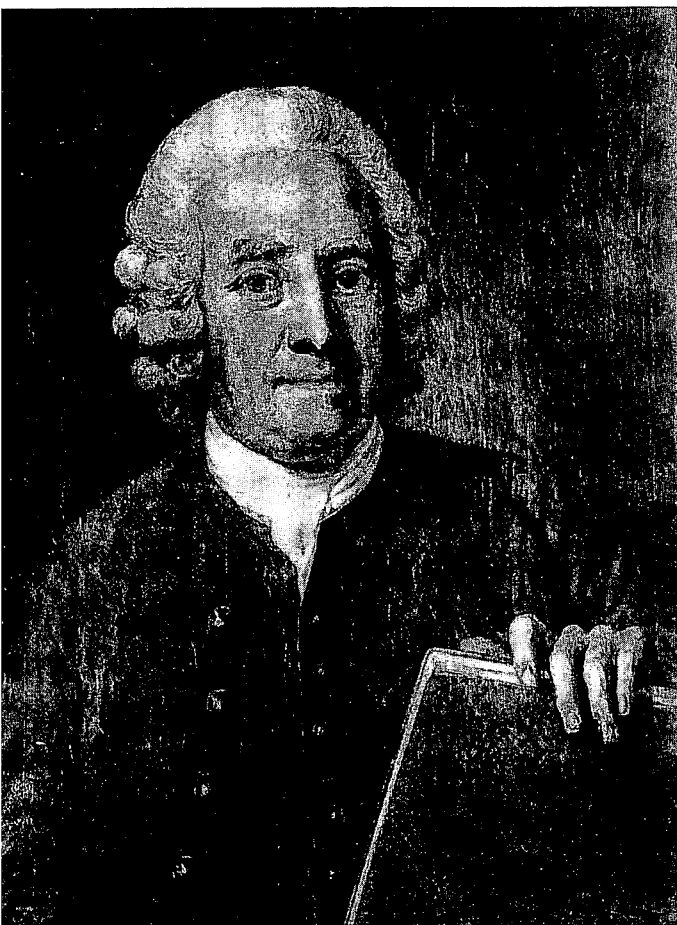


The Messenger

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH

JANUARY 1976



Servant of the Lord
Emanuel Swedenborg
born January 29, 1688
died March 29, 1772

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Editorial

HOPE IN THE LAST QUARTER

"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go . . . for he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Hebrews 11: 8, 10

As we open the door into the last quarter of the twentieth century, a brief glance forward seems appropriate. Our theme, not surprisingly, is HOPE. What is rather surprising is the fact that we find only a dozen or so references to hope in Swedenborg's writings. Perhaps the reason for this is that *his entire theology assumes a hopeful attitude*. The glowing light of hope shines through every page of his writings. Swedenborg's personal life testifies that the gospel of hope was for him a living reality. When you live a certain way you don't have to constantly write about it or talk about it.

What do we mean by hope? Webster defines it this way: "Desire with expectation of obtaining what is desired; trust, reliance. Ground or source of happy expectation." I like that definition, especially the last part. To hope means to have an affirmative mind-set toward all of life — past, present and future. It means to be ready at every moment for that which is not yet born; to be on the look-out for signs of new life. And when these signs of new life come along, we are ready and waiting to usher them into the world. Hope is an expectant, supportive, optimistic attitude toward life. It says that life is essentially good and worthwhile; it believes that life can improve and change for the better. Without this kind of hope our spirit, individually and collectively, will gradually sicken and die. It is humanly impossible to live indefinitely with despair as a companion.

The hope we need is found in almost every page of God's Word. In the creation story, in the Lord's promises to Abraham and Moses, in the sermons and life of Jesus Christ, in Revelation's radiant picture of the Holy City — everywhere we find this inspiring, liberating promise of hope.

Our hope for the New Church is founded on the belief that there is a spiritual dimension to life that permeates and shines through this material world. God visited us in the person of Jesus Christ; he overcame the hells; he established a new

religious life - style in the world. This same risen Lord is with us evermore and his Kingdom is gradually taking form and shape in his world. This conviction is at the center of our Christian hope, and without this implicit faith, this divine assurance, there is no reason for our existence as a separate denomination.

True, the way ahead is not always clear or certain. There are still many miles to go, many tests to endure, many hills to climb. *But the major battle has been fought and won*. Whether or not we win the final battle depends in large measure on our response to the Lord's claim on our lives.

Dr. Howard Spoerl expressed this idea beautifully in his essay, "Our Distinctive Faith". He wrote, "Our faith proclaims the New Dispensation. According to it, the ordinary world around us is not the world it used to be. It has been touched and quickened by a new principle that our theology calls the Second Advent. Do we really believe this? If we believe it, instead of continually searching for signs of a new order appearing according to our preconceived notions, *we ought to assume that the change has occurred*, and learn to regard untraditional and unexpected phenomena as possible symptoms of it. The divine order, so far as it exists on earth, exists in many and varied forms."

How much we need that kind of faith — and hope — as we step into the last quarter of the twentieth century.

P. Z.

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Paul B. Zacharias, Editor

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The Starting Line

Eric Zacharias

1976 — A Hallowed Year

"And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land." Leviticus 25: 10

With these words, Moses speaking for the Lord, announced the year of jubilee. It was to be a year of celebration, a hallowed year. There was to be no seed sown and no harvest taken. Every man was to return to his own possession; every man was to fear his God; no man was to oppress another man.

