

The Messenger

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH
NOVEMBER 1976

I thank thee, O Lord,
Because thou hast put my soul in the bundle of life;
thou hast brought me up to an eternal height, and I walk in an
unsearchable plain.
I know that there is hope
for him whom thou hast formed from the dust for an eternal
company.

I thank thee, O Lord, because thou hast sustained me with thy
strength,
and hast shed abroad thy Holy Spirit in me.

I thank thee, O Lord, because thou hast made me wise in thy
truth
and in thy wondrous mysteries hast given me knowledge.

I thank thee, O Lord, because thou hast done wondrously with
dust,
with a thing formed of clay thou hast done powerfully.

I will praise thy name among those who fear thee,
with songs of thanksgiving and prayer.

from "Songs of Thanksgiving"
in *The Dead Sea Scrolls*



In This Issue

It's been a pleasure assembling this issue of the MESSENGER. A lot of good material has come in, and I hope you will enjoy reading it as much as I have.

The Rev. Harold Larsen, of Orange, N.J., reminds us of the true meaning of Thanksgiving. For so many people it is simply a holiday from work; a day to watch football games and to over-indulge at the table. These external activities are pleasurable and not necessarily wrong, but they fall far short of Thanksgiving at its best. Genuine Thanksgiving is a certain attitude toward life, in which we recognize that the Lord is the source of our being, and our thanksgiving is our appreciation for the gift of life. We can do no less.

How well do we really know one another in our local Society? We come together on Sunday mornings, with perhaps a Coffee Hour, and we have various programs through the year, but is this enough opportunity to foster in-depth relationships? See p. 210 for an article on "how to" plan and carry out a Retreat in your area. It is increasingly evident that more "happens" in this type of concentrated religious experience than on a month of Sundays. This article suggests a simple format that could be adapted in any one of our churches. All it requires is about ten to twenty people who want to grow in their awareness and understanding of spiritual realities . . . some planning . . . a suitable site . . . and the vision. In most cases you will have sufficient local leadership resources. (We already know more than we use.) Take the plunge — the rewards are very satisfying.

Paul Mikoloski, a Roman Catholic High School student in Bath, Maine, recently visited the Swedenborgian church in Bath, and we are happy to share with you his favorable observations. He was impressed by the friendly atmosphere, the "different" type of sermon, and the freshness of the theology he heard. One wonders what he will do with it now!

The Rev. Richard Baxter, just getting settled in St. Paul, writes of his recent experiences in candidating. In the next few years four or five ministers will be ordained, and each one will go through something of the process described here. Congregations without ministers will pay special attention to this article, as it speaks directly to their situation.

Normally the masthead just inside the front cover is not the most exciting thing in the world to read. But with this issue we have reached a milestone — this being our 5000th issue of the *Messenger*. Or so we thought! Marion Kirven, S.S.R. Librarian, has done some detective work in looking back over these "5000" issues and comes up with some disconcerting information. The awful truth is out — our good friend, Leslie Marshall, fell asleep at the switch on May 19, 1951.

P. Z.

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Paul B. Zacharias, Editor

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The Starting Line Eric Zacharias

THANK YOU LORD . . .

With the approach of the Thanksgiving Season there comes to mind the Lord's words by the prophet Malachi, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

Pause here for a moment. Give your heart, mind and soul opportunity to refresh themselves — *blessings in such abundance that there shall not be room enough.* A promise so staggering as to raise goose bumps.

A few days ago, while wandering about the quiet streets of Pretty Prairie, Kansas, (with the expectation that I might meet someone for a bit of conversation,) I stopped at a building site and exchanged some thoughts with a carpenter.

Soon there came the question, "What is it that you do in this small town?"

"I'm the minister of the New Jerusalem Church — just a short distance from here."

Our conversation continued.

"My wife and I are Baptists — and we began tithing a few months ago. I was against it. Ten percent is a sizeable amount. I wondered how we were going to get along without it. But, you know, we are getting along without it — just fine — and we now feel good about our decision. I can't tell you why — perhaps it's just knowing that we are doing something to help the Lord."

I left — thinking. "Bring ye all the tithes into the store - house . . . and I will pour you out a blessing."

Who is this God we worship? To whom have we made this commitment? Is He out of touch with His people? Not at all! The promise of His abundance is once again spread before us in the Gospels. For three days a great multitude had been with the Lord in the wilderness — and now there was no food. Jesus called together the disciples to express His concern. The disciples had seven loaves and a few small fish. These were set before the hungry. How could this possibly suffice? But it did, "And they that had eaten were about four thousand . . . and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets."

" . . . prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts . . . if I will not . . . pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

In the Arcana, we read, "It comes into the mind of scarcely anyone that there is a continual Divine influx through the internal man into the external; that is, an influx of celestial and spiritual things through the Rational into the natural."

"Influx" is a fascinating concept. In the New Church, the term is familiar and central in our thinking. Indeed, the essential thrust of our entire theology focuses upon "influx."

