

The Messenger

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH

MARCH 1976

CONTENTS

The Starting Line	Eric Zacharias	38
Report From Another Side Of The Mountain	Steve Koke	39
Suggested Lenten Readings		40
Blueprint For Another Depression?	John Hotson	41
Abortion: Two Viewpoints		42
Parable For Today – "That Little Extra"	Jaikoo Lee	44
From Church Records		45
National Alliance Bulletin		46
1976 Convention Registration – Information – Program		48
That's A Good Question!	Richard Tafel Sr.	50
Ministers and Wives Institute		51
Tribute – Rev. Alfred Regamey	Andre Diaconoff	52
We Get Letters		53
Revelation Revisited	George Dole	54
Announcements		54, 56
The Last Word "Resurgence '76"	Galen Unruh	55



The Starting Line Eric Zacharias

There were about eight of us in this small-group discussion. We were one of several groups into which the Florida Institute participants had been divided. The subject — the mission of the Church. The assignment was to draw up a statement that will serve as a unifying influence in the Church. We had come from homes in Philadelphia, in California, in Florida and Kansas.

The content of our thought soon began to reflect the individuality of the group members. With some, the Church must point itself in the direction of social awareness with increased concern for the quality of life. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethern, ye have done it unto me." Others would have the emphasis strike more boldly into the arena of Christian doctrine — recognizing that a considerable portion of the theology broadcast by the media continues to be inadequate and unrealistic in our present society. This is accompanied by the thought that we must do more to bring the name of Emanuel Swedenborg before the public. This is, indeed, a theology that is relevant and consistent with emerging concepts of spiritual growth through the exercise of enlightened freedom. The thought is also voiced that as a church we must move into specific areas of service. We have, for instance, a number of ministers who are performing large numbers of weddings. We believe that the New Church has a beautiful and a distinctive theology that speaks to marriage and its significance to those who enter this relationship.

Where does all of this leave us? Does this necessarily promise a fractured Church — a Church in which everyone is doing his own thing? Does this lessen our effectiveness?

We must first acknowledge that our Convention consists of a number of congregations and groups that are quite loosely inter-related. Our ministers and their respective congregations are quite free to define for themselves what is to be the nature of their church life.

Our structure has advantages and it has disadvantages also. Our theology stresses the uniqueness of the individual and that growth to spiritual maturity must take place in an atmosphere of freedom. We cherish this. The Church and the Lord, we contend, are best served when a minister, for instance, is given room for self-development and when he and his people determine the course of their life together. Thus, we have ministers who have developed counselling skills, others who have followed interests in marriage and family life, others who are diligently pursuing scholastic challenge. All of this is good.

The very nature of this freedom, however, carries with it certain highly pertinent questions. When does freedom become license? At what point does freedom (license) become self-serving to the neglect of the needs of the larger body? The nature of freedom relevant for this New Age will, I feel sure, be given attention as we move along in our Bicentennial year.

Is there, then, a unifying force that will lead us to a Church of increasing effectiveness and at the same time grant us the freedom so essential to us. Yes, there is. The Lord advises his listeners, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." We, in essence, move away from bondage to our lower self and into the heady air of freedom as we develop an affection for truth. Freedom, then, encourages a solidly structured but at the same time comfortable, flexible life style.

Swedenborg has a great deal to say about the nature of freedom which is supported by the Word, and then he writes, "Now as the church exists by means of faith and love . . . it follows that the church is the church through the understanding of the Word . . . a noble church if in genuine truths, an ignoble church if not in genuine truths, and a destroyed church if in falsified truths." SS 77. Here we discover that which unifies us in our diversity. It is the Word. Whatever we may develop now or in the future as program in the field of education, missions, counseling, the wedding chapel concept, national ministry — must be firmly rooted in the Word of God.

This is simply one of the rules written into the fabric of the God — man partnership.

THE MESSENGER

MARCH, 1976

Vol. 196, No. 3

Whole Number 4992

Published monthly, except for the one double issue in July — August, by the Swedenborgian Church (founded 1817, incorporated 1861 as the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America).

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The opinions of contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or the Department of Publication, or represent the position of the church.

EDITORIAL, BUSINESS, & SUBSCRIPTION ADDRESS:

THE MESSENGER

Box 2642, Stn. B

Kitchener, Ontario, N2H 6N2

Subscription free to members of the Swedenborgian Church: non-members, \$3.00 a year: foreign postage .25 extra: gift subscriptions from a member, \$1.50: single copies, .25.

Report From Another Side of the Mountain

by Steve Koke

(Around 1960 a group of outstanding New Church young people emerged in the Bay area. I wrote to one of them, Steve Koke, asking him to share with Messenger readers something of his spiritual journey these past fifteen years. His story is well worth hearing. Ed.)

Probably the greatest blessing one can receive is the ability to surrender himself to a path which takes him on a fulfilling mission he has not anticipated himself. When the moment comes, the path grabs *him*. It is not a planned acquisition. In fact, it seems to get even more power if it has totally eluded his educated guesses and fond speculations about the future. In my life, dramatic changes typically come winging in from some totally ignored direction.

But before anything like this could happen, I had to let go of a tendency to concentrate too much energy on pushing and maintaining my own growth. This may sound strange. But one tendency in our culture is to internalize the old Protestant work ethic and replan and reconstruct the personal psychic world. This becomes an endless and exhausting labor; what one ought to be is always around another corner, and what one is is an object of discouragement.

One must take responsibility for his world, but it is largely the responsibility to accept himself as he was designed to be and to see his structure and tendencies as the outer clothing of a unique visionary idea. The task of self-healing or personal growth is largely to allow this inner vision to take hold. Too much purposefulness, too many parental voices and ideals, too many teachings and too many therapies push and pull at it and eventually obscure it. The major problem of self-development for most well-intentioned people is not how to be "good" or "creative" in some accepted sense, but how to find the real self in spite of inherited cultural and personal expectations. With patience, sensitivity, and a faith that one is *designed* to fill a unique place in the Universe, the inner design will emerge under its own power.

For example, I decided about three years ago that I was getting tired of maintaining beliefs and that they could take care of themselves. Beliefs are like children; for awhile they need protection and feeding. But eventually I began to let them settle into their most natural place in my consciousness and then found that more energy had been freed to develop consciousness as a whole. Once I got some hold on what Reality *felt* like, and what it is like to be led to it and experience healing and self-renewal, something in me let go. I potentially could find Reality anywhere, in any religion in which it was available.

To a large extent, one's belief system is like his home. It is a protective nest one can leave and come back to. It sometimes needs care and upkeep, but one needs to carefully sense whether he is designed — by natural temperament and abilities — to also spend his life working in it. One may be designed to work elsewhere instead and use this spiritual home as a base, a supply and reference point for expeditions into other regions. Inevitably, that kind of realization can come only from the heart. I have recently come to see myself as the latter kind, an explorer, rather than as a person who works consistently in his spiritual home.

This has led me into a totally unexpected development. I have noticed for some time that I have a tendency to turn up among people who have points of view which are sharply different from my own. These people represent an ambiguous situation. On the one hand, they are bearers of revelation. Something new comes to me through them, and I find myself struggling with new ideas I never heard myself asking for. On the other hand, they represent a challenge to express myself, my own objections or alternative forms of awareness, and then to *transcend the difference*. The solution always seems to lie in this direction: Together we can discover something new.

It has taken me a long time to see myself this way. But I think the reason is that I have needed to make sure that my own foundations were secure; for I need to form myself well and solidly before entering strange environments. This is not a process one guides consciously. Eventually, something "clicks" inside and one finds himself on a new path. The real danger is to overload oneself with shoulds and oughts and try to force one's soul into known safe paths long after the inner change has taken place. Then what was once necessary and healthful becomes repressive and ultimately a departure from divine intent. A certain looseness is needed in order to follow one's path, a freedom to follow intuitions and to recognize when his expectations of himself are his own carefully constructed opinions.

Since this began to happen, therefore, I let go of all regular work in the Church. Simultaneously, I surprisingly found myself becoming deeply involved with what I now feel is a crucial task for human consciousness, the formation of a unified vision of life drawn from many great religions. This is the kind of goal that may be approachable only along an asymptotic curve which runs through many future generations. But it is a new source of fascination for many deeply religious people I have come to know who are reaching beyond their culture and heritage in a growing love of all life.