The year 1976 is not the fiftieth year in the life of our nation — rather four times the fiftieth. Those upon whom there fell the awful task of founding a new nation saw their responsibility as one that was indeed under the hand of God and so declared, "...that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty" Liberty was proclaimed throughout all the land.

The Leviticus account of the year of jubilee warns that a new crop is not to be sown — but that the people eat only that which increases of itself in the field. This, in itself, leads one down interesting thought trails. The Kansas farmer, for instance, would be quick to recognize this as presenting a situation he faces each fall planting season. It is essential that the volunteer growth (the increase thereof out of the field) be completely destroyed before the sowing of the new crop can begin. The volunteer crop is not wheat alone — but mixed with it are weeds that if permitted to grow to maturity will choke out the grain. Was there, then, an underlying purpose in the Lord's demand that in this year of jubilee only the increase of the field be used for food? Certainly those who partook of this fare were made intimately aware of the quality, the nature and the variety of that which the earth had produced — that which was sweet and that which was sour, that which was good to the taste and that which was bitter.

As a nation celebrating our year of jubilee, we cannot literally fulfill the requirements laid down in the Leviticus formula. It is inconceivable that we permit our fields to lie fallow for this year. It cannot be a year of rest. The balance of our economy, the food needs of our nation and of the world dictate that a new crop is harvested — hopefully one even larger than that harvested the previous year.

However, the principle that unfolds for us in Leviticus is one that has significance for us. Yes, we may attempt to take to ourselves the mental set of those who gave the call to liberty 200 years ago. We celebrate their courage. Their steadfastness. Their vision. We cannot, however, bask in the assurance, "We have George Washington to our father . . . And now the ax is laid unto the root of the trees." See Matt. 3: 9 — 10

Is not this year, the year of our jubilee, a time for a responsible assessment of "that increase thereof out of the field? The sweet and the bitter, the useful and the useless, that which promotes spiritual good and that which hinders. What is the condition of health of the body? The crime rate is up 18% in this last year alone. There appears to be a continuing deterioration of the fabric within the family structure. Those who exist in poverty or on its edge increase in number. There appears to be no end to the revelation of trickery in high levels of government.

There is much, also, that is good. The increase in the field is not tares alone. Each of us is offered a great variety of opportunity for involvement — in community life, in the life of the Church, in personal fulfillment. There is an openness that promotes the growth to maturity. There is a freedom that cherishes individuality and the uniqueness of interests.

All of these, the good and the bad, the bitter and the sweet, are the qualities of life that are the "increase thereof out of the field."

The struggle of the Revolution for Independence goes on. The echos of the guns that blazed at Concord and Lexington have long been silent. Today, an even more urgent, equally demanding call to serve awaits an answer. The struggle has turned inward — it is a struggle of conscience, a struggle to determine what values shall prevail, a struggle to determine if freedom and responsibility can indeed passionately challenge the citizens of this generation.

This is an invitation to all New Church people to come together in Philadelphia, the cradle of our republic, and there from June 30 — July 4th join in celebration of this year of jubilee, a hallowed year.

Aspects of the Swedenborgian Movement

John Sanford Peck

The Swedenborg Movement as an organized entity, was born with the formation, in the year 1782 in Manchester, England, of a society consisting of "gentlemen who were both able and willing to promote the cause of truth by bringing and publishing the works of Baron Swedenborg in English" under the leadership of the Rev. John Clowes, the rector of St. John's Parish in Manchester. And this was ten years after the death of Swedenborg in 1772. Clowes had been introduced to the "New Christian Religion" in 1773, but at first was "repelled by the size of the volume, and especially that it treated principally on points of doctrine." However, he overcame his early reluctance and became an inspired leader in the New Movement.

In 1783, three men met in London, in a house in Clerkenwell Close, and formed a society for the purpose of "reading Swedenborg's works and holding conversations about him." Those present were Robert Hindmarsh, printer, Peter Provo, apothecary, and William Bonington, clockcase maker. Shortly thereafter "John August Tulk, Esq., a gentleman of independent property joined our society and his zeal, ability and judgment added strength to our hands." In the summer of 1784, James Glen, a member of the Great East Cheap Society, arrived in Philadelphia from England. He was filled with missionary zeal and immediately began to spread the doctrine by means of lectures, which produced two converts. The first, Francis Bailey, was a printer and a close friend of Benjamin Franklin. The other was John Young, a lawyer,. After his lectures, Glen departed for Boston and eventually returned to his home in Demerara.

After the departure of James Glen, a box of books, sent by Robert Hindmarsh from London, arrived in Philadelphia. These books, English editions of the works of Swedenborg, were sold at auction, and soon a reading circle of enthusiastic converts was meeting regularly at the home of Francis Bailey. This little group became the center from which the new religion spread far and wide, southward into Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia and westward beyond the Alleghanies.

It was well established that Swedenborg himself never attempted to preach or to found a sect. He believed that members of all the then - established churches could belong to the New Church without

forming a separate organization. All the other great religious reformers, Luther, Wesley, Calvin, and a host of others, were powerful and inspired preachers, and the success of their movements was founded on their forceful preaching. A study of the beginnings of the Swedenborgian movement reveals some highly significant and startling differences between it and all other reform movements. Firstly, the Swedenborgian movement started ten years after the death of Swedenborg himself. Secondly, the first groups were formed to read and study books, not to listen to preaching. Thirdly, printers and publishers were prominent among the leaders of the new movement. Robert Hindmarsh in London, and Francis Bailey in Philadelphia, and the avowed purpose of the Manchester Society was to print and publish, and by inference, to distribute, English translations of the writings. These early pioneers translated and published literally thousands of copies of Swedenborg's books, usually at their own expense.

