by Mr. Tafel has been judicious and fully in harmony with the vigor of the original. The editor has wisely omitted the dated catechetical device of appending reviews and review questions to the various subsections. He has also adroitly eliminated one source of confusion in the earlier edition by the simple expedient of using only one continuous series of paragraph numbers, replacing the original dual system.

For the information of readers who are availing themselves of this study guide for the first time it may be helpful to state that the book is divided into two nearly equal parts: (1) the outlines of Swedenborg's teachings, treated under three main headings, (a) The Spiritual Life, (b) The Word, and (c) The Lord; and (2) selected readings from Swedenborg. This latter section comprises some 264 carefully chosen passages, all keyed to Part I.

The main thrust of the book is made evident by the table of contents, making it possible to confine the index at the back to the locating of scattered definitions and comments not directly referred to in the table of contents. The typographical style of the book is pleasing and uncluttered, with good readable type faces throughout. There seems little doubt that this book will fulfill the hope expressed in the preface, that through it Mr. Wunsch "may continue to speak to still another generation of students and inquirers."

It is, in fact, with that conviction in mind that this reviewer feels it necessary to call to the reader's attention a few typographical and other errors which struck his eye. They are all of such a nature that one can easily write the corrections into his own copy without in any way detracting from the overall usefulness of the work.

The last line on p. 3 should read "nn. 131 - 395." The first note in the middle of p. 145 ends with a reference to "n. 86." It should read "n. 216." The group of errors which may prove

most troublesome to those readers who take the trouble to look up citations in context begins on p. 152. When Mr. Wunsch first published his book the various publishers of Swedenborg had not yet reached consensus on how to number the posthumous work *Charity*. Understandably, the author chose to follow the then current American edition. Since then, however, agreement has been reached to use the numbering system followed by J. F. Potts in the *Swedenborg Concordance*, thus making the numbering used by Wunsch obsolete. This was overlooked in editing this second edition. Thus the references to n. 173 (p. 152) should read "C. 158, 167," n. 174 "C. 184," n. 176 "C. 173 - 176," n. 177 "C. 187," the note to n. 177, line 2, should be "C. 188." Reading n. 178 "C. 190, 191, 193," n. 179 "C. 74 - 76," n. 183 "C. 72," n. 212 (p. 174) "C. 204." A simple printer's error occurs on p. 199. The reference should be "A. 3691." On p. 224, n. 302, the reference has inadvertently been omitted. It should read "T. 207." On p. 249, line 4 should end "n. 142." Finally, on p. 273, the note refers to "n. 90" rather than n. 95.

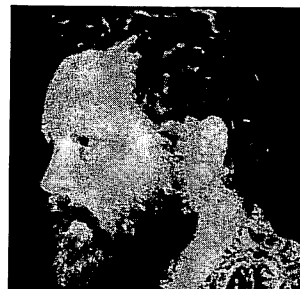
William Ross Woofenden

OUR CHURCH IN WILMINGTON (con't)

The Wilmington church was founded by people who wished to study and share together, as well as with others, the insight and enlightenment of "the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Jerusalem as revealed in the Theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg." Today we seek to understand and live these truths, and to promote their broader acceptance. We function as a family seeking both the affectional and rational growth of persons into wholeness. As one of our newer members put it: "I see the Wilmington New Church family as a symphony of souls, each performing in a unique capacity toward the harmonious whole, and the entire being offered ever anew to the Lord."

The Lord is at work in our midst.

Article by: Miss Virgina Shaw and Mr. Randall Laakko



Rev. Randall Laakko

REVELATION REVISITED

by the Rev. George Dole

This monthly column will be devoted to the study of the writings, beginning with *The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine*. The first instalment will deal with the introductory material, which for reasons of space will not be quoted. Beginning in the next issue, the column will present serially a new translation of *NJHD* (omitting the *Arcana* excerpts) beginning with paragraph 11, with commentary on the portion presented each month.

Two years after the publication of the last volume of the *Arcana*, four other works appeared — *Earths in the Universe*, *Heaven and Hell*, *Last Judgement*, and *NJHD*. Each of these draws heavily on the *Arcana*; each is in its own way a topical editing of material that occurs in more scattered form in that work.

NJHD is organized around basic concepts of our theology. The chapter titles are theological terms or phrases, and each brief chapter focuses closely on its title. For the most part, Swedenborg offers discussion rather than definition, and he appends to each chapter summarized references to places in the *Arcana* where the topic may be pursued in greater detail.

The net result is a work of remarkable brevity, simplicity, and scope, an admirable introduction to the basic elements of the theology of the New Church.