Consequently, I am now involved with the Nyingma Institute in Berkeley, California, a Tibetan Buddhist organization, studying under the lama there. As I see it, my task is to be able to feel that side of myself which corresponds to the Buddhist path and sense its relationship to my own religion as a different but possibly complementary view of Ultimate Reality. Understanding what that difference means will come later; first must come openness. This openness is based on the working premise that every religion that has endured as an expression of the human spirit imparts a genuine experience of the Divine. It is like viewing a mountain from a new side. Each religion therefore has revelations to offer to every other one, and the mountain is known best when it is experienced from all sides.

A difficult challenge, however, is to transcend the difference when two points of view conflict and both have meaningful content. One must find a higher level of awareness in which the basic values of both sides are preserved and clarified. For if there is one Reality behind all religions, then whatever is of value in each will be a fragment of that Reality. Instead of debating two conflicting positions as they stand, pitting one part of Reality against another, one must be prepared to find a third position which represents an advance from both of the others. In this way, meaningful differences become a challenge to grow.

This appears to be mainly a challenge to *feel* something different, not a challenge to work out a theological problem. I think that a theology is an attempt to articulate a general state of wholeness and a primal, nonverbal awareness which always appeals to us first through the deeper feelings it inspires. Conscious, logical understanding, even in one's own religion, comes later and may have to be readjusted from time to time as feelings, the real forms of knowledge, evolve. A unified religious awareness therefore will come to us first as an expanded feeling for different states of being. Once one knows what feelings another religion evokes, he can know instinctively how it relates to his own religion and its feelings. Thus, religious understanding begins with an intuitive *participation* in what one is trying to understand. And if one is free to participate, then he is also free to go beyond participation to a new awareness of that mountain.



The Meaning of Lent

Lent is that period of the Christian year covering the forty weekdays preceding Easter. It begins on Ash Wednesday, which this year is March 3. The word Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon *lencten* which means spring. It is also interpreted to mean "lengthen", refering to the lengthening spring days. The observance of Lent began in the fourth or fifth century as early Christians sought to deepen the devotional approach to Easter.

Lent is not just a time when we *give up* something but a time when we *give* ourselves to Someone. It is a time of introspection – when we examine our lives in the penetrating light that comes from the Risen Glorified Christ. The main emphasis of Lent then is on keeping spiritually fit. Daily Bible study, regular prayer and worship, and Christian service are some of the disciplines essential to spiritual fitness.

Suggested Bible Readings For Lent

March 3	Psalms 42	March 26	Mark 1
March 4	Psalms 46	March 27	Mark 2
March 5	Psalms 51	March 28	Mark 3
March 6	Psalms 53, 54	March 29	Mark 4
March 7	Psalms 56, 57	March 30	Mark 5
March 8	Psalms 63	March 31	Mark 6
March 9	Psalms 66, 67	April 1	Mark 7
March 10	Psalms 92	April 2	Mark 8
March 11	Psalms 104	April 3	Mark 9
March 12	Psalms 107	April 4	Mark 10
March 13	Psalms 121, 122	April 5	Mark 11
March 14	Psalms 127, 128	April 6	Mark 12
March 15	Psalms 139	April 7	Mark 13
March 16	Psalms 145	April 8	Luke 16
March 17	Isaiah 2	April 9	Luke 17
March 18	Isaiah 5	April 10	Luke 18
March 19	Isaiah 6	April 11	Luke 19
March 20	Isaiah 12	April 12	Luke 20
March 21	Isaiah 25	April 13	Luke 21
March 22	Isaiah 35	April 14	Mark 14
March 23	Isaiah 40	April 15	Mark 15
March 24	Isaiah 53	April 16	Revelation 20
March 25	Isaiah 55	April 17	Revelation 21
		April 18	Revelation 22

Food and Fuel Crisis: Blueprint For Another Depression?

by John H. Hotson

(The writer, well known New Churchman, is Professor of Economics at the University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario.)

What has gone wrong with the world of economic system and can the "wrongs" be set right? If so, how? And if not, what then?

As we all know, the economics of the advanced industrial nations — North America, Western Europe, and Japan — are in the worst condition they have been in since the great Depression of the 1930s with rapidly increasing prices — especially food and fuel prices — coupled with high unemployment.

At the same time most of the "under-developing" two-thirds of mankind face a continuation of the grinding poverty which has ever been their lot — or a worsening into massive starvation unless unfavourable crop trends can be reversed.

How does it happen that the development decade of the sizzling '60s, has given way to the stagflation of the sickening '70s?

Rapid population growth together with several disappointing crop years in a row in major grain growing regions of the world are the cause of most of the food shortage, and consequently of part of the inflation, while much of the rest of the inflation and most of the unemployment in the industrial world can be blamed on the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC) decision to quintuple the price of oil between 1972 and 1975.

It has sometimes been said that OPEC really did the world a favor by producing this artificial oil crisis since we are bound to face an utterly real oil crisis quite soon, and the sooner we get working on alternatives, the better.

It is also true that the creation of vast surpluses in Arab countries' balance of payments can be a blessing in disguise, but only with more intelligent world leadership than has yet been shown in this crisis.

According to calculations in a recent issue of the British publication, *The Economist*, the oil countries' combined current surplus (excess of export earnings over imports) of \$70 billion a year in 1974, amounts to \$7 million an hour.

Only \$6 billion of the \$70 billion 1974 surplus were made available as grants and loans to developing countries, either directly from OPEC or through such international arrangements as the International Monetary Fund's oil facility which "recycles" oil monies to deficit countries.

The lion's share of the investments are going into the developed world. Latest estimates are the oil-exporting countries' cumulative surplus by 1980 will be \$200 to \$300 billion.

This surplus will be a blessing or a curse to the world economy depending on the uses to which it is put.

What should be done? The solution is obvious, though few have yet seen it.

If OPEC will not relent and cut back drastically on the price of oil — and in recent weeks they have not only not done this, they have even increased the price a further 10 per cent — the developed countries, with or without the co-operation of OPEC, must make truly massive development loans and grants to the underdeveloped oil-importing nations of the world.

What the OPEC countries have done, in effect, is to "tax" the oil importing countries \$100 billion a year in increased oil prices and then to spend only a third to one-half of their increased revenue.

The increased oil price caused inflation and their failure to spend their earnings caused stagnation. The \$70 billion surplus of 1974 represented an increase in "planned savings."

If, and only if, this increased saving had led to increased real investment (construction of new buildings, machinery, equipment, dams, roads, hospitals and so forth) would it have increased world wealth and output. There is instead a fall of output, employment and income in the countries with oil deficits in their balance of payments.

If we permit another bungle like the Great Depression, surely the "free economy" will be finished, and many other freedoms as well. The "rich" countries would turn to "right wing" totalitarianism: the poor, to the "left wing" solutions. Though the solutions would be different the result, including increased war probabilities, would be much the same in either case.

The only way we can avoid a world of total (and totalitarian) control is to plan on a world scale to the degree that we already do domestically. The institutions, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations, already exist, but they must be strengthened.

So great are the problems that only the "moral equivalent of war" will suffice to solve them. The U.S. wasted \$200 billion devastating Vietnam and this did much to precipitate this crisis.

By taking the lead in a real "war on poverty", by helping the world embark on a real "development decade" rather than one of the mere words, the U.S. could yet help mankind while solving its own employment problems.

Looking a bit further ahead, it seems evident that even more fundamental changes in life - style are in the offing. Anthropologists have demonstrated that until quite late in mankind's evolution we were vegetarians. Then our inventive ancestors developed fire and meat eating.

Much more recently they took up the consumption of alcoholic beverages, and still more frequently smoking tobacco (and other unhealthy stuff), flush toilets and vehicles which threaten to end all life through pollution.

ABORTION: TWO VIEWPOINTS

by Lynn Zimmerman
Conv. Abortion Com.

(Lynn is a member of the Detroit New Church Society, presently studying at the New Church College in Bryn Athyn, Pa.)

The people of the New Church are the luckiest people on this earth, for they have the truth of the Lord by which they can guide their lives. It is very important therefore that we of the church look to the Lord for guidance in our everyday affairs. We can do this by looking in the Bible and the writings.