It was only after these early groups, formed to study and distribute the writings, had been firmly established that the movement to form a separate and distinct church started and grew to such proportion that it caused the first schism among followers of Swedenborg. The Separatists, or those desiring to found a distinct sect were led by Robert Hindmarsh while the Non-Separatists were headed by the Rev. John Clowes. In fact Clowes continued to preach the new doctrines from his pulpit in St. John's Parish in Manchester, as an Episcopal rector until his death. This Non-Separatist position was maintained by the Rev. Phillips Brooks in his Boston Episcopalian pulpit in more recent times. The strong belief in the value of making the writings readily available to the general public and thus spreading the New Doctrines far and wide, held by the founding fathers, has carried over into the work of the great printing and publishing societies of the present day. The Swedenborg Society of London, the Swedenborg Foundation in New York, founded over a hundred years ago as the Swedenborg Printing and Publishing Society, and others, carry on the tradition today.

It is well to give some consideration to this work of publishing and distributing the writings. It is not at all necessary to be a formal member of a New Church Society to read and profit from the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. The Swedenborg Foundation alone, estimates the regular readers of the writings to be between five and ten times the total membership of the societies comprising the General Convention. This should be some comfort to us when we regard the present small membership of most societies and their struggles to exist; and their relatively slow growth, if not actual retrogression, when compared with the period from 1800 to 1860.

It is well, on this 287th anniversary of the birth of Swedenborg, to give some thought to the direction in which the future should turn. The world today seems to be at a cross-roads. Most writers agree that present-day ethical, moral and religious concepts have not kept pace with the vast increase in technology and that the world is waiting for a new preaching of the Gospel. The late Rev. H. Clinton Hay once said, "that the early preaching was mostly expositions of the Scriptures and a contrasting of Old and New Church doctrines, but that a new generation had arisen who had been raised in the New Church and had no interest in Old Church errors. They cared very little for a methodical exposition of the Scriptures but wanted a broader application of the doctrines to life itself."

Does not the answer lie here? Certainly the New Doctrines, if they may still be called new, have practical application to everyday life. Originally, the Doctrines, due to their very nature, and due to their manner of introduction, i.e., reading and studying books, appealed directly to reason, and the first converts were among intellectuals and students. But the average man today acts and thinks from his emotions much more frequently than he does from his reason. In this day of slanted propaganda and high pressure advertising, the ability to engage in critical thinking is fast disappearing. Possibly an appeal to "reasoned emotion" is what the world is waiting for. The New Church has never been noted for its missionary zeal. If the original converts had been drawn from the ranks of the Methodists, or other groups with a fervent evangelical tradition, it is possible that by now, the New Church might be filled to overflowing.

(Reprinted from the January, 1955 MESSENGER.)



SWEDENBORG'S SUMMER HOUSE

Here Swedenborg did much of his writing during the warm weather, and was conveniently near to a small room in the rear which housed his library.

The summer house has been carefully cared for these many years by the Swedish government, and still is in a good state of preservation. Its only piece of furniture now is a miniature pipe organ, but four feet high. The house is nestled in among the trees surrounded by gardens and radiating a peaceful atmosphere.

During the season thousands of travelers from many countries, passing through Skansen, stop to read the following poem, in Swedish, inscribed on the bronze plaque set in front of the right window:

I am a Summer - house which you pass by.
I once stood in the South * in my Master's garden.
His Angels filled me with harmony
And the Spirit World enjoyed being in my care.

A mighty researcher, a great prophet
Has used me as his simple cottage and home.
Here he saw the glory of the heavens;
Here was created a New Jerusalem.

Around the Spirit which has flown was I a shell.
Now, stand I alone, with my grief.
But I was filled with harp and cymbal
When the Lord visited Swedenborg.

Written by the Swedish poet,
Hjalmar Gullberg, in memory
of Emanuel Swedenborg and
his summer house now located
in Skansen.

* Southern part of Stockholm

CONVENTION INFORMATION

Plan To Attend the 1976 Session of Convention

**Celebrate the Bicentennial in historic Philadelphia
Home of the Declaration of Independence and the Liberty Bell**

"Where it all began"

Site: The beautiful 216 acre Campus of Haverford College on the outskirts of Philadelphia.

Just off the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

A five minute walk from the railroad station, and a twenty minute train ride from downtown Philadelphia.

Limousine from airport stops at the door of Convention's campus headquarters.

Ample parking.

Convenient transportation to all Bicentennial sites and events.

Dates: June 30 — July 5

Convention has been set to bring you to the center of the Bicentennial Celebration at the height of this historic occasion.

The Convention Program ends Sunday evening, July 4, but we have made arrangements for you to stay over until Monday, which is also a holiday.

Cost: With accommodations in Philadelphia and on the East Coast at a premium and with prices out of sight, you can nevertheless attend Convention, and share in celebrating the Bicentennial Fourth of July, for only \$18 a day (room and board)!

Make your reservations as soon as possible in order not to be disappointed, as everyone wants to come to Philadelphia this year.

Write to: Church of the New Jerusalem
2129 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19103

**Convention
Theme:**

**"Freedom and Responsibility"
The Spirit of the New Age**

**Special
Note:**

For Those Wishing To Spend More Time In Philadelphia

In the expectation that there are many who will want to extend their visit and to take in more of the Bicentennial Celebrations, we have reserved room at Haverford College for fifty people from July 6 to July 10. Accommodations everywhere will be very tight. You can make this your headquarters, making return trips not only to Philadelphia but to the adjacent cities as well. But please act promptly.