God, the Creator, is not complete by Himself. The very nature of the Lord's love requires beings outside of Himself. God must function in a partnership with His creation. Man has his life only through this partnership. Thus, between God and man there is a continuous flow of communication which seeks to bring man into a positive, harmonious response with his Creator. Can the Lord's influx be likened to the gentle, caressing breeze, unseen and unfelt, that flutters the tiny leaf of the aspen in the lingering beauty of the Colorado autumn? It is the Lord's life reaching out to touch us, to quicken our spiritual fibres.

The implication of the principle of "Influx" is tremendous for us as a Church. The Church is ultimately the Lord's — the Church within each of us as well as the Church in its worship and all of its uses. It is the Lord who builds it today, who will continue building it, who oversees its fulfillment and who has written the Laws of Divine Providence which govern it. The Lord heals it and causes it to spring forth and grow. And all of this will be accomplished — not in accordance with our prediction or prophesy or planning — but only as we yield to His influx.

We, the Lord's partners, are in no way excused from our role, our responsibility, our initiative. Indeed, there is placed upon us a most provocative challenge — to so live our lives that the Lord's promise is fulfilled in each one of us: "To pour out a blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it."

May all the blessings of this Thanksgiving Season be yours.



THINKING AND THANKING

"Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His Holy Name!

Bless the Lord, O my soul and forget not all His benefits." Psalm 103: v. 1 — 2

Thanksgiving, like love, can never be forced and commanded because it comes from the heart and will of a man.

We all know how the first Thanksgiving came about in 1621 when Governor Bradford approved the setting aside of the First Thanksgiving Day in America. The Pilgrims were truly thankful and wanted to set aside the day for the giving of thanks to the LORD.

There was deep approval throughout the country when in 1941 Congress approved the last Thursday of November as a National Holiday to be known as **THANKSGIVING DAY**. It had long been practiced in most of the states and now it was given the sanction of a National day for the giving of thanks to the LORD.

Marjorie Webster writes of this in her poem: "THANKSGIVING THOUGHT."

When lengthening shadows fall across the day
And peace of night blots out the weary way,

Somehow, as inner vision clears the mind,
We glimpse the truth to which we oft are blind,
The things that really count
Are things we cannot count.

What value shall we place upon a smile
That lifts the heart and makes our life worth while
And what shall be the measure of a friend?
In whom our daily joys and sorrows blend?

How count those little unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love — how get the facts
About such things as courage, faith and hope?
For lack of which we stumble, fall and grope?

We cannot estimate the values, sound and true
That we receive each day, the whole year through.

So, for the many blessings brought our way,
Give our grateful thoughts on this Thanksgiving Day
For things that really count
Are things we cannot count!

We have mentioned that Thankfulness, like love cannot be commanded. In Exodus 23: 14 — 16 we read where THE LORD commands Israel through Moses.

"Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto ME in the year.

Thou shalt keep the feast of Unleavened Bread —
in the month, Abib,

the feast of Harvest, the first fruits of thy labors,
which thou has sown in thy fields, and
the feast of Ingathering, which is in the end of the
year, When thou has gathered in thy labors out
of the field."

These three feasts signify the persistent worship and thanksgiving to the LORD for liberation from spiritual captivity.

1. The Feast of Unleavened Things signifies worship and thanksgiving for purification from falsities represented by Egypt.

2. The Feast of the Harvest of first fruits signifies worship and thanksgiving for the implanting of TRUTH in GOOD.

3. "The Feast of Ingathering in the going out of the year, when thou gatherest in thy works out of the field," signifies worship and thanksgiving in a grateful mind for the implantation of GOOD and the final regeneration and liberation from damnation.

We notice in the first two feasts of Thanksgiving that they were feasts that had to do with TRUTH, the first feast the liberation from falsities represented by Egypt, which had enslaved them, and the second feast, the implanting of TRUTH into their thinking and understanding.

We can see here that *thinking* has a great deal to do before *thanking* can be sincere and heartfelt. It is for this reason that the LORD instituted these three festivals and commanded their observance, but the command is to the spiritual Israelite, the INTERNAL regenerating man and is REPRESENTATIVE of what such a man does willingly and voluntarily.

Man cannot think straight if he is in evils and falsities and his mind has to be purged of false affections and thoughts before he can be freed from Egyptian worldliness and falsities. The LORD came into the world to give us DIVINE TRUTH inspired and lived in the HOLY WORD so that mankind can read the WORD and be set free from the falsities of Egypt. This is the unleavened bread, the pure bread from Heaven, the Living Bread.

How is our *thinking* today? What is our dialogue with our soul?

Are we saying to our soul, "Bless the LORD, O my soul?" We must first get rid of our material *thinking*, our longing for the things of Egypt before we are truly *thanking* God. It took a long time for the Israelites to purge themselves of their love of Egypt. For forty years they were in the spiritual wilderness and all of their old men died off and were not allowed to enter the HOLY LAND.