Even if the Bible or writings don't directly deal with each situation in the world, there can always be conclusions drawn from them to explain our situation. It is very important, though, that we do not draw conclusions to confirm our beliefs, but to look and see what the truth about it really is. This article deals with what I feel the Bible and the writings say about birth control. I have not dealt with everyone's special problems in this matter, for decisions in this area are ultimately up to each person involved, but I have sought out the general principle as it is revealed to us by the Lord.

"God alone, consequently the Lord, is Love it self, because He is Life itself, and angels and men are recipients of life." D.L.W. 4. "Since man is not life, but a recipient of life, it follows that the conception of a man from his father is not a conception of life, but only a conception of the finest and purest form capable of receiving life." D.L.W. 6. As we can see from above, man is not life, nor can he transmit life at conception, but as he is a recipient of life he can give this form receptive of the Lord or life. This form that is transferred to the mother is formed in the father from the influx of the Lord's life within him. Man receives from a

Clearly, with the vast population in prospect, and our limited ability to feed ourselves and depollute the environment, some of these "socerer's apprentice" brainstorm may have to go.

What civilized world would devote millions of acres to booze, tobacco, pot and opium when this year 30 to 50 million people, most of them children, will starve to death?

How many such deaths will it take before we see the necessity for life - style changes? And with regard to the reflation policy, how much petrodollar stagflation must occur before we agree to reform our international financial institutions?

spiritual marriage "truth and whatever has relation to truth; and that this in its progress into the body is formed into seed . . ." C.L. 220. Once this seed is implanted at conception the form is still constantly receptive to that same influx. It is the Lord who nourishes the embryo into a perfect human. (See Isaiah 44:2).

Conjugal love and the love of procreating flow from the Lord as one through the wife and then into the husband. (C.L. 92, 393) From the ultimating of these loves comes the propagation of the human race, consequently an angelic heaven, which is the highest use man can perform. (C.L. 68). This desire to procreate is also accompanied by a desire to protect and this love makes one with the love of infants. These loves: conjugal love, the love of propagation, protecting and infants are all complementary and necessary for the existence of each other.

It is important to note that the Lord does not give children only to those who desire them or are in a conjugal relationship. As we see from C.L. 245, that although the souls partaking in the act of intercourse are disunited and have no desire to conjunction, there is a conjunction effected in a mediate love, this resulting in conception.

The concept of birth control comes into focus as we see that there are those who do not desire children and make attempts to prevent conception, and if conception does occur, make attempts to prevent birth. As just mentioned, the processes of intercourse, conception, fetal development and birth are given as the highest use man can perform; and also, since this life is the Lord's, it is sacred and holy. So the question is: Just how much control should man exercise over the propagation processes?

Several places in the writings speak of external acts without the internal as disorderly and evil. This can be applied to the act of sexual intercourse without the desire for or love of offspring. This is shown as an abomination when in the *Spiritual Diary* Swedenborg tells of the consequences for those who mix holy and profane things and practice venery with no desire for offspring. (S.D. 1005, 1202, 1203.) We also find in C.L. that commonness of intercourse is a cause of cold and the couple then become indifferent and wearisome. In A.C. 2746 we are told that fornication practiced so often and with so many results in a loss of love of procreating and therefore conjugal love in both men and women.

It would seem from all this that intercourse without desire for offspring or conjugal love is contrary to order.

HIGH - LIGHTS OF THE ABORTION COMMITTEE REPORT

History

At the 1969 Convention in Claremont, California, the following resolution was presented by the Council of Ministers:

That the Convention support the legalizing of abortion in cases where it is responsibly applied for the physical and emotional welfare of those involved. Be it also resolved that such therapeutic abortion shall be considered primarily a matter of concern between the patient, attending physician, and personal counsellor.

A clear majority of the Convention delegates voted in favor of this as a standing resolution (Minutes of August 26, 1969).

Convention in 1973 decided to appoint a committee for further study. This committee finally included the Rev. Horand Gutfeldt, the Rev. Dr. George F. Dole, Miss Karen Keith, Dr. Frederick Laitner, and Ms. Marilyn Turley. The committee held its first meeting in Urbana in 1973. Since Miss Keith was unable to attend because of illness, Miss Diane Olsen of Urbana College was asked to participate.

The Present Legal Situation

On January 22, 1973, the United States Supreme Court decided that decision and consequent action to abort rest solely with the woman and her attending physician, provided this occurs within the first trimester of pregnancy.

Clinics which do not meet certain health and sanitary standards are not permitted to operate, though detection of sub - standard clinics remains a problem.

Doctrinal Commentary

"Charity is acting skillfully and with intent that something good may result (N.J.H.D. 100)." The motive or intent of an action largely determines the effect of the action on the actor; the wisdom or skill of the action largely determines its effects

We must also consider the question of abortion — the terminating of a potential human. In the womb the fetus has no life from itself; in other words, it has no will or understanding, that is, until birth. But what is important is that it has the potential — it has a use — and termination of this potential, this use, is a sin against the Lord.

In summing up what the writings say on man's control over procreation we should look at *Divine Providence* No. 180. It discusses the external and internal processes of the body and man's control over the external ones like eating and drinking. It continues that if man had control over the internals, like his eyes, ears, heart or lungs, that he would pervert and destroy them.

on others. The choices that significantly affect a person's regeneration are those made in freedom (a quality of the will) according to reason (a quality of the understanding). The freest will is a truly loving will; the most rational understanding is a truly religious one.

In analyzing the problems presented by abortion, then, we need to describe both the emotional and the conceptual attitudes most conducive to the good, moving from general principles toward specific applications. If we treat Swedenborg's volumes as case - books of laws for outward behavior, we run the risk of betraying their fundamental truths.

The doctrines of our church give no clear answer to the much - debated question of the time at which the embryo can be said to be a human being. There is not a human consciousness (D. Wis. 5), a human will, or a human understanding (D. Wis. 11: 1) in the fetus. There is a soul forming a body because of its conjunction with the Lord (D. Wis. II: 1). Birth is a major step (D.L.W. 401) in a process the Lord has designed to lead to angelic life. But we do not know, and should not pretend to know, whether abortion earlier or later in pregnancy terminates this process or simply moves it from this world to the adjoining one. The same ignorance holds true for miscarriage as well; and we impose our own preferences on others in this regard only at considerable peril.

It does seem clear, however, that the ideal attitude toward an embryonic life, from the moment of conception, is one of deepest and gentlest love, not for the cellular matter but for the innocence and potential angelhood of "a commencing will and commencing understanding (D. Wis. 5)."

Returning to the definition of charity in N.J.H.D. 100, then, we affirm that "the good" we wish to result from our choices can be nothing less than bringing people closer to the Lord. This is a higher good than the preservation of physical life. (Matthew 10: 28).

Surely we share a common goal – to co-operate with the Lord in building a heaven from the human race. We do indeed disagree at times as to the best means toward this end; and knowing our finitude we can ill afford to pretend to certainty or – as some have felt Convention's resolution did – to impose our convictions on others.

In the proposals which follow, the committee has tried to outline steps for the church that could find widespread acceptance, and in some measure reflect and further an underlying loving unity among us, by putting our principles effectively to work.

Areas of Application

The church, including laity, ministers, members, and friends, should ideally provide a community of understanding love and support for one another and for those who enter its doors. Acceptance (which does not necessarily imply approval) without condemnation or labelling is a vital aspect in providing a climate where an individual may find help in a time of crisis. The church should welcome and comfort those in distress as readily and as well as it joins in such joyous moments as weddings, baptisms and confirmations. A community of understanding love, built on trust, acceptance, and genuine concern should be the constant goal of all church communities.

A most vital part of a truly loving community is its educational program. In the particular area of understanding human sexuality, marriage, and pregnancy, it is essential that the church develop a wise and effective program which will build high values, ethics, and morals for young people and their parents. *This committee strongly suggests that the Council of Ministers request development of a study guide by a committee to include Swedenborgians trained in the fields of theology, medicine, psychology, sociology, and education. Adequate funds should be set aside for this purpose.*

When the unhappy pregnant girl or woman, married or unmarried, enters the doors of the church for help, there are obvious pitfalls to be avoided. Judgment, condemnation, or labelling will not help her gather her resources to find the best course of action. This is the time for listening instead, for caring, non - condemning responses. It is a time to discover the depth and dimensions of the need, and to respond with every bit of mature love, understanding, and help that can be mustered.