Special Projects Fund

People make gifts and extend their support to projects which make sense to them. People are most likely to assist those endeavours which are well defined and have visible results. Are these generally accepted statements true for the membership and friends of our church? More specifically, is it realistic for the Board of Managers of the Swedenborg School of Religion to hope for the kind of church - wide response necessary to support its new Special Projects Program?

Over the past several years your elected representatives at the theological school have collaborated with the faculty in developing a plan of action to implement new ideas of ministry, free faculty members to author books or produce neoteric translations and sustain or improve any process which is currently of benefit to the students, faculty and our church at large. Anyone seeking Special Projects Fund sponsorship for an endeavor will submit his/her proposal to the Board of Managers who will thoroughly study it before giving either approval or disapproval.

Last Spring, the Board approved it's first project: Dr. Robert Kirven's request to withdraw for one year from his regular faculty duties at S.S.R. in order to devote his total efforts to writing a book on the nature of spirit. In his words:

The substantial life forces that I call "spiritual" are familiar in everyone's daily experience. They are so far from being abstract, mysterious or supernatural, that their common unrecognition stems partly from their very ordinariness. It is because they are so universal and natural, that they are so easily overlooked, misinterpreted or even denied. In fact, our language has almost lost the capacity to speak of them precisely and credibly.

The Board approved the request as its members believe in Dr. Kirven's ability to direct himself to his chosen task. The Special Projects Fund will be financing Dr. Kirven during his writing sabbatical but it needs contributions and pledges from all of us to do so.

Should total gifts exceed the requirements of the first project (and it is hoped they will) the fund will be in a state of readiness for the next approved idea.

Do you have a suggestion for review by the Board of Managers and/or the faculty?

Please supply the information requested below when forwarding your contribution or pledge.

Roger D. Paulson
Jerome A. Poole

The enclosed gift of _____ is for the new Special Projects Fund.

I wish to also pledge _____ Please bill me for one - third of this amount in January, April and July of 1976.

Name

Street

City

State/Province..... Country

Mail to: SPECIAL PROJECTS FUND
Swedenborg School of Religion
48 Sargent Street
Newton, Massachusetts 02158

THANK YOU.



The following brief excerpts are reflections about Convention; especially valuable because this comes from one whose loving and sympathetic understanding of every point of view makes her wisdom and hopefulness accessible to us all.

Convention 1975

"...Some of us — maybe all of us — are grateful to see the trends in Convention coming back to good solid interest in doctrine. And I use the word 'doctrine' happily because doctrine in the New Church means the unfolding of God's word for us — unfolding of the meaning and purpose of life as the Lord sees it and created it. And what can be more helpful in our living than this!

"...It is from this perspective that I count these happenings of Convention 1975 as not only noteworthy but progress toward establishing the New Church on firm foundations.

"...Many of our mini - courses...were truly helpful in increasing our understanding of what we can learn from Swedenborg.

"The subject of 'Authority of the Writings'.... was not only thoroughly discussed in the Council of Ministers but was brought to us all by a...well educated panel of Ministers. They offered differing slants...but all held the view that it is the Lord speaking to us through the writings.

"The Sunday School had a good meeting...The League was a splendid group of young people... In short, I found a swing back toward our uniqueness and I found deeper union...coming out of the sincere expression of different angles of perception."

Margaret Briggs

Can We Help?

Among the English New Church publications we receive is one called *The Plough*, which is edited by the Federation — another word for League. A recent issue describes a Holiday Workshop for young people which had for its purpose exploring the best ways to answer the questions of friends and acquaintances about the church.

The conclusions reached in the Workshop were these:

- 1) Everyone present had known the same sense of panic when being questioned. It was common experience also to begin apologetically and to feel uncertain of how *much* to say.
- 2) It is essential to first discover the motives of the questioner — the depth of interest he has.
- 3) We should not launch immediately into a list of New Church doctrines or involved explanations. It would be more worthwhile to explain what we feel are the most *personally* important aspects of our religion.
- 4) It was suggested that either individually or in groups we could produce a series of booklets or tapes dealing with subjects that we consider *personally* important to us. A small group felt inspired to consider the theme of happiness, not only as related to Heaven but also the happiness which we can strive toward on this earth.

The reporter for this Workshop ends her summary by saying:

"I came away feeling far more competent to face that previously somewhat *dreaded* question: What church do you belong to?"

Isn't it regrettable that the question should be dreaded?

We have summarized the Workshop for two reasons:

- 1) To point up once again that no one is alone in the difficult feat of communicating to others the true meaning of New Church concepts; and
- 2) To suggest that the young people in your local Society probably have these same frustrating experiences that the young people in England discussed and need your help in meeting them.

Women, we believe, can move mountains if they chose. If sometimes they seem to ignore the mountain in favor of smaller challenges usually this is because no one has called the mountain to their attention.

The young people in your church may only need motivation; some way to make it possible for them to record their discussions as they try to define their feelings and thoughts about the New Church, and someone to encourage them to embark on this venture. It would be a learning experience on several levels for all concerned.

Does your Society have a tape recorder available? If not, could your Alliance sponsor a project to purchase one? If we can give guidance and support to our young members in this kind of activity what more important endeavor could we possibly undertake?