But the new man, "born again" of the DIVINE TRUTH in JESUS our LORD, is permitted to enter the

HOLY LAND. The second feast was the feast of the harvest of first fruits of their works. This is like the man who allows TRUTH to enter his external man and work there. This is *thinking* straight and with an affection for TRUTH. Here again we are *thanking* GOD because we are doing it in an orderly manner, admitting that all TRUTH is from Him alone.

The second feast is a celebration of co - operating with GOD, when a man plants the seeds of TRUTH within himself, and yet admits that all TRUTH is from GOD. Then these seeds of DIVINE TRUTH appear in the "good works" that are produced in his external man, the earth. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he, and here he is *thinking* TRUTH and so is holding a spiritual feast with the LORD.

The third feast is at the end of the year when they gathered in their works out of the field. Here is signified worship and thankfulness for the implantation of GOOD in the mind and for final liberation from damnation. This is when the mind is no longer infested with falsities or with evil desires but has received and planted TRUTH from the LORD in the heart and mind and finally receives the GOOD OF TRUTH in Regeneration of the WILL.

Now, dear friends, what is the personal application of our lesson in terms of modern language and thought. It is simply this:

Millions of people may stay home from work on THANKSGIVING DAY and enjoy the rest and relaxation and over - eat the typical THANKSGIVING dinner. They may even attend Church and give some attention to why we should be especially grateful in America for our material blessings. And yet, if these people are only concerned with the material wealth and riches which they have received, they are but little better spiritually than those people who do not acknowledge God.

We have to bless the LORD with our souls and our hearts, everything that is within us, and we have to worship and thank HIM for all His benefits, but especially for HIS Spiritual benefits, otherwise we are like the rich man in the parable who, when he had prospered greatly, decided to tear down his barns and build greater ones and say to his soul,

"Soul thou hast much goods, laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry!"

But GOD said unto him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall these things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward GOD."

Money cannot buy grateful, peaceful and loving hearts. It takes real *thinking* to be truly *thankful* in times like this. We have to be right with GOD, with the WORD, and with the Ten Commandments and Law of Love to be truly thankful. Let us always *think* of God's marvelous love for us that led HIM to become as one of us and then by temptation, combats and victories to provide us with Redemption and the means for Reformation and Regeneration.

Are we thankful that GOD is a GOD of Love, a real Heavenly Father, or are we worried about the price of turkey that it has gone up to 69 cents a pound?

Are we grateful that we have been led to receive the LORD as Our God and Our Savior? We should always be grateful for HIS WORD and for the WRITINGS of Our Church which so eloquently present HIS love and concern for us.

May this be our way of *thinking* and *thanking* the LORD not only for our material pleasures and blessings but also for the knowledge that HE will ever help us in our moral and spiritual needs.

May we then say with the Psalmist:

"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me

Bless His Holy Name

Bless the LORD, O my soul and forget not all His Benefits."

Rev. Harold B. Larsen
Orange, N. J.

The Hole or the Doughnut?

Have you ever felt like the hole in a doughnut — useless, unnecessary, expendable? Years ago, when I was a "boot" at the Great Lakes Naval Station, I felt like the hole in a doughnut. I was a stranger, among strangers, in an unfamiliar environment. My sole purpose was to endure and survive. But enduring and surviving is an unexciting, unimpressive existence, which cannot lead one up and out of the doughnut hole abyss. In order to do more than endure, survive, exist, one must take the initiative. I did! First, I stopped pitying myself. Secondly, I let go of my fear. Thirdly, I looked at the other doughnut holes who shared with me the unsavory existence of immunization shots (administered with square needles), G.I. haircuts, beans for breakfast, the steel wool shuffle, and marching everywhere to the strain of "Hup one, Hup two." Fourthly, I began to make friends. One does that best, you know, by showing interest in the other person. Lastly, I surrendered myself to becoming a sailor.

Some Christians are like boot camp recruits; they live with that hole - in - the - doughnut feeling — useless, unnecessary, expendable. To them, Christianity is to be endured. They are strangers within the Church. They withdraw. They survive. They exist. They are filled with self - pity. They are afraid of others, of God! They may be surrounded by riches, but they exist in poverty.

In the Book of Matthew, Jesus encountered a hole - in - the - doughnut man who believed that Christianity was a good idea, but he lacked the faith to *fully commit* himself to it. He went away.

Christianity is a process which demands all that one has and is. Those who think it is only a good idea ultimately go away - some sorrowfully. Those who journey in love, with faith in Jesus Christ, find joy and escape from that hole - in - the - doughnut feeling. Have you?

Rev. Norm Haag
Maineville, Ohio.

(The Rev. Norm Haag and the Rev. Dick Tafel Jr. share in a number of religious activities in the Kemper Road area.)