Whether or not abortion is chosen, post-pregnancy counselling and visiting should be a regular part of the life of both minister and congregation. Ongoing care and inclusion in the church community are important aspects of the church's responsibility in this area. If, for example, the church has helped an unmarried woman to a decision not to have an abortion, it has a responsibility for the physical and emotional welfare of both mother and child. To neglect this responsibility is a betrayal of its purpose, the formation of a heaven from the human race.

Parables for Today

Matthew 5: 38 – 42

Jaikoo E. Lee

THAT LITTLE EXTRA MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

It takes very little to tip a pharmaceutical scale one way or the other, and that tiny extra can make a person better or worse. This happens in life all the time. What seems to be a big, big difference is often started by a little extra. One stupendous accomplishment can often be traced back to a little extra somebody has given to his life. This is one secret of life, and knowledge of the secret has made a difference in many people's lives.

A song writer wrote a number, but he was having a hard time selling it to a publisher. No one would buy it. Then one George M. Cohan looked at it and bought it from the song writer. He then did something to the song. It sold like hot cakes; soon he made a fortune. What did he do? He added three words or, more accurately, noises; *bip, bip, hooray!* It was a little extra, but it made the difference.

We credit Alexander Graham Bell with inventing the telephone. However, he was not the only one who tried to make the telephone work. There were many others, such as Gray, Edison, Dolbear, McDonough, Vanderweyde, and Reis. Philipp Reis came quite close to completing his invention, but he did not come up with that little extra: a little screw that could be twisted one quarter of a turn to make the current flow without interruption. Bell did.

Evidently this issue was brought before the Supreme Court, which declared Bell to be the winner. Here's part of what the Court had to say:

Reis never thought of it, and he failed to transmit speech telegraphically. Bell did, and he succeeded. Under such circumstances it is impossible to hold that what Reis did was an anticipation of the discovery of Bell. To follow Reis is to fail, but to follow Bell is to succeed. The difference between the two is just the difference between failure and success. If Reis had kept on he might have found out the way to succeed, but he stopped and failed. Bell took up his work and carried it on to a successful result.

The vast difference between Reis' failure and Bell's success was caused by one little extra screw. This is one of the immutable laws of life. You get from life what you give to life. If you give to life what most people around you give to their lives, you will get from your life what they get from their lives. But if you give a little more than the common practice around you, life will bring you a little extra.

The Lord, during His earthly ministry, spoke often to this point. He said, for instance, "...if any one would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if any one forces you

to go one mile, go with him two miles." He also counseled, "Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

Some may say, "Well, this is one of those nice things a nice guy like Jesus was supposed to say. But don't worry if you can't follow it. It is so impossible a command to follow, that you'll be forgiven." This certainly is one way to react to it. One can react to it that way and still live an okay life. But one thing is clear to me; and that is, his life will *not* be a shining example of what a human being can be!

The Lord says here that there is an immutable law of life: When you give a little extra to your life, your life will bring you an extra! It is a very hard-nosed, down to earth understanding of life. You can put it to the test any time you want to. Everytime you will find out that it works.

Church Records

BAPTISMS

CHARLESWORTH: Keri Ann, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. William Charlesworth of Delmont, Pa., was baptized on December 12, 1975, the Rev. Eric Zacharias officiating.

CONANT: Frances Allison, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Barry Conant of the Bridgewater Society of the New Jerusalem Church was baptized on December 21, 1975, the Rev. Dr. William Woofenden officiating.

HALLIWELL: David Michael, son of Mr. & Mrs. David Halliwell was baptized in Philadelphia, Pa., on May 18, 1975, the Rev. Richard H. Tafel Sr., officiating.

LITTLE: April Dawn, granddaughter of Mr. & Mrs. John Little was baptized at St. Petersburg, Fla., on January 5, 1976, the Rev. Leon Le Van officiating.

MIKLOSH: Jason Michael, son of Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Miklosh was baptized in Philadelphia, Pa., on December 28, 1975, the Rev. Richard H. Tafel Sr., officiating.

BIRTHS

DHUEZ: Congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. Lyle Dhuez of Prince Albert, Sask., on the birth of their son Alfred Craig on December 23, 1975.

GLANDERS: Congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. Michael Glanders of La Porte, Ind., on the birth of their daughter Melissa Ann on December 11, 1975.

GOTSCH: Congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. Gregory Gotsch of Baltimore, Maryland, on the birth of their son Brandon David on December 31, 1975.

KIRBYSON: Congratulations to Cpl. and Mrs. Al Kirbyson of Nain, Labrador, on the birth of their daughter Holly on December 24, 1975.

PHILLIPS: Congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. Bud Phillips of Park Ridge, Illinois, on the birth of their daughter Elizabeth Noel on December 29, 1975.

ROGERS: Congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Rogers of Park Ridge, Illinois, on the birth of their son Matthew Wayne on October 22, 1975.

CONFIRMATIONS

HELDING: Alice Ann Heldring was confirmed into the faith of the New Church in Philadelphia, Pa., on January 4, 1976, the Rev. Richard H. Tafel Sr. officiating.

LORENZ: Renay K. Lorenz was confirmed into the faith of the New Church in Portland, Oregon, on January 11, 1976, the Rev. Andre Diaconoff officiating.

BECKHAM: Alice Beckman entered into membership of the New Church, Kemper Road Center, Montgomery, Ohio, on December 21, 1975, the Rev. Richard H. Tafel Jr. officiating.

MARRIAGES

TAFEL – MILDEN: Robert W. Tafel Jr. and F. Susan Milden were married in Philadelphia, Pa., on October 4, 1975, the Rev. Richard Tafel Sr. officiating.

ZANG – RABENSTEIN: Robert Zang and Dorothy Rabenstein were married on October 18, 1975, the Rev. Richard H. Tafel Sr. of Narberth Pa., officiating.

SUDDEN – AITKEN: Donald Sudden and Grace Aitken were married on February 7, 1976 in Kitchener, Ontario, the Rev. Paul Zacharias officiating.

DEATHS

GIELOW: Frances J. Gielow died in Michigan City, Ind., on December 16, 1975. The Rev. Matthew S. P. Glowe of the La Porte Church officiated at the memorial services.

KLASSEN: Mrs. Agnes (David) Klassen, formerly of San Clare, Manitoba, died in Calgary, Alberta, on October 8, 1975. The Rev. Canon Orme officiated at the resurrection service.

KIERNAN: William M. Kiernan of Tampa, Florida, died on Nov. 10, 1975. The resurrection service was conducted by the Rev. Leon Le Van.

W E Y S

Wilderness Experience for Young Swedenborgians
Lake Alice August 22 – 27
Seattle, Wash. (incl'd, travel)

Theme:

"Experiencing the World from Within"

Resources to be used:

The Bible – Meditation – Reflection on wilderness experience – Our Swedenborgian heritage – and hiking, swimming, campfires.

Director: Don Lovell Camp Pastor: Cal Turley
Please write for applications or further information to: WEYS General Convention
48 Sargent St., Box 66
Newton, Mass. 02158



FRIENDS IN NEED

It is not difficult to bring to mind a vivid recollection of our dear friends, Eulalia and Obed Mooki. Two years ago we were awaiting their visit; a year ago, richer for their time with us and completely won by their charm we looked anxiously for the word that finally came, assuring us that Obed had fully recovered from a critical illness. But time rushes on, urgent demands envelop our attention and 1974 moves further and further into the past.

Shall we lose touch with these extraordinary people, these good friends, only because 3000 miles separate us? Or is there a way that we can go on being a part of their lives, and they of ours? No one who came to know Obed and Eulalia Mooki can ever forget but we need to give vitality to our memories by a concrete means. **AND WE CAN!** They need our help.

So many things need our help. Appeals come from every side, many impossible to deny and somehow we find a way to respond if we are sufficiently moved. In our comfortable lives there is always the possibility that we can reach out once again and give. But here is no ordinary appeal. These are our kin, in the strongest kinship of all. The extent of their work, perhaps even their health is being affected by the conditions under which they must function. In the New Church Herald for September, 1975, the following account appeared:

MOOKI MEMORIAL COLLEGE FALLING DOWN

"The Mooki Memorial College premises in Orlando, Johannesburg, together with Mr. and Mrs. Mooki's small private apartment which is incorporated in them, are in a state of hopeless disrepair. They were built in an amateur way by the Rev. Edwin Fieldhouse and the students back in the 1930's, and have given good service; but now the roof leaks, the plaster is falling off the walls, and the whole premises have an air of delapidation.