The Joy of Discovery

The experience of discovery, of coming suddenly upon something of great value, usually produces a sense of joy. Especially is this so when the newly found treasure is made up of exciting, forward looking ideas. Sharing these ideas, seeing others respond, watching an idea take hold and develop into action — all this is exhilarating.

Early New Churchmen knew this exhilaration. From one to another and still another they sent word of their astounding discovery. As their numbers grew they saw lives being changed, they saw courageous people leaving established churches to join with them, they saw the flow of enthusiasm released, saw it deepen, widen, gather strength. In their small groups were people who dared to be different, people who cared about ideas and truth

and had been starving. The enthusiasm was contagious; it became stronger and surer reaching out beyond those small circles.

Somehow, somewhere between then and now the joy and the enthusiasm, the certainty of response, these seem to have been lost. Of course, the New Church is no longer “new”; for us discovery is over and taken for granted. But there may be still another factor in the slowing of our collective pulse - rate.

That first discovery and its joyfulness generated dreams of Utopia — the vision of a society of men who would live their lives by the light of these new ideas. When Utopia was not easily forthcoming and the realities of a man - made organization with its foibles and its factions came plainly into view — did this not drain away some of the joy of discovery?

The ideas are still exciting, still liberating, still capable of kindling joy. We felt this anew and responded to it in Obed and Eulalia Mooki. For a brief time we saw through their eyes. And we catch glimpses of that earlier vitality and radiance now and then among ourselves. For the most part however we are, like Martha, often troubled and anxious about many things; uncertain or apologetic with outsiders, discouraged among ourselves.

Can we become aware of joy again? The ideas that generated it are there, still there in the pages of the same books. Perhaps we have diluted them? Compromised with them? Expected too much — Utopia for example — or settled for too little. Whatever the answer, underneath will be found the root of our present dimming of joy. We suspect that individually more easily than collectively a rediscovery is possible if we seek to know deeply, each one alone, the beauty and strength of our heritage.



Please address contributions to:

Mrs. Clayton Priestnal, Editor

112 East 35th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016

Parables for Today

Judges 9: 8 – 15

Jaikoo E. Lee

LET THE BEST IN YOU RULE YOUR LIFE

Have you ever felt that there are many persons in you and that they all try to take over your life and run it? You listen to one of them and make a very important decision. Then later you are terrified by the thought that you could make such a decision. "It was not me! It was not like me!" you cry out.

The British novelist and playwright Somerset Maugham made this penetrating observation about himself. "I recognize that I am made up of several persons and that the person that at the moment has the upper hand will inevitably give place to another. But which is the real one? All of them or none?"

We can almost hear St. Paul's anguished voice. "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate . . . I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do!"

It is obvious that there are many different forces in each of us. We must let the best of them take charge of our life if we want to lead a successful living program. Let the best in us rule our life!

In the Book of Judges we find a parable that speaks to this point. Trees wanted a king who could rule over them. First they went to the olive tree and said, "Reign over us!" And the olive tree said, "No." The trees went to the fig tree and said, "Come, reign over us!" And the fig tree refused to rule over anyone's life. So the trees now turned to their third choice, the vine, which turned them down, too. With no good choices remaining, the trees went to the bramble, and the bramble replied, "If you are anointing me king over you in good faith, then come and take refuge in my shade. If not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon." So instead of a fine, noble material like the olive tree, the fig tree, or the vine, an ignoble and unfit material like the bramble ruled the lives of the trees.

This parable has an historical background. Around the eleventh century before Christ the people of Israel were ruled by judges. Under the

leadership of Gideon they prospered and enjoyed peace and tranquility. Then many of them turned for leadership to Abimelech, who was not the best man for the job. He murdered his stepbrothers, sons of Gideon, and attempted to rule the nation only to drive it downhill.

Before too long he himself died a ridiculously tragic death. While he was attacking a fortified tower, a native woman dropped an upper millstone on his head – about 18 inches in diameter and 3 inches thick. While dying, Abimelech said to his young armor - carrier, "Draw your sword and kill me. I don't want the people to say that I was killed by a woman!" He must have been a male chauvenist. The armor - carrier granted his wish and finished him.

Let the best in you rule your life!

THOUGHTS ON ACHIEVING GOALS

To attain our highest goals in life is difficult. Following are a few guideposts I believe are helpful in achieving goals.

There must be an "inner light" to pursue the challenges that are best suited to each individual. Morality is a necessary ingredient for successful and intelligent living.

Simple living each day and steady discipline of the will can develop our mind and harness spiritual power.

The achievement of goals requires deep study, high ideals, and diligence.

A certain amount of self - esteem is necessary in order to achieve goals.

As we strive to achieve any worthy goal, should not the Hand of Him who gives us life also be in the desire to be successful? We need God's love and higher help constantly.

Accomplishing our goals always brings us great personal satisfaction.

Lucile Krehbiel
Pretty Prairie, Kansas

Out of Kansas comes the story of a businessman who, away on vacation and reading his hometown newspaper, was stunned to come across his own obituary. Shocked and angered, he immediately got the editor on the long - distance phone. "I'm calling about the report of my death you published in your paper last Friday", he exclaimed. "Yes sir," came the calm reply. "And where are you calling from?"

Saturday Review

WHAT ARE WE DOING WITH OUR CHILDREN?

Ronald Brugler

Representing the Board of Education, I recently attended a three day conference in Erlanger, Kentucky, sponsored by the National Council of Churches. The conference brought together those individuals responsible for developing denominational educational programs and ministries for children, youth and adults. I attended the children's forum, while Perry Martin represented our church in the adult forum.