BLUE PRINT FOR A MOUNTAIN TOP EXPERIENCE

Betty Drummond

Last spring when some of us in Kitchener got excited about the idea of having a fall retreat, we knew little how to go about it. However, where there's a will, there's a way!

A group of 22 church members signed up ranging in age from 15 to 85! We divided these into cabin groups of 3 or 4 and assigned kitchen duty by cabins. Those in each cabin looked after their own breakfasts, and every one brought one dish for the communal meals. Finances were subsidized by a grant from the Canada Association. All adults paid \$10. while Leaguers paid \$5.

Several of us left early on September 24th, arriving at Stonehills — a lovely resort about sixty miles north of Kitchener — at 7:30 p.m. This was very helpful, as we were able to meet the guests and quickly assign cabins and make coffee.

The main lodge is a beautiful, log building with a wide deck on three sides looking out on the surrounding hills. Our wonderful hosts, Bob and Dora Fowler, had a roaring fire in the floor to ceiling fieldstone fireplace and went out of their way to see that we were comfortable. Cooking and heating and washroom facilities were available in each cabin.

Just before retiring for the evening, we gathered by the fire in the main lodge, and Rev. Paul set the spiritual pattern for the weekend. We realized that by the principle of "Influx is according to Efflux" we would get as much out of our weekend as we put into it. We wanted not just to talk about God, but to try to encounter Him, each in our own way. We also hoped to find out a little more about ourselves, where we were, and where we wanted to go in life.

After much happy visiting and letting the peace of our surroundings soak in, we set out across the field for our separate quarters. The stars were so near you could almost touch them and we felt the reality of the Lord's presence.

Early next morning, as we crossed to the lodge, we lifted our eyes to a glorious day breaking over the hills, and we were glad to be in this place.

Our first session was an interesting exercise called "Color Your World". Each of us took a sheet of newsprint and crayons and drew a representation of our world as we saw it. In sharing these works of art, we found we all had much in common. At this point we divided into groups of five, choosing people we wanted to know better. It was suggested that married partners not be in the same group. In exploring the topic, "where I want to go in life", the bonds of friendship deepened for us all.

Before lunch we found time for some quiet walks with friends, and I know many deep concerns were shared.

Fresh air made us ravenous, and the chilli and hot bread served informally were delicious.

By 2:00 p.m. we met again to discuss "What the New Church means to Me". Our thoughts were guided by a sheet of passages from Swedenborg's writings which sparked many lively discussions on the themes of the Church, life and love. When the whole group re-convened, we shared some of the many insights we had discovered.

A delightful time ensued from about 4:30 to 6:00 when some of us enjoyed the sauna facilities and just being very much alive! Others went for walks, rested, or read material from our retreat library.

Our topic for the evening was "Personal Commitment", which was approached through Bible study. Each group chose a Bible selection, such as the Raising of Lazarus, the Walk to Emmaus, the Sick Man at the Poolside. We placed ourselves in the shoes of the various personalities in our story. Try this sometime — it is a most revealing experience. After sharing our findings with the larger group, we culminated the evening with a moving, candle-lit communion service in front of the fire.

Sunday morning, although the skies were overcast, our hearts were full of sunshine, and we spent some time together talking about the Church of the Good Shepherd, resulting in some specific recommendations. An evaluation of our total experience followed. As one of our members expressed it, "Wild horses won't keep me away from the next Retreat!"

Despite the inclement weather, several carloads of members joined us from Kitchener for the worship service. Six or seven people spoke about their favorite Bible verse or a reading from one of the books made available to us throughout the weekend. This made for an informal service with maximum participation including the leading of the singing by Bess Klassen and Floss Ahrens.

And so our Retreat (some thought it should be called "advance") came to a close over a luncheon with those who had come from Kitchener sharing in the warmth and joy which flowed all around. Surely the Lord was in this place!

We are looking forward to more church retreats in the future, and we hope your society will consider holding one in your area.

THE ANNUAL APPEAL AND OUR CHURCH'S 160th ANNIVERSARY

The money — where does it come from and where does it go? These questions will be answered in the 1976 — 1977 Annual Appeal brochure being mailed to Swedenborgians in the United States and Canada in November.

In order to carry on the work of the church, we rely heavily on investments from gifts and bequests from the past — but it is never adequate to cover all expenses incurred in the day to day — week to week and month to month operation of our denomination. In addition, we have heavy commitments to the foreign mission field all over the world.

Captain Ebel, our national treasurer, has prepared easy to understand graphs showing where the annual income of \$322,933.00 comes from and how this income was used last year in meeting national and international program expenses.

Our Church will be celebrating its 160th anniversary on May 15, 1977. We were organized on May 15, 1817. Our history is a colorful one with events initiated and shaped by strong, dedicated families and individuals. To build "the New Jerusalem" has been, throughout our history, the compelling urgency of our people. This was the spirit that established Urbana College on June 19, 1850 and congregations from Fryeburg, Maine to the shores of the Pacific ocean and from as far north as Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, to the tip of Florida. This was the spirit that envisioned and developed the Wayfarers' Chapel at Palos Verdes, California as a memorial to Emanuel Swedenborg.