"They have been condemned by the Orlando municipality and at any time now the bulldozers will arrive and demolish them in a cloud of dust. The cost of rebuilding in a manner to satisfy moderate requirements has been estimated at about \$20,000 — a sum which is quite beyond the capacity of the Africans to raise without help. Remember, the New Church of Southern Africa has no capital investments inherited from the past (as we have!) and they cannot obtain a mortgage.

"The Sydney Society in Australia has undertaken to give a substantial sum, the American Women's Alliance have contributed handsomely, and the Africans themselves are doing their best. We of the New Church in Great Britain must also give a helping hand, especially as the African Church is our 'child' now grown up and struggling manfully to be independent.

"The above was the main body of an address given by the Rev. Brian Kingslake on the Tuesday evening of Conference. He had been authorized to issue an Appeal to the whole Church on behalf of the Mooki Memorial College Rebuilding Fund.

"It was a joy to see so many delegates and friends going up to him and pushing something into his hand . . . Before the end of Conference he was able to announce that he had received *300 pounds*. Could we not increase it to a thousand?"

In the winter and spring of 1974 our fund-raising efforts throughout Convention realized about \$5,000. In the fall of 1974 an appeal in the pages of the Alliance Bulletin asking for your help in meeting hospital fees of \$1,500 was over-subscribed. Contributions have been coming steadily but slowly to the NEW YORK CHURCH ever since then, until recently, earmarked for the Building Fund.

At the beginning of 1975, \$500 from the Fund was sent to the Mookis to assure them of our continuing interest and loyal support. A balance now remains in the account but we do not plan to forward this until the total can be increased to a more significant sum.

The New York Society is still the agency for receiving your contributions. Prompt acknowledgment will be made individually; general information will reach you in these columns. We would like to suggest that if it is generally approved, when our goal is reached a scroll with the names of all donors (not amounts) be inscribed and sent to the Mookis with a check and a proclamation of our loving wishes for their continuing success and the fruition of their hopes.

Make checks to:

**New York Society of the New Church
Mooki College Building Fund
Send: c/o Priestnal
112 East 35th Street
New York, N.Y. 10016**

The reader may recall that the March, 1975 issue of the Alliance Bulletin considered the question: WHAT IS A MINISTER? In response to that query, Gwynne Mack, daughter of an outstanding minister calls our attention to a special quality and emphasis of ministry that she feels to be uniquely the opportunity of the New Church clergyman.

As a minister's daughter I have vivid memories of some of the things that have been expected of a minister: my father going out before daybreak on freezing winter Sundays to rouse the church furnace; and during the Depression endlessly called to the door by down - and - out wanderers hoping a minister could shelter, feed, and find jobs for them. The discussion in the Alliance Bulletin presented the minister as: a teacher, a guide, counselor, interpreter, comforter, shepherd, a human being but nevertheless with unshakable faith and enthusiastic interest, who can be both a leader and a servant, preach the Word, give individual advice, influence the young — all this, and be compassionate, too! Is this not almost an image and likeness of the infinite God? Certainly today's ministers are not that; but when did this concept come to an end?

The Christian church ministry developed from the disciples whom Jesus sent out *to heal the sick, cast out devils, and preach the Kingdom of heaven*; these were his specific instructions for what they were to do. Time was when ministers, doctors, and teachers were the educated people upon whom the masses of the uneducated had to depend for knowledge. Nowadays church congregations are full of persons as educated as — perhaps more so than — their ministers. This being so, it is only *spiritual* knowledge that a minister can give to others, but how many these days are doing this in depth? It is the most needed teaching of all; yet how well are modern theological students prepared to minister to the needs and struggles of the inmost soul?

In this decade there is a new curiosity about spiritual realities. Especially among the young there is an awareness of the extra - sensory level of life, of possibly an immense significance in the experience of death. The New Church has profound knowledge of the Kingdom of Heaven; and this knowledge if understood and applied could be of great value in healing the sickness and casting out the devils now rampant in our so - called civilization.

If people would really desire and seek from their religion the truth concerning the Kingdom of Heaven (hopefully their destination!), ministers might feel inspired to concentrate on understanding these truths and teaching them fully, thus becoming *specialists in something to be found nowhere else*. Once recognized, this speciality could free them from the conglomerate of busy - work which is now overwhelming and take them beyond the external chores of maintaining a church organization.

Gwynne Dresser Mack

Also in response to the issue on Ministry, a comment was received from Alice Spear, Librarian of the Los Angeles Church.

"The Editor —

"May I commend the policy of an open forum on important issues such as in the March 1975 Alliance Bulletin: "WHAT IS A MINISTER." Dependent on this subject it seems to me, is the one WHY THE CHURCH? As I see it, the church is the place to learn how to be holy and whole. If the minister meets these two requirements, he is a Godly one and a practical one. An imbalance of these two qualities is dangerous. A balance of these qualities is almost impossible in one person. However: The practical application of *holiness* is not in being preached to but rather in being given an opportunity to express holiness in living relationship . . . To learn how to be a *whole* person requires therapy and meditation whether individually or in groups.

"Swedenborg has relevant words to say on all subjects . . . I believe his teachings can be best received in groups rather than in audiences, and as the church as a focal point is fast diminishing I see for the future The Church In The Home, and wish the day would come soon."

Alice Spear

ADVANCE CONVENTION REGISTRATION

Haverford College, Haverford, Pa.

June 30 — July 5, 1976

Name.....

Address

Accompanied by:

Names

Relationship

Ages of Children

.....

.....

Arrival Departure

Date and Hour

Date and Hour

Arrivals at Philadelphia Airport take Bennett Limousine to Stokes Hall, Haverford College. Fare: \$5.00 per person.

Arrivals by train: From Penn Central 30th Street Station take either Paoli local or Bryn Mawr local to Haverford Station. Five minute walk to campus.

For all persons 18 years and older: A non-refundable registration fee of \$20.00 must accompany your request for reservations. This fee covers cost of meeting rooms, use of swimming pool and other facilities, reception, cost of banquet, entertainment, buses, nursery care and older children's program.

RATES:

Full Session of Convention: Room and board (Beginning with dinner Wednesday, June 30; ending with breakfast Monday, July 5)

Adults

\$86.80 per person ☐

With room air conditioner

\$99.30 per person ☐

Young people 13 — 18 years, registering for ANCL program

\$15.00 per day per person ☐

Children, 12 years and under

\$71.85 ☐

If in parent's room with own

sleeping bag and towels DEDUCT

\$30.00

\$41.85 ☐

Children under 2 years

No Charge

(Bring your own baby equipment)

Partial attendance at Sessions

\$18.00 per day per person* ☐

Window air conditioner

\$2.50 per day ☐

*Room and three meals per day.

If you plan to arrive Wednesday morning — Luncheon \$3.75 additional. ☐

Post Convention Package

\$79.00 per person ☐

With window air conditioner

\$91.50 per person ☐

Room plus breakfast and dinner each day. Begins with dinner Monday, July 5 and ends with dinner Friday, July 9. Check out Saturday morning, July 10 when there will be no breakfast served.

Young people under 18 must be accompanied by parent or adult who will accept responsibility as a sponsor.

CAMPERS: May be parked on campus but not used because of College regulations.

A limited number of air conditioners available. Please indicate whether or not you wish one. They will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

RESERVATION DEADLINE: June 1, 1976

Send this application form and registration fee to:

Mrs. Robert W. Tafel
2129 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19103

Checks should be made payable to: Convention of New Jerusalem '76.

TENTATIVE CONVENTION SCHEDULE

Sunday June 27 6 p.m.	Ministers and Wives Registration Buffet Supper and evening of fellowship at the home of the Rev. & Mrs. Richard H. Tafel.
Monday, June 28	Ministers and Wives Meetings
Tuesday, June 29	Ministers and Wives Meetings
Wednesday, June 30	A.M. Ministers and Wives Meetings Registration General Council Meeting Board of Missions Meeting Opening of Convention
Thursday, July 1 9 a.m.	Convention Business Session Nominations "Independence Hall 1976" Convention Program
1:30 p.m. 8 p.m.	
Friday, July 2 9 a.m.	Convention Business Session Elections Board of Education Program Sunday School Association Meeting Convention Business Session
1:30 p.m. 3:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	
Saturday, July 3 9 a.m.	General Council Meeting
9 a.m.	Alliance of New Church Women Meeting
10 a.m.	Alliance Program (MEN invited)
Noon	Alliance Luncheon
1:30 p.m.	General Council Meeting
1:30 p.m.	Board of Missions Meeting
6 p.m.	Banquet and Program
Sunday, July 4 10 a.m.	Worship Service — Philadelphia Church (Bus transportation provided)
5:30 p.m.	Fourth of July Celebration
Monday, July 5	Check - out after breakfast

THE LEAGUE PROGRAM NOT YET SET

Make your reservations and travel arrangements early. All reservations must be made by June 1.

THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION!

Rev. Richard H. Tafel

What is the specific difference between correspondences, representatives and significatives – in language easy to understand?"

Any object in the true order of nature – a rock, tree, cloud, etc. – is a "correspondence." "Water" corresponds to "truth," both having the property or function of cleansing and of satisfying thirst, but on different levels of our being. When we say, "I want to be clean," or "I am thirsty," we need to know the context to know which level we are referring to.

A "representative" is an event or person who has come (perhaps arbitrarily) to stand for a spiritual reality. In representatives the person, in and of himself, is not regarded, but the thing he pictures or stands for. Thus all the kings of Israel and Judah, even the worst, represent the royalty of the Lord; as did even the Pharaoh who set Joseph over the land of Egypt. In the same way "Canaan," the promised land of the Israelites, has come to picture or represent *our* promised land.

A "significative" is any word used in context with a person or event which is a representative. For example, in speaking of the Promised Land as "flowing with milk and honey," the words in quotation marks would be "significatives."

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- (1) *Why is it so much worse for me to say, "God damn you, you stepped on my foot!" than to say, "God bless you, you didn't step on my foot"?* In both instances two sins were committed: taking the Lord's name in vain, and telling God what to do.
- (2) *Along the same line it jars me to hear someone say, "My God, am I tired!" and yet it doesn't bother me when I say, "My Lord, am I tired!"*

These are complicated questions! I only offer the following for your further thought, not as solutions. First of all, I believe that we have to get down to motives: *why* was it said? Many people, out of habit or thoughtlessness, regularly use the Lord's name in one form or another, automatically and unconsciously, in their conversation. It jars me; I hate it. But can I accuse them of breaking the Commandment, of taking the name of the Lord in vain? It would be if I said it. My feeling, training and background is different.

In the two instances you cite in your (1), I see only the first as taking God's name in vain. If the second one were, am I breaking the Commandment when I pronounce the Benediction? Did you, when you sang, "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen"? You speak of the committing of two sins in each case, one being "telling God what to do." But in praying, aren't we often telling him what to do? Is that a "sin"?

What is the difference between your two examples, only the first of which I believe is taking God's name in vain? The one is full of anger,

hatred and the spirit of vengeance; the other, of love and well-wishing. The one is a cursing; the other a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing. One is irreverent and the other is reverent. The first seeks to take upon oneself the power and prerogatives of God, and to use them to damn, blast and destroy. It breathes out hell; the other, heaven.

Your (2) is even more puzzling to me. Is it because "My God" is used in swearing, whereas "My Lord" is usually not? Is it because "God" is a more personal name for the deity, and "Lord" more of a title, thus less direct? Is it because people so commonly interlard their conversation with "My God", and we resent the profaning of the holiness of his name? Is it because "My Lord" is more suggestive of prayer? In either case, is this breaking the Commandment? How about the motive?

Perhaps one of the most damaging results of carelessly using the divine name is that it takes away something from our personal relationship with the Lord, and spoils something of our appreciation of what is sacred and holy. But lest we become self-righteous in our practice of not taking the Lord's name in vain, may we remember that there is perhaps nothing more blasphemous than exalting him with our lips and denying him in our deeds. Being a parson, I just had to get that in!

Swedenborg tells us that people of all faiths who live up to the best they know are received into the Lord's Kingdom. Yet he also says that one has to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior before eternal salvation is possible. How do you reconcile these divergent views?

Yes, Swedenborg does say that people of all religions, or of no religion, who worship God as they know him, and who do their best to live up to the truth as they know it, are members of the Lord's One Great Church and are on the road to heaven. But I find no contradiction between that and his saying that no one can enter heaven unless he believes in one God who is at once Divine and Human, and worships him as Lord. Those who have lived a good life have ample opportunity in the World of Spirits – which is midway between heaven and hell, into which we all enter at death – to be instructed in the heavenly idea of the true God. We are told that such eagerly and readily accept the God-Man as Lord, because goodness has an affinity for truth. It is what lies in the heart that spells out our destiny; only secondarily what is in our minds. "Love is the life of man." That is why Swedenborg said, "The first question asked those entering the other world is not, 'What is your doctrine?' but 'What is your life?'" Hence I see no contradiction in your question. Your first statement speaks about setting our feet in the path that leads to heaven; your second refers to our actually entering heaven.

Send your questions directly to:
Rev. Richard H. Tafel
200 Chestnut Avenue
Narberth, Penna. 19072

INSTITUTE FOR MINISTERS AND WIVES

The 1976 institute was held at Swedenborg House in Deland, Florida, from January 8th to the 13th, with 23 adults and 2 children participating. Ernest and Hazel Frederick were our hosts, assisted by members and friends of the DeLand Church. A committee of ministers and wives did the preliminary planning and helped to get us started. We spoke of our wants, dreams, and hopes and developed our own program as we went along. Eric Zacharias was our soul pilot, leading us in worship and meditation.

A group experience can never be communicated adequately to those who did not share in the experience. We can only try to give you glimpses into our time together and express some of our feelings and reactions.

DeLand, Florida — Sunshine and oranges, gracious and thoughtful hospitality.

Purpose — Our need to be together, to share, to laugh, to cry is enough.

Shared Leadership — Being there to shine a light for each other's darkness.

Support — Where there is trust we can be accepted even by those who don't agree with us.

Learning — We learn when we risk openness. Learning does not have to be always serious — it can come in fun and laughter.

Aims and goals — To care for one another, giving expression to the love that flows into our being from the Lord.

Baggage — We bring it with us and we take it home. Some gets discarded. Some we discover is heavier than we realized and we find friends to help us carry it. Some is not so unacceptable when we dare to show it, and some may even prove to be a gift we were afraid to own and use.

Diversification — My needs may not be your needs. We have enough time and enough trust to hear and validate each other. I will give up some of my freedom to allow you to meet your needs, but I will not let you take away my freedom. There is a limit beyond which I cannot tolerate intolerance.



Convention President raids orange grove in DeLand, while . . .

Male — female — Creative tension stretching our boundaries.

Sunday worship — Sharing our favorite Bible passages and their impact on our lives.

Communion — There is more available to us than we can ever take. We do not have to be satisfied with a crumb and a sip of life.

Perry and Erni Martin



Our genial hosts: Hazel and Ernest Frederick: Dorothy Farnham.

Thank You

Dear Convention friends:

We wives and husbands thank Convention and General Council for the financial assistance and accompanying spirit of affirmation expressed in supporting the recent Ministers and Wives Institute at Swedenborg House in Florida. We feel the spiritual nurturing and the opportunity for fellowship will benefit the Church as it has us personally. We look forward to continuing Institutes which respond to our personal needs and professional development. Thank you for your caring.

With heartfelt good wishes,
Randall and Mildred Laakko
on behalf of the Council of
Ministers and their spouses.



Messenger editor duplicates feat in Kitchener, Ont.

REV. ALFRED REGAMEY

1902 – 1975

Quietly, firmly, devotedly, with strength he found in his love for the Lord of life and in his truth, Alfred Regamey spoke and wrote, ministered, worked and walked the daily road. His life has been his witness, deeply, openly, generously.

Son of a pioneer New Church pastor Alfred grew up in a beautifully happy and united home, in a family who had much love to share and who shared it, and who, in daily conversation, were lighted by their faith in the Lord's coming and His presence.



From an early age Alfred had a gift for joy. Humor rose a clear spring. It refreshed with friendly understanding. Where there was need for counsel and planning Alfred was one you could trust for insight as well as for clear and practical thought. His concern for others was proved not by much talk, but by the right word spoken at the right time. He was very conscientious in counsel and decision. He valued the life of the church and he gave of his best to uphold it among the many and in every person. Alfred was a loyal and true friend.