The theme of the children's forum was: "What shall be the nature of the Church's ministry with children in the 1980's — and how do we tool up to implement this ministry?" We spent the first day in a process called "futuring". This enabled us to free our minds from the present so that we could look at the future in relation to what the world will be like, and how children will be growing up in this world. Through this process we were able to examine the future from three different perspectives — possible, probable and preferable. In the light of these alternatives we examined ways in which the church can develop a changing ministry which will be supportive and nurturing for our children.

Then we divided into five work groups. I selected the children's advocacy group, which examined children's ministry from the perspective of hearing the needs and rights of children in the church at national and local levels. We believe that through a system of child advocacy, children will become more of an integral part of the total church community. With an effective system of children's advocacy, children's voices will be heard, and the church will be alerted to the needs and welfare of young people.

During and following these sessions I found myself asking: "What is our church doing with our children?" I began to realize how much the Swedenborgian Church has to offer in this area, but how little is actually being done. Several national children's organizations have declared 1976 to be, "The Year of the Child". I feel that our church should also be examining itself and its ministry for children. The Board of Education shared my enthusiasm and a recommendation to this effect — that we incorporate "The Year of the Child" into our Convention theme this summer — was sent to the Convention Planning Committee.

FROM CHURCH RECORDS

BIRTHS

CARPENTIER — Congratulations to Dr. and Mrs. James Carpentier of La Porte, Indiana, on the arrival of their daughter Alison Kay, born October 13, 1975.

BAPTISMS

RUPPENTHAL — Lisa Dawn, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Terry Ruppenthal of Owen Sound, Ontario, was baptized at Kitchener, Ontario, on November 9, 1975, the Rev. Paul B. Zacharias officiating.

DEATHS

HALL — Mr. Sydney H. Hall of Florida died suddenly on November 3, 1975. The Resurrection Service was held in Bradenton, the Rev. Leon LeVan officiating.

MARRIAGES

IRK — HUDGINS — George Edward Irk and Kathy Eileen Mrozinski Hudgins were married in LaPorte, Indiana, on October 18, 1975, the Rev. Matthew S. P. Glowe officiating.

HAIGH — SCHMIDT — Stanley Haigh and Phyllis Schmidt were married on November 6, 1975, at Kitchener, Ontario, the Rev. Paul B. Zacharias officiating.

SMITH — PARKER — Michael Alan Smith and Carole Jo Parker were married November 8, 1975, at LaPorte, Indiana, the Rev. Matthew S. P. Glowe officiating.

If You're Coming to Boston During the Bicentennial Year We'd Like to Help!

Accommodations will be difficult to come by in Boston during the Bicentennial year of 1976. We are in a unique position to help make a planned visit to Boston more enjoyable for you and your family by securing hotel or motel reservations and by suggesting tours that will take you to the high points in and around Boston.

Don't forget to include a visit to the Swedenborg School of Religion, your church's school in Newton, and the Central Office.

If you would like us to help, just write to: Roger Paulson, 48 Sargent Street, Newton, Mass. 02158 or phone the school at 617-244-0504 during office hours 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday.

THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION!

Rev. Richard H. Tafel

Will you please give the rationale for the change in name from "New Church" to "Swedenborgian Church?"

The first reason is one of communication and public relations. "New Church" not only fails to indicate to others what we are, but often conveys a misleading image, namely, a new building. I once met a man who had joined our Church through his reading of Swedenborg's books. He told me that when he lived in London he passed by a "New Church" every day, without suspecting that it had any connection with the new truths which he had come to prize so highly.

The name "Christian" was given to the followers of Jesus Christ by others. In much the same way those outside our Church, if they know us at all, know us as "Swedenborgians." This is as natural and understandable to them as it is for them to refer to other Christians as "Lutherans." In neither case do they imagine that Lutherans worship Luther or that we worship Swedenborg, or that loyalty to Jesus Christ on the part of either is called into question because of the name by which they are identified. Our two best public relation centers bear clearly the name of "the servant of the Lord" in his Second Coming: the Swedenborg Foundation and the Wayfarers' Chapel, "A Memorial To Emanuel Swedenborg." Today most of the churches of our Convention, in addition to their local names, carry the identification, "Swedenborgian."

A weightier reason for the change is the ever present danger, both to ourselves and others, of identifying our organization (together with our sister organizations) with the New Church, the Second Coming of the Lord, which Swedenborg was commissioned to herald and whose divine truths he was inspired to reveal. Reserving the term, "New Church," for this glorious Cause which we seek to serve allows us to proclaim it and to champion it in a truly humble way that is not possible if we use that term to refer to ourselves. By the way, did it ever occur to you that our habit of referring to ourselves as "New Churchmen" implies that others aren't?

In our pluralistic society we need a more inclusive word than "Christian" to describe mankind's spiritual goals and strivings. What word would you suggest?

It is humbling, and healthy, to say, "I don't know!" I agree with you that in this time of our Lord's Second Coming, when he is building his Church anew and requickening the human spirit — and because that Church transcends sects and

denomination and religions — we do need a more inclusive word. "Christian" is certainly not big enough to include all those who make up the Lord's One Great Church on earth! For those within Christendom, that grand word, "Christian", can be heightened and broadened to contain the new spirit which our Lord is breathing upon us in this New Age. But what about those beyond our borders, those of the world's great religions — and perhaps those of no professed religion — who are also feeling and reacting to the new out-pouring of the Lord's Spirit and Life?