* * *

We may perhaps best understand paragraphs 1 - 7 if we regard them as an explanation of the title. This section is headed "The New Heaven and the New Earth, and what 'The New Jerusalem' means." It opens by quoting material from Revelation 21, following this by the statement that angels understand this spiritually, not literally, and proceeding with a concise listing of the spiritual meanings of the basic terms of the passage.

This sets the stage for discussion of the new heaven, the new earth, and finally the New Jerusalem, using both the *Arcana* and the spiritual meaning of Scripture in support.

Three major aspects of the new heaven are described. First comes its quality. It is of one heart and mind (*Unanimum*) because everyone there is heavenly — that is, everyone loves others as himself and therefore bonds others to himself freely and mutually. Second, since all infants who have died for some seventeen and a half centuries constitute that heaven, together with all loving people from the same era, it is a vast heaven. And third, since earlier people had no notion of faith as distinct from love, only of a faith of love, the new heaven is distinct from and lower than earlier heavens.

The new earth is then described as a new church on earth, with the note that the Lord always takes care that there be a church binding man to the Lord and earth to heaven. Even as Swedenborg writes, one church is ceasing to exist and a new one is being founded.

In this context, the "New Jerusalem" of the title refers specifically to the worship and doctrine of this new church. It is from the Lord out of heaven. This "heavenly doctrine" is then a kind of theological synonym for the New Jerusalem.

With the title thus explained, we turn to an introduction to the doctrine. (nn. 8 - 10). The consistent burden of this is the primacy of love. The only doctrine of the early churches was a doctrine of charity, and the only requirement for church membership, so to speak, was a life involved in the "good of charity." These were more inward and wiser people. The Lord states that the entire Law and Prophets — the whole Word — is simply the Two Great Commandments. It is a doctrine of love and charity. By implication, so is the doctrine that will follow.

IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE . . .
A TRIBUTE TO
L. V. WARD – DOWNING, WISC.

The phone rang, "This is Sandy Lewis at Boyceville. Your father just passed away here in front of the store. Your mother is here alone. Can you come"?

Some Messenger readers knew my father, Mr. L. V. Ward. He shared some thoughts with you in the *New Church Visitor* a few years ago. My parents would sometimes drive the 60 miles to the St. Paul church. I always looked forward to the fellowship of people from that church.

My father usually attended the local Methodist Church and the ministers looked forward to his comments at the end of their sermons. Few of them shared his Swedenborgian views, but later I would hear most of them preaching these ideas from the pulpit in due time under a different guise.

Both my father and my grandfather were Swedenborgians. They taught me everything I know about death and life. If my life has a meaningful feeling or deep thoughts of myself and my fellowman, they were put there by my father. Dad was always under pressure to make his business go, yet I discovered he always had time to talk if I would go to the store and for a few minutes be a part of him. It was a very important part that I hope I carry with me through the rest of my life. We could talk of religion, (that was his favorite subject,) or school, the other kids, or whatever you named. He always laid the facts out front, and I could choose the direction.

Dad made a practice of living on a very meager income. He would do things in ways that would be of benefit somewhere, sometime. I've seen him burn bills that people owed. He'd say, "By the time they could afford to pay, I can afford not to collect." Then there were the people that came forward to say, "You know, without your father, we could never have bought our farm." Best of all were the great chicken dinners we enjoyed in payment for seed corn.

I have learned that angels are always with us, and they certainly had been watching over my father carefully. It seemed that on his last day in May all his family found a reason to come to the store, and many of his friends just stopped in to chat.

I should have known it was about over. He even told me, but I refused to listen. He had told me how easy it would be: that death was simple and not anything to get up tight about; that most of us cause our own pain, troubles, and problems in this life.

Trains were Dad's hobby and he loved to talk about them. He was talking about a long freight that was winding its way up the tracks when he suddenly stopped talking. My mother said, "It was all over, just that fast." When I arrived he was still sitting there with his hands folded on his lap and a smile on his face. Whoever he was talking to was on the other side of the curtain. Dad was 83, a vital member of our family unit. Still actively running a small town hardware store six days a week, ten or more hours a day.

"AND I WAS GLAD WHEN THEY SAID UNTO ME, LET US GO TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD." At his funeral our friend Vera was singing the last word of the last song. Way off in the distance we could hear the local freight whistle as the minister said, "Amen." I knew then that Dad had left and the rest was up to us, and the tears of selfishness and loneliness ran down.

Mrs. Charles Ford

THE LAST WORD

FOREVER IN THE NOW

Recently, when dining with my wife and two friends, I apparently shocked the whole company when I announced I might know what my eternal occupation was to be in heaven. My wife thought the idea that I would get to heaven too presumptuous. My friends couldn't accept the idea of heaven at all, to say nothing of my confidence in an eternal occupation. But, now that you have joined this company, and are somewhat shocked too, let me tell you of my forever occupation, and how I came to this strange conclusion. My eternal occupation will be to forever search out, clarify and present to others the real nature of existence, to clarify ultimates.