His education gave Alfred good acquaintance with the Latin and Greek languages and culture, centered as it was in the classics and humanities. Having received his Bachelor's degree in Lausanne, he followed on to come to the New Church Theological School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He graduated and was ordained in 1923. He then returned to Switzerland, and entered the ministry alongside his father. He also took a teaching position for some years. He was a gifted educator and friend of youth. He was for many years president of the organization of the French Speaking Swiss Youth.

He served as Pastor of the churches in Lausanne and Geneva, and was installed as General Pastor for the Continent of Europe. He travelled extensively as General Pastor.

Our friendship started with Alfred stretching his hand to me in welcome in a time when I was a stranger and companionship meant everything. We were both very young. It was he who opened the way for my finding the New Church stream of life.

Andre Diaconoff

We Get Letters

ON ANGELIC EDUCATION, DECLINING MEMBERSHIP, AND OTHER PLANETS

Dear Mr. Editor:

Thank you for a MESSENGER which is so attractive, well put - together, interesting and stimulating! I particularly appreciated your editorial and Eric's column in the October issue.

You ask some questions; I can't resist offering some replies:

Why has there been little discussion lately on declining church membership? Is it because perhaps by now the *status quo* has simply become accepted? Or because the growth of the New Church (not to be confused with the ecclesiastical organization) can not be measured quantitatively, but only qualitatively — not in a head - count of a group, but in the extent of enlightenment permeating the human race?

"What can we do, as a Church, to counteract" such appalling situations as abuse of children, suicidal tendencies, emotional (thus mental) breakdown? Since the cause of these aberrations is lack of spiritual development, should not the Church's most urgent responsibility be to teach intensively and guide this level of development in human beings? Coping with worldwide starvation likewise seems to depend upon whether it is oriented to purely physical or to spiritual considerations.

"The Kingdom and the Power" I first read in its earliest edition, published in 1951. My uncle, Horatio Dresser, knew its author, and I know her daughter and the daughter's husband who now carries on Mrs. deWetter's work. Mr. Wunsch and I discussed this book; I was then (as during much of my life) making a special study of such material.

I feel that an explanation for the lack of theological education, quite prevalent — as you say — in such communications, is the fact that following death *we do not change quickly* (if ever) (as people, that is; of course there are individual exceptions) from the pattern of thought and understanding which has been steadily formed throughout our lifetime on earth. We awake "on the other side" exactly the same persons we have already become, and our ability to change our thinking depends entirely upon what ability for doing so has been achieved while on earth! If our acceptance of certain concepts remains fixed, at this level of existence, why would those concepts change suddenly just because we have shed our physical apparatus? I believe that under Providence the opportunity for learning Truth is given according to potentiality throughout earth - life as well as hereafter; in fact the learning is what we are here for. But if, with freedom of will, many do not seek or grasp the opportunity here, why would they quickly do so after transition?

I am interested in Van Dusen's interpretation of Swedenborg's discussions of life on other earths, and am reminded of how often mysteries are explained by even more fantastic solutions than those being repudiated. (As in saying that UFOs are only Venus or reflections; and "haunted" houses are simply contracting their timbers, or harboring rats or mischievous children.) Since Swedenborg learned about life on other earths from *spirits* originating therefrom, may not their lives in the physical universe have occurred *eons* ago in areas where life may no longer exist? Contemporary science has learned that in pre-history civilizations flourished on our earth in lands now uninhabited or deeply overlaid with modern structures, and that human life has been on this earth for many milleniums more than heretofore imagined, and conceivably life here could come to an end in milleniums ahead. When Swedenborg said that "procreations of the human race on earth will never cease", may he not have been using the word "earth" generically — meaning the natural level of existence rather than this particular planet?

With continually expanding proof of humanity's presence on this earth in a past time beyond our comprehending, why shouldn't we assume that there was life on other planets in similar or even earlier ages of the universe? And if Swedenborg's descriptions of that life and its customs seem too strange to believe, they would not equal what could be written of life today on this planet!

Gwynne Dresser Mack
Pittsfield, N.H.

TWO DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

Dear Editor:

I have never been able to find anything regarding the New Church stand on premarital sex. Young people come to me and ask what the harm can be if no unwanted children are brought into the world? I am not speaking of promiscuous sex but sex between two lovers. Of course this love affair may end and there may be several later ones before there is a marriage, but in each case there is sincere love between the two. Swedenborg tells us that seldom are heavenly marriages made on earth. If I quote the Commandment on adultery, I am reminded that I am an apologist for the theory that all Scripture cannot be taken literally. A great many people have changed their ethics to accept premarital sex. What does the New Church say?

I find myself just as stymied on the subject of homosexuality. I certainly don't feel that a homosexual should be punished for a condition he evidently cannot help. Neither can I accept the condition as normal. It only seems unfortunate to me. Yet a "practicing" homosexual doesn't feel unfortunate. It seems the situation is so prevalent that one should know where one stands on this subject. Where does the New Church stand?

Respectfully,
Anna Raile
Scottsdale, Ariz.

(Readers are invited to respond to the questions raised. Letters over 300 words may be edited. Ed.)

SHARING JOHN HOTSON'S VIEWS

Dear Sir:

It was good to read in the October issue of the Messenger that you propose some thorny questions, testing our ability to ultimate our beliefs.

While strictly a layman in theology, the life and behavioral sciences, I make bold to comment on number one, concerning population restrictions.

Birth rate seems to vary inversely with the average life span or the probability of survival. What is amply illustrated by the spawning of fish, may well apply to mankind. It is nature's way of preserving equilibrium. The human animal's life is shortened by climatic changes, malnutrition, disease, exploitation and mass homicide. All of these with the possible exception of climatic change (and even this is influenced by land use and atmospheric pollution) are subject to human understanding, decision and conduct.

We may assume one or more of several attitudes toward the "poor" lands. We may say, "Let nature take its course — we've got our own problems, so why worry about some stupid people too lazy to make it." This attitude is both amoral and short-sighted. It ill becomes a nation with 6% of the world population, accounting for over one third of world consumption. Swedenborgians know that no nation can do or not do anything that does not affect all on this little planet sooner or later.

We can take the immediate step of growing more to feed the starving. All our altruistic instinct, our past tradition and our Christian teaching impel us to become a greater exporter of food rather than the greatest arms merchant.

There are no easy, quick answers to a long range solution, but two attitudinal preconditions on the part of the West are required; a decent respect for the values of alien cultures, free of condescension and patronage — and an effort to limit material growth so that the disparity between western and the third world nations may in some degree be narrowed. Westerners tend to idolize material acquisition, believing that bigger is better and more is better still.

Medical and agricultural missionaries (in the tradition of Johnny Appleseed) have carried our knowledge and skills to "new" lands for years, but a far greater international effort is needed. Permanent rise in living standards can only come when recipients willingly accept help to help themselves. Nor can the industrialized West continue to avoid paying fairer prices for the Third World's raw materials.

Thus in time (we hope quickly enough) will a more humane biological balance be reached with lowered mortality and birth rates and a higher quality of life both physically and spiritually.

Gustave Bischof
Garden City, N.Y.

REVELATION REVISTED

The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrine

I. THE GOOD AND TRUE (cont.)

Rev. George Dole

18. From the fact that the evil and false are opposed to the good and true, we can see that the true cannot be bonded to the evil or the good to the false that derives from the evil. If something true is connected to something evil, it becomes no longer true but false, since it has been falsified. And if something good is connected to something false derived from something evil, it becomes no longer good but evil, since it has been adulterated.

However, something false not derived from evil can be bonded to something good.

19. No one who is involved in something evil and therefore in something false as a result of established purpose and life can know what is good and true, since he believes that his own evil is good and therefore believes that his own falsity is true. But everyone who is involved in something good and therefore in something true can know what is evil and false.

This is because every good thing, with its proper "truth", is essentially heavenly. Any element of it which is not essentially heavenly still comes from a heavenly source. In contrast, everything evil, with its proper falsity, is essentially hellish. Any element of it which is not essentially hellish still comes from a hellish source. Everything heavenly is in light; everything hellish is in darkness.

NOTES

18. "Bonded" (*conjungi*) is here contrasted to "connected" (*adjungitur*), the former implying a virtually permanent joining, the latter implying close contact but not necessarily adhesion.