The ancient Romans had a beautiful and all-encompassing word which was that big "pietas." But, alas! that word in translation and in its descent to us has become cheapened and, as "piety," no longer serves. We just can't use "the pious" for our purpose. Piety suggests to us the puritanical spirit and practice. Our Catholic brethren use the term, "a religious." But here, again, besides being grammatically awkward, this suggests the "churchy," if not the ecclesiastically limited outlook and interest. And *that* is not big enough.

How Swedenborg must have struggled with this problem! Having vision broadened and spirit quickened, and not having words to express it! How many times, beholding heaven's further realities, he had to throw up his hands and say, "I can't put it into words for you!" His climaxing work, "The Universal Theology of the New Church," in which he was inspired to set forth the eternal truths on which the Coming Great Church of the Lord is to be founded, he must entitle "True Christian Religion" — for want, like us, of a bigger word! The one word in his revelation which to me might meet our requirements today, all things being equal, is "spiritual." But would "spiritual people" serve our purpose? (We certainly can't use "the spiritual.") Unfortunately, "spiritual" has lost much of its original meaning and force. Today it carries a nuance of "un-worldly," if not "other-worldly." Then, too, in our times the very "dimension of spirit" is questioned and denied.

So I end as I began, "I don't know." When I undertook to write this column it was not with the understanding that I know all the answers. That is why it is headed, "That's a Good Question!" Perhaps those who follow this column may suggest answers.

Send your religious queries directly to:

Rev. Richard H. Tafel
200 Chestnut Avenue
Narberth, Pa. 19072

Letters should be signed, though names will not be used in this column.

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THEME

“PATRIOTISM IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEW AGE”

CONTEST RULES

- All entries must be neatly typed and double spaced.
- Attach your name on a separate piece of paper to your manuscript.
- Essay length: 1000 to 1200 words — about three typed pages.
- All manuscripts become the property of the MESSENGER.
- An Essay Committee appointed by the editor will judge all entries, and its decisions will be final.
- Entries will be judged on originality of thought, clarity of expression, and literary style.
- All manuscripts must be in the editor’s hands by April 20, 1976.
- The winning essays will be published in the MESSENGER.
- ALL READERS OF THE MESSENGER ARE ELIGIBLE.

ARE YOU INTERESTED?

The Board of Education invites you to inquire about a position as Executive Secretary. This is a part - time, salaried position. Responsibilities include: attendance at Board meetings, implementing programs, co - ordinating activities with other groups, planning and administrating conferences and workshops, and assisting with agendas, budgets, notices, evaluation, etc. If you are interested, please contact —

Rev. Dorothea Harvey,
619 S. Main St.,
Urbana, Ohio 43078

SURPRISE!

I dreamed death came the other night
And heaven’s gate swung wide.
With kindly grace an angel bright
Soon ushered me inside.
But there to my astonishment
Stood some I’d known on earth
Whom I had judged and labelled
Unfit or little worth.
Indignant words rose to my lips
But never were set free,
For every face showed stunned surprise —
No one expected me!

(Anonymous)

What If God Went On Strike?

Presently Canada is sorely afflicted by labor strife. After seven weeks without mail, it's good to have the postal system working again. All the paper mills in Canada are shut down. All High Schools in Toronto have been closed for over three weeks. On Dec. 8 the buses will roll again in Kitchener after a three - month long strike. There must be other, more efficient ways, to resolve labor disputes. The following poem, read over radio station CHML in Hamilton, says it all.

It's just a good thing God above
Has never gone on strike
Because He wasn't treated fair
Or things He didn't like.
If He had ever once sat down
And said, "That's it — I'm through,
I've had enough of those on earth
So this is what I'll do".

"I'll give my orders to the sun
Cut off your heat supply,
And to the moon — give no more light,
And run those oceans dry.
Then just to really make it tough
And put the pressure on,
Turn off the air and oxygen
Till every breath is gone."

Do you know He'd be justified
If fairness was the game
For no one had been more abused
Or treated with disdain
Than God — and yet He carries on
Supplying you and me
With all the favours of His grace
And everything — for free.

Men say they want a better deal
And so on strike they go,
But what a deal we've given God
Whom everything we owe.
We don't care whom we hurt or harm
To gain the things we like,
But what a mess we'd all be in
If God should go on strike.

Author — Unknown

Your comments, suggestions and contributions re: the MESSENGER are always welcomed and greatly appreciated. All letters and material for the MESSENGER should be sent directly to the editor in Kitchener.

Please send all ADDRESS CHANGES to Roger Paulson in Newton, Mass.

The Last Word

Jan Seibert

RUMINATIONS

"What age would you like to be for the rest of your life?"

"If you had just 24 hours to live, how would you spend them?" Those questions, posed in the September 1975 *Messenger*, started my wheels turning and churning.

That business about the optimum age has no pat answer yet, for I'm not finished with living. Childhood or the teens? Never! There were happy times and successes, surely, but the memories are still sharper of the painful inadequacies, the re-buffs, and the disenchantments of those first twenty years. As the youngest child, I had too many good acts to follow and not enough wisdom to accept that I was I. The comparisons were invidious, and venom eroded my self esteem. No, those weren't the years I'd like to be again.

The twenties? Full as they were of jobs and marriage and children and home - building, they were good, but not the best. The thirties? They held a wealth of happiness. When they ended, I thought I had it made. Surely the hump of struggle had been surmounted by then. But the forties? Even better than the thirties. But the best? An inelastic budget and expanded family needs put a dampening pall over the many delights, achievements, and growth.