So that the work may continue and prosper we are setting a 160th anniversary fund raising goal of \$25,000.00! In order to meet this goal each member and each organization within the General Convention in the United States and Canada is being asked to respond generously to the 160th anniversary Annual Appeal. You will be asked to send your gifts to the *General Convention of the New Jerusalem, Central Office*, 48 Sargent St., Newton, Mass. 02158. Watch for your appeal letter and brochure.

CONVENTION CALENDAR

Board of Managers, S.S.R.	Dec. 3 — 4
Rededication of Cambridge Chapel	Dec. 5
Board of Missions, Newton	Dec. 6 — 7
General Council, Urbana	Jan. 20 — 22
Dept. of Publications, Phila.	Feb. 17 — 19
Florida Conference, DeLand	Feb. 19 — 23
C.O.M. Executive Committee, Newton	March 2 — 3
Planning and Development, Newton	March 20 — 22
General Convention, San Francisco	June 29 — July 3

OHIO ASSOCIATION REPORT

The Ohio Association held its annual meeting in Pittsburgh on October 1 — 3. Delegates attended from Cleveland, Urbana, Cincinnati, Indianapolis and the host church. A warm welcome was extended also to Mr. Bill Etue, sent by the Middle Atlantic Association as a representative.

Association funding was made available to a number of programs including the Almont New Church Assembly, the Sunday School Association, and a variety of scholarships.

The study program was devoted primarily to three topics: The Doctrine of Use, Freedom and the Life After Death. There was a good depth of involvement which was rewarding to all participants.

During the Sunday morning worship service the renewal of authorization for Lay Leadership was made for: Tom and Jim Zehner, Norman Bester, Gilbert Heddaeus and Frank Theriault.

THE MESSENGER STORY

Marion Kirven

PROSPECTUS. At the session of the General Convention of the New Jerusalem Church in the United States, held at Chicago, in June 1853, the following Preamble and Resolution were adopted: —

"Whereas, in the opinion of this body, a Periodical owned by the Convention, and published under its auspices, would be the means of great usefulness in collecting information in regard to the condition and prosperity of the Church throughout our whole country, and thereby bringing to light the various wants of the church at large, and would be better adapted to meet these wants than a work left merely to private enterprise. —

Resolved; That Messrs. Scammon, Gerrish, and Hoskins, be a committee to establish a *Weekly New Church Newspaper* in the city of New York, and take such other steps as may be necessary to carry the object of this resolution into effect.

The object of this journal will be to collect and diffuse intelligence concerning the reception and spread of the Doctrines, and of the state, progress, wants, and prospects of the church in all parts of the world. It will contain summaries of General News, Secular and Ecclesiastical, Domestic and Foreign. The effort will be to make it a complete *Family Newspaper*, so that those taking it need not be obliged to resort to any other medium for their supply of weekly intelligence."

This (the PROSPECTUS) is the way the MESSENGER started, the first issue appearing on May 26, 1855. You are reading the 5000th issue of it. THE MESSENGER has gone through some changes and the hands of twelve editors, but its purpose has remained the same. Of course, it does not try to supply you with all the news you need for the week — or even the month; probably not even *The New York Times* could hope to do that, anymore.

After printing 651 issues of Imperial size, which was one piece of paper about 33½ x 22¼ inches, folded in half and laid out as four pages per issue, the *New Jerusalem Messenger* changed its size, shape and format to a quarto of sixteen pages. This new size *Messenger* continued to be published weekly, but its format more that of a journal or magazine than that of a newspaper, with longer articles and fewer non - New Church news items. The *New Jerusalem Messenger* continued as a sixteen page weekly, but changed its name with the Jan. 7, 1885 issue to *New - Church Messenger* with the following comment: "We think our readers will agree with us that our new name makes a more tasteful heading. The extreme length of the name *New Jerusalem Messenger* made it rather awkward as a single line title, while the double line was not liked by most. These difficulties are avoided in the name *NEW - CHURCH MESSENGER*."