"...since it has been falsified" seems redundant, especially in the Latin sentence. However, "falsification" and "adulteration" are parallel words in many places, and here the first paves the way for the second.

Note the corollary that something factually true becomes functionally false if it is used for wrong purposes.

The last statement in this number comes with special emphasis because it breaks the pattern of precise parallelism that has obtained thus far. It may be taken to state a basis on which change is possible, since it allows our necessarily imperfect grasp of reality to be a vehicle for whatever of good we may have.

19. "...established purpose..." (*confirmatio*) introduces an important concept (cf. D.P. 318). There is a major difference between "impulsive" evil and considered malicious intent.

Of the wide range of meanings for the Latin preposition *in*, English "involved in" seems most appropriate for the familiar phrase "in good (truth, evil, falsity)."

One last aid is offered for understanding the meanings of "good" and "true", namely that no mere intellectual process will suffice. We must engage in worthwhile efforts if we are to understand, because a heavenly life is required for the heavenly light that is needed. Note the implication that we are to "see" what is good and what is true, not simply to learn about them.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Board of Managers of the Swedenborg School of Religion recently appointed the Rev. George McCurdy, Mrs. Virginia Branston and Dr. Wilson Van Dusen to serve as a S.S.R. Presidential Search Committee. The new S.S.R. President will assume office in September, 1977.

Qualified persons interested in serving in this capacity — or anyone seeking further information — should contact Committee Chairman George McCurdy, 592 Oak St., Westwood, Mass. 02090. Further details will be forthcoming in future *Messengers*.

NOTICE

All resolutions intended to reach the floor of Convention at the Annual Meeting in July, 1976 should be in the hands of the Research Committee by April 1st, for review and preparation for publication in an issue of *The Messenger* preceding the Annual Convention meeting.

This orderly procedure was established by the General Council in January 1974.

Address all communications to the Research Committee Chairman.

Adolph T. Liebert
626 Park Place
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15237

The Swedenborg Library of Boston has moved to its new home on 79 Newbury Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02116. The telephone is the same (617) 262-5918.

THE LAST WORD

RESURGENCE '76

Galen Unruh

One of my parishioners displays a plate on the front bumper of his automobile with the word RESURGENCE '76 in large type through its center. Above and below the center design are the famous words: "that this nation under God may have a new birth of freedom." Now I have never been one to plaster my car with slogans, not even during political campaigns, even though I have always been greatly interested in politics. But this time, because I have through the years been deeply impressed by Swedenborg saying the sign of the new age would be "freedom," I wanted one of those plates for my automobile.

The entire nation is being swept up in preparatory activity to celebrate our bicentennial year, and of course there is a lot of commercial promotion tied in with it — we suspect geared to the profit-making motive. It's a little like Christmas, but my own thought is that even though there is some commercialization in it, still there can be, and is, much of the spirit of wanting to promote something of value. So, today, my friendly parishioner gave me an extra plate for the front bumper of my car. Now I am propagating one of the fundamental concepts — the spirit of liberty — which underlies this great nation of ours.

I wrote that last sentence with mixed feelings. Why? Because I am not proud of some of the activities of my country in recent years. We certainly do need resurgence of the true spirit of freedom in this nation on all levels. Secrecy in so many of the activities pertinent to the conduct of corporate and public affairs has been the downfall of much for which this nation stands. Or should I say the *manner* in which secrecy is handled has been our undoing?

We hear it said that we need the CIA. We need to know what is going on in the camp of the "enemy." But now we are finding that *covert* activities have taken place, that orders have gone out from high places seeking to upset governments, even orders implementing assassination. We have lost the respect of the nations of the world which we once enjoyed. The reasoning seems to be that if the Soviet's KGB can do it, we can too!

Why is it so often true that the moment an individual is elected to some position he immediately assumes authority not incidental to the office? That question, I am sure, has been asked by countless numbers of individuals. Does it have something to do with one's own seemingly innate evil and selfish nature? My, how we do love power! England's Lord Acton said that "a little power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

I smile inwardly every time I hear it said, as it is occasionally, in Council of Minister's sessions, that "we need to be reminded that nothing, absolutely nothing, is to be repeated outside these meetings

as to what has transpired here." Then pretty soon one begins to hear outside those sessions about some of the things that *did* transpire! And I recall that during my term on the General Council some years ago there was an air of that same spirit of making certain that "outsiders" didn't have access to what was going on. I understand this policy has changed for the better in recent years, thank God.

Of course there is some need for secrecy. Even the Lord admonished some of those whom he healed not to go about publishing what had happened. But I think we need to be more aware of the deeper implications of what is going on, and to ask ourselves *why* some things require secrecy and others do not. I never did hear that discussed in any of the Council of Minister's sessions. Maybe it is something we need to consider in greater detail. Personal integrity can be damaged by the inconsiderate divulging of secrets, true. However, how often is it that we use the guise of secrecy to protect ourselves from what might possibly be constructive criticism?

We certainly should learn something valuable through all our present-day exposures, wire tapping and spying included. We are entitled to privacy. We are entitled to many of our secrets, and I think it is healthy that each of us has his own secrets, but something is radically wrong with the manner in which secrecy is being handled.

I usually become a little upset when I hear someone say they are not interested in what Swedenborg reported about activities in the spiritual world. They say they are interested only in what happens here — that there will be time enough for finding out about the other when they "pass over". Yet we can learn profound psychological and spiritual lessons from a study of life in the spiritual realm. Why, for instance, is it true that the evil ones in the lower world cannot see into the heavens, but the angels of heaven can see into the regions of hell? Evil is blind and goodness is not, but I don't think the angels would be angry if the evil ones found out what was going on in heaven! They know that goodness can protect itself handily — without doing anything *covert* to make certain the evil does not get the upper hand.

Something I wrote in the "Plains Banner" was reprinted in a paper of another denomination recently. I honestly think there was a bit of plagiarism involved on my part. I don't know where I picked up the idea, or part of it, but I thought it was so good that I tried to make it my own: "Some of the worst enemies of freedom are hatred, jealousy, pride and prejudice. There is no freedom in the propaganda of hatred . . . I think we have to ask ourselves if we are well enough educated to handle the challenge of real freedom; whether we can "agree to disagree" without losing our sense of unity . . . We would add that intelligent thinking is possible only when it is guided by an honest love and affection for truth — truth of the highest order, uncontaminated by personal pride and prejudice."

What does it mean to be a New Church woman in today's world?

Conferences for New Church women are being sponsored by Convention's Board of Education. Weekend Women's Conferences have been held in Urbana and Kemper Road Center; one is planned for Kitchener in April. Qualified leadership is available.

Are you interested in participating in a conference of this kind in your local church or area?

For further information please contact:

Pat Zacharias
215 Union Blvd.
Kitchener, Ont.

ACADEMY OF THE NEW CHURCH MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

With the consent of the Board of Directors I take pleasure in announcing the formation of the Academy of the New Church Museum Association. Membership is open to all New Churchmen who have an interest in supporting and participating in the activities sponsored by the Museum Committee of the Academy.

A statement will be forthcoming from the Museum Committee containing the order and organization of the Museum Association, its benefits, dues, activities and officers.

The adult New Churchmen who wish to join in the support and activities of the Museum Association are cordially invited to do so.

Bishop King
Bryn Athyn, Pa.

SWEDENBORG SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATION

The Seventy - Ninth Annual Meeting of the Swedenborg Scientific Association will be held in the auditorium of Pendleton Hall, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, on Monday, April 12, 1976, at 8:00 p.m.

Brief reports and election of president and members of the Board of Directors will be followed by an address by Edward F. Allen entitled, "God, Man, and the World."

All interested persons are cordially invited.

Morna Hyatt
Secretary

CONVENTION CALENDAR

Worship Committee Narberth, Pa.	March 7 - 9
A.C.A.M., Newton, Mass.	March 11
C.O.M. Exec. Com. Newton, Mass.	March 9 - 12
Dept. of Education Urbana, O.	March 19 - 20
CONVENTION '76 Philadelphia, Pa.	June 30 - July 5

IN THE APRIL ISSUE

Dr. Kubbler - Ross's views on life after death.
Rev. W. Rice on "State, Church and Taxes".
Thumbnail sketches of S.S.R. Students.
Our Church in Pawnee Rock.
Plus many other interesting features.

THE MESSENGER

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