Then came the present fifties. They're much the best age so far. Now I can accept myself better as I am, can understand that some facets of me are immutable, others still open to change. Now the opinions of others are less important, less shattering in their disapproval, more easily accepted with equanimity in their approval. My style of behaviour, of dress, and of speech and ideology are peculiarly my own. If others hold them to be unorthodox, what of it? The world may be my judge, but I don't have to please *everyone* in it. The fifties are full of freedoms not accorded the young. They're being a lovely age.

If each decade has been better, over all, than the others, the sixties, seventies, eighties — maybe even the nineties — could be so full of new opportunities and freedoms that they'll be even better. Not having reached them, I can't know yet what they'll offer, how the trend of their checks and balances will average. I can't know yet if they'll encompass that chosen, magical year to be cherished as one age to wish to be for the rest of

my life. Thank God for an overweening curiosity about all my tomorrows.

This mental review of the decades has evoked all manner of memories — of the happy and the tragic; of the funny and the poignant; of the achieving and the static; of the fulfilling and the frustrating. Now I know what that one best age will be.

When it comes, my body will still be strong and healthy, my mind still eager for every new experience, my heart still in love with my immediate world and still wanting to ameliorate some of the unhappiness in the larger world. That joyous age will be full of time - freedom to pursue my interests, will have brought full self - acceptance without self - scorn but also without self - complacency — will find my body still strong and vibrant, ready for the work of the day and welcoming the playtime too, will find me full of emotional vitality to savor the loves and to share the burdens of those dear to me. Will I know that age when it comes? I doubt it. It will be another from which to winnow the remembered beauties of the continuum that is my life, another to be searched and sifted for more progress toward my ultimate regeneration. It's an age to be found only in retrospect, not to be known in its moment of passing.

* * *

If I had just 24 hours to live, how would I spend them?

That question shot me off in all directions, grasping all manner of positives to be exploited. Each one seemed magnificent, then became ridiculous in one way or another as unworthy of that one final day on earth, until at last I found the one thing that would end my earthly life with the greatest joy possible. In those final 24 hours, I'd throw frugality to the winds and would make dozens of telephone calls, I who loathe the telephone, avoid it whenever possible, and initiate a call only when a letter won't suffice.

In those telephone calls, I'd let down the bars of constraint imposed by my rigid upbringing where love was only implied but never expressed. I'd tell each one why I have loved him dearly, what specific actions or words had added a dimension of love and joy to my life. It would be a call to thank them for their friendship and all it has brought to my life and my heart. It's easy to let the generality of love and esteem show. It's difficult, at least for me, to be so specific.

This decision of how to spend those hours came when a young and once deeply troubled friend called long distance to express her thanks for my having listened to her, offered her support, love, and acceptance, and for giving her comfort and a few suggestions that might help her resolve her problems. Her call was a reaffirmation of friendship and of the caring it is ours to give through listening, loving, and sharing. More than that, by telling precisely what had helped her, she pointed the way to help others and warmed my heart while she showed she was strong enough to express her newly won self - assurance. Both of us were richer and our friendship deeper for her call. What better possible way to cheer the hearts of others than to spend that final day in such pursuit? And no other way could surround me with such an aura of warmth and love.

The puritan ethic with its stern injunctions against expressing emotion made it impossible for me as a young woman to tell or show another how I felt inside. Physical touching and words of love were indiscriminately branded as carnal. The freedom of expression and openness of heart that the Swedenborgian Church have taught me had a long battle against the deeply ingrained rigidity of speech and action.

With the freedoms I now have to show and to tell others how I feel, those 24 hours will end before everyone is thanked. But, at least my own spirit will be full of the joy that comes from such sharing. In the interim years, I'm free to say to each of you who has listened and helped and loved, "I love you, and I thank you." There's no reason to wait for that hypothetical last day. I'll get on with it now. There just might be time enough.

A minister was rejoicing with a little old lady over her elderly male cousin who had finally seen the light and joined the church after a lifetime of riotous behavior. When she wondered aloud whether all the old fellow's carrying - on would be forgiven, the minister assured her: "Yes, indeed. The greater the sinner the greater the saint." "Preacher," the old lady said wistfully, "I wish I'd known that fifty years ago."

The longest pastorate, according to the Guinness Book of Records, is that of the Rev. Bartholomew Edwards, who served Ashill, Norfolk, England, from 1813 to 1889. Others only seem longer.

The United Church Observer.



THE "SWEDENBORG" STAMP

In 1938, to commemorate the 250th anniversary of Swedenborg's birth, Sweden issued a postage stamp in his honor, in three varieties and two colors.

The first one to be distributed with usual perforations was violet, value 10 ore, about 2c U.S. A little later came a similar stamp, also violet, but in booklet form. Thirdly, a 100 ore. stamp, green.

The value of stamps to collectors depends mainly on supply and demand. There was an average printing, but the issue evidently was sought for, and today the green stamp catalogues at \$4.00, unused.

It was through the able efforts of the late Alfred Stroh that the importance of the anniversary was brought to the attention of the Swedish government. Originally he had been selected by both arms of the New Church to go to Sweden mainly to see that all documents relating to Swedenborg were located and properly preserved.

L. M.

CONVENTION CALENDAR

Ministers and Wives Institute — DeLand, Fla.	Jan. 8 — 13
General Council DeLand, Fla.	Jan. 15 — 17
S. S. R. Board of Directors	Feb. 7
Dept. of Education Urban, Ohio	March 19 — 20
CONVENTION '76 Philadelphia, Pa.	June 30 — July 5

New Addresses

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