If only the editors could have solved their other difficulties so simply. Marguerite B. Block, in *THE NEW CHURCH IN THE NEW WORLD*, Chap. XI on "Liberalism", says, "the periodicals of the New Church have served as a forum in which all the controversial questions have been discussed. This is especially true of the *Messenger*, which almost from its birth has been a storm center . . . The Rev. J. P. Stuart, came into conflict with the Boston group on account of his Academy doctrines, and was removed after only three years." When the Rev. Chauncey Giles was editor in 1870 he wrote, "Great fault is found with the *Messenger* because it is not ecclesiastical enough, and does not teach as fully as it should the doctrines of the Church as revealed truth, and does not refer enough to Swedenborg as 'authority.' " This Giles' quote, as well as the following, is from M. Block's book; 'In 1895 the *Messenger* was criticized as being 'too technical, philosophical, and metaphysical for the average man,' for 'treating petty questions and leaving out important ones,' — and for being 'too conservative!'" M. Block goes on to tell how the *Messenger* declared itself a modernist, in the "Fundamentalist - Modernist" controversy of 1924, and how it was attacked on the ground that it should represent Convention and be non - partisan. M. Block made this observation in 1932: "For the Convention has never given the *Messenger* more than half - hearted support. The reports of the editors from year to year prove this fact, and also how impossible it has been for anyone, no matter how able or how tactful, to satisfy both sides." As I read M. Block's summaries of these controversies, I have the feeling that history is repeating itself in the New Church. Unfortunately, each generation has to start from nothing and learn everything its elders have learned — and more.

On Jan. 7, 1942 *The New - Church Messenger* changed from a weekly to a periodical "Published Fortnightly". A paragraph on its front page says: "In this new form the MESSENGER will look less like a magazine and more like a newspaper. But it cannot be a real newspaper unless the various Societies supply it with news. The most difficult part of the Editor's work is the securing of news items. Few ministers and secretaries realize that the church at large is interested in the various society happenings. Such news items as do reach the MESSENGER are sometimes woefully out of date. This could be easily remedied by the Societies." The Whole Number of that Jan. 7, 1942 issue was 4610.

The *Messenger* continued as a bi - weekly publication until July 1963, when it became a monthly. Then in July 1966 the *NEW - CHURCH MESSENGER* began appearing as *THE MESSENGER*. It also became smaller in size; down to 7 x 10 inches and averaging 16 — 20 pages per issue.

SAD NEWS FOLKS — This 5000th issue is over nineteen years late due to the fact that in laying out and publishing of the May 19, 1951 issue somebody turned the Whole Numbers around. The May 5, 1951 issue is Whole Number 4850; the May 19, 1951 issue is Whole Number 4581. As I looked more closely at the Whole Numbers after May 19, 1951 I found several more errors. According to my best calculations, the 5000th issue really was the March 2, 1957 issue. But let us go ahead and celebrate now, since we missed our chance in 1957.

*Block, Marguerite Beck, *THE NEW CHURCH IN THE NEW WORLD* (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1968) p. 315 ff.

Editors of the NEW JERUSALEM — NEW-CHURCH — THE MESSENGER

Rev. William B. Hayden	1855 — 1862
Rev. J. P. Stuart	1862 — 1865
Rev. Chauncey Giles	1865 — 1877
Rev. Charles H. Mann	1877 — 1902
Rev. Samuel C. Eby	1902 — 1905
Rev. John S. Saul	1905 — 1921
Rev. E. M. Lawrence Gould	1921 — 1932
Rev. Arthur Wilde	1932 — 1945
Rev. Leslie Marshall	1945 — 1953
Rev. Bjorn Johansson	1953 — 1966
Rev. Robert Kirven	1966 — 1975
Rev. Paul Zacharias	1975 —



Marion Priestnal, Editor

SUMMING UP:

WHAT LOCAL GROUPS ARE DOING AND THINKING

Last spring the secretaries of our local women's groups were asked to fill out questionnaires concerning the activities of their group; also, to give suggestions in two categories:

1. Ways to develop a better working relationship between local groups and the aggregate Alliance (Note — the word *National* was dropped from the name in 1967, since it did not appear to include our Canadian sisters — Ed.)
2. Ideas that would be useful to other local groups.

You will probably be interested in an analysis of the replies. 27 secretaries responded, returning the form to Louise Woofenden.

FOURTEEN answered the question about "*new and unusual activities*". In those fourteen answers yard - sales, bazaars, craft sales, auctions, bake sales, quilting, family nights with basket dinner, and sewing projects were described.

One answer mentioned a clothing drive for the Mookis and a fund - raising dinner for the Mookis as well as a policy of giving 10 per cent of profits from any Alliance sponsored event to the Mookis.

One reply stated that extended responsibility for the general expenses of the Church was being under - taken by the Ladies Aid Society; one mentioned financial support of a broadcasting program.

One secretary wrote: "Same old bazaars, cake sales, etc." (!)

Thirteen left the answer space blank.

Various impressions emerge as we look over these replies:

In general we do not seem to be attempting any new or unusual activities at the present time.

If something is needed to infuse creativity and fresh motivation into the bloodstreams of some of our local groups, **WHAT IS THAT SOMETHING?**

The question: "*Are there ways in which the (National) Alliance could be more helpful to you?*" elicited these responses:

Fourteen blank answer spaces.

Eight answers saying "no" or "none" or "can't think of any".

Five answers which said:

1. "Send us sure - fire ways to make money, or suggest projects of intense interest to everyone". ("Dream on!", the writer added.)
2. "Wish we could feel more a part of the (National) Alliance — perhaps something we both could work at."
3. "Would like to be able to read what other groups are doing."