Now how did I arrive at such a far out idea? Let me tell you. My wife and I and friends had gone to see the film *Godfather II*. We agreed on the quality of the film, the intimacy of human portraiture, etc. Moreover, a friend of mine is the son of a Mafia don, and, on his testimony, I take the film as accurate. Yet my wife and I felt that, to some extent, we become what we participate in. By participating in a violent, low conception of the human, we become more like that. We wanted something more uplifting. It didn't remotely touch on my life's love.

My ruling love is to clarify and present for others' uses the real nature of existence. This is a natural focus for me, one that tends to obtrude at the oddest times. While working on the hull planking of a 12 ton power boat my greatest insight was not into planking, but into the nature of the Divine human. Whenever I am not simply overburdened with stress and difficulty, whenever I can relax a bit, my eternal occupation shows up. When involved in it, I feel better, have more energy and my digestion is even better. I take it now that this kind of activity is at least close to my real nature. And, as Swedenborg says, because this is what I love to do, this is where I feel most free. Moreover, it is my easiest and most natural occupation. It is the life's love which is said to be different in each and to remain to eternity (D.P. 105 - 9). It is like a personal compass that orients each of us.

Some would ask, yes, but how do I find my own ruling love? Thinking as a psychologist, I would hope one day a comprehensive test for it could be developed. But, for the present, I would say, *review all the experiences in which you feel most at peace and productive and then look at the common denominator of these experiences.*

Interest tests (such as Strong's Vocational Interest) would help, but the love of the life is even more central and subtle than vocational interests. I don't believe anyone is wholly removed from living out to some extent their fundamental nature. Severe constant pain may come closest to keeping us from ourselves. I don't believe material circumstances or opportunity keeps us away. Living out the life's love is so much a matter of feeling that it is largely internal and can be done anywhere. Great worry and stress can intrude and delay the process only for a time. It knows and finds itself. I can remember the electrifying experience as a boy of paying 5 cents for Troward's *The Edinburgh Lectures on Mental Science* and realizing that here it is; this is what I was looking for, and such treasure so cheap. I haven't changed essentially, just elaborated from where I was then. It is the same for everyone.

Granted that getting to heaven is up to God's will, my apparently presumptuous idea rests on two further assumptions; that there is a life's love which can be realized, and that the present is the fulcrum of eternity. Much of Swedenborg's writings indicates we are now designing our eternal state. What we associate ourselves most with here, we are likely to continue if there is a real continuity of existence. Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* can be seen as dealing entirely with this life. If I want to know a certain peace and love in human relationships, I must practice it now. If I am to have a life with a certain kind of focus, it must become so focused now. The eternal is the elaboration of the present. For it to be my eternal occupation, I must work at it now. So when I announce my eternal occupation, it is already a natural center for me, what I choose to associate with, what is true now. What you would be eternally, be now. What you will do eternally, you are doing now.

And, you see, this very article is practice in my eternal occupation, for I am speaking of ultimates, attempting to clarify and show uses for others. Likely, we cannot miss becoming what we have most often been, what we truly are. What an awesome thought, that we can fashion and taste the eternal now.

Wilson Van Dusen

NEW CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION APPEAL

Plans have been started for the revision and printing in book form of the *Dole Notes* for Sunday School teachers' reference. The Rev. William Woofenden has volunteered to do the revisions at no cost. This leaves only the printing and binding costs to be raised by volunteer gifts from INDIVIDUALS, CHURCHES, SUNDAY SCHOOLS AND ASSOCIATIONS. To date over \$625.00 has been received or pledged. Any gifts or pledges should be sent to: Thomas B. Zehner, FUNDS CAMPAIGN CHAIRMAN, 439 E. Burgess St., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15214. Make cheques payable to *NEW CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION*

CONVENTION CALENDAR

California Ass'n	Aug. 29 - 31
Ohio Ass'n (Almont)	Sept. 19 - 21
Bd. of Pub.	Sept. 25 - 27
Mass. (Fall) Ass'n	Oct. 5
Planning & Development at Blairhaven	Oct. 6 - 8
Kansas Ass'n	Oct. 12
Bd. of Ed. (Urbana)	Oct. 30 - Nov. 1
Urbana College B.O.T.	Oct. 31 - Nov. 1
Mid - Atlantic Ass'n at Washington D.C.	Nov. 8 - 9
S.S.R. B.O.M.	Dec. 5 - 6

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