4. "More nationally organized projects to work for — we need to keep in closer touch with others so as to get fresh ideas."
5. "Better inter - group communications. Local groups in turn might prepare a one - sheet newsletter, one copy to be mailed to the secretary of each group."

As you can see — those who expressed an opinion seem to feel isolated, and a longing to be a part of something larger than their own small groups. How shall we interpret the fourteen blank spaces where no opinion was expressed? Are these and the eight "no" groups entirely satisfied with things as they are? Did they hesitate to state opinions; or feel that no solution exists? Someone is surely thinking about ways in which we could work together for a common end; ways in which we could exchange information, news, ideas, and feel closer to each other.

The question: "Do you have suggestions for local groups?" resulted in:

Blanks	—	14
"No"	—	7
Suggestions	—	6

We quote the six suggestions:

1. "Our group finds enjoyment being foster parents to a little Korean child." (Pittsburg.)
2. "Guest night. Each couple invites another couple for pot luck and cards or games afterwards". (Pretty Prairie — Kansas.)
3. "It is important to relate to the neighborhood people. We have at least 15 young people ages 6 to 16 . . . perhaps encouraging children to attend might help other local groups." (Riverside, California.)
4. "Fellowship Dinners; study groups jointly with nearby Societies. A group to discuss women in the church and our role or our importance (and our problems unique as they are) could be beneficial. (San Francisco, California.)
5. "The use of provocative short films as a spring board for discussion groups, if this kind of discussion is desired." (New York City.)
6. "We try to read and discuss one book a year. This year it was *Psychology As Servant of Religion* by Alan Grange. (Detroit)

Practical ideas, all. In some cases they are best suited to the kind of locality where the report originates. For example, Riverside, California recommends relating programs to the neighborhood children. In inner city locations — Chicago, New York, Washington D.C., etc. — this is hard to accomplish. But the greater number of our churches are in small cities or small towns; certainly they would like the details of how Riverside went about and achieved this objective.

To learn more about some of these and other suggestions, does the idea of a one - page newsletter from each group in turn appeal to any one? Your editor would be glad to start the project and to assist others in carrying it out. It would not be a tremendous production. A total of about 65 mimeographed copies each time would suffice. Your reactions would be welcome.

We might have wished on the whole for more information and fewer of those blank spaces but in view of our limitations it seems that we continue to respond valiantly to the circumstances in which we are functioning. Perhaps we need to gather around a table and ask ourselves for new ideas, a new outlook, a new reason to summon energies and interest. What we are doing is useful and necessary BUT — as several comments indicated — are we repeating "the same old thing?"

Would it open new horizons if we moved out beyond the world within our churches and as individuals looked for new situations where we would feel especially needed? To encourage you to explore this idea we have put together the following invitation to "change the world a little."

TO CHANGE THE WORLD A LITTLE

"I wondered why somebody did not do something; then I realized I was somebody." Anon.

In a world where injustice and misery seem to be evergrowing; where violence and tensions each day reach new levels, where the very old and the very young suffer because they need more care and more concern than a fast moving society seems able to give them — **WHAT CAN I DO?** Do you ask yourself this?

Women ask this question many times over. To find answers they usually look to organizations either civic or church related, hoping to find the means by which to be of help, some way to "change the world a little", some way to lessen the feeling which they have of being only an insignificant and helpless observer in a troubled world.

Have you discovered what for you is the opportunity to be of genuine help, a situation where you can bring heart and hand together to work at relieving a burden, or easing it somewhat? If so, we would like to have you write and tell us what you have done or are doing. If you have not searched for and found *your* way to respond or have not stumbled across it in your daily

round, perhaps becoming more aware is all that is needed. *No one is insignificant* — there is something to be done that needs *YOU*. There is a niche where you can give of your courage and support — perhaps even inspiring others to join you.

Recently a widely circulated magazine asked its readers to contribute their ideas on this subject. Among replies received, here are some of the projects undertaken by individual women — with results far beyond their expectations.

1. Volunteering in a day care center for retarded children.
2. Being a big sister (thru' an agency) to a pregnant, friendless girl of 16. This opened the way for further volunteer work with the agency.
3. Visiting the forgotten people in a County Home for the aged and infirm. (The instigator sparked the formation of a small volunteer organization which now has worked out an on - going program.)
4. Learning the alphabet for the deaf, in order to communicate with *one* deaf child. This lead to work with other deaf persons.
5. Reading to a blind person.
6. For several hours a day manning a phone for a service which takes calls from lonely, isolated and confined persons who need to hear a friendly voice and to feel that someone is interested in them.

If you can't do these things alone perhaps you can help to organize a neighborhood group that will work together. It is important wherever possible to seek one - to - one situations. That kind of relationship is so important to aged, ill or handicapped persons, and so lacking in our depersonalized world.

Please write to us about the way you have tried or would like to "change the world a little". Your letter will be published in the Bulletin.

Editor.

A CAUSE THAT DOES UNITE US ALL

In early September we finally received word from Orlando, South Africa as to the safe way to send the check we had been holding. After reading in July that a post office in Johannesburg was destroyed by fire we had written and asked for precise instructions. It is late September now and the check is on its way!

The contributions most recently received have been deposited here in New York to await the additions which we know will come toward the next building phase.

A letter from Eulalia dated August 12, says: "I was hospitalized for a few days but I am back home and active. Thanks for your prayers! Marion, it is two years now that we were with you in your very warm home, when you and Clayton were our dear parents in the U.S.A., an experience we shall never forget in our lives Yes, there is light now. Our dear brothers and sisters the world over are lighting their candles around us, and how can we not begin to see light!"

Leaving now this world of reports, statistics, analyses and projections we come to an entirely different sphere — the world of impressions; impressions received in going from one New Church center to another in rapid succession during a period of several months.

Carole Rienstra whose husband David will next July become an ordained New Church minister spent an interesting summer in just this way. For our enjoyment she recounts her response to a variety of experiences.

SUMMER HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS Carole Rienstra

This summer Dave and I loaded our little green Datsun wagon with our three children, a giant oversized teddybear, twelve suitcases, four sleeping bags, two comforters, a half - done quilt, a clarinet, numerous packages and bundles, a wide assortment of odds and ends and traveled from Massachusetts to Maryland; from Maryland to Michigan; and from Michigan to Maine!

Since this was Dave's last summer before ordination, we thought it would be a good time to get some practical experience serving a congregation. We were delighted when the Baltimore Society accepted our plan and S.S.R. approved. We left in June and were put up in an apartment in off - campus housing across from John Hopkins University on Charles Street, near downtown Baltimore, for two months. We were pleasantly surprised to find Maryland actually a southern state and the people in the Society filled with southern charm and hospitality. From Sunday luncheons to picnics on the Potomac; from lending pots and pans to serving mint juleps on the lush green countryside, they saw to it that our every material need was graciously supplied. And when we saw the doctrinal class and Sunday Morning Worship mushroom during our stay we knew too that the Lord had once again fed us with spiritual as well as natural food.

During our stay there we were also fortunate to take side trips not only to Convention in Philadelphia but also to our nation's capital, only thirty - five minutes away. We found this a real highlight during the bicentennial year, especially for our two older children.

Of course time has a way of moving along and we found that we too had to move on, for the opening of Almont Summer School was next on our itinerary. We did manage to squeeze in a brief visit to our hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan on our way to Almont.

One would hardly recognize Almont! It is still on the corner of Cameron and Tubspring, but that's about all! The little chapel has been turned around and now bids you welcome by way of a lovely little path surrounded with green grass and shrubs. Inside, the chapel just glows with warmth radiated partly from the sun shining in the new amber windows and partly from all the tender loving care it has received in the past few years.

Across the road are a lot of the familiar faces gathered around the flag while it "flings to the breeze" but now they are joined by many new faces counting up to over a hundred for that first week's session. One is overjoyed at the program's winning combination of spiritual and physical fitness that Walter and Kathy Orthwein and many other hardworking Almonteers have prepared for this year. Stimulating lectures, tennis courts, and the swimming hole all provide great ways to stay in shape. As one looks over the grounds with the new dorms, new campfire pit, the many little ones playing around the sandbox, one seems to be

reminded of the words: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you."

It certainly was not easy to pack up and leave this haven but we must and this time we are pleased to make room for another passenger, our special teenage niece, Julie, who is going to join us for our jaunt to Fryeburg. Fryeburg, nestled not only in the beautiful White Mountains of New Hampshire but also in a very special place in our hearts forever! So as we are Saco River bound we begin to eagerly anticipate the lectures in the new lecture hall, just added last year, the great view from the front porch of the "Maine" building, surrounded by the little cabins in the woods, the warm days and cool nights by the fire, the old white church in town for Sunday Worship, the ring of the horseshoes, the Richardson's farm, stunt nite, the Antonucci's and their tennis courts, outing day, a chance to teach, and of course Mr. & Mrs. de Fox, the special camp directors! (also known as our good friends George and Lois McCurdy.) Fryeburg, a very special place, where very special people find time to listen to lectures and find time to grow spiritually closer to the Lord and to each other. And as time inevitably closes this session too, we sing "We're sorry to go away, and wish that we could stay."

Driving home, although I'm sad, I'm cushioned by the thought that if we stay in the ways of the Lord, time and space will not really separate us from all the friends we have made during this summer . . . this summer along some beautiful highways and byways of our life.

READINGS FOR THE NEW AGE

In spite of many prophets of doom, I do not believe there is anything determined or inevitable in the world situation which justifies despair. The forces of evil working on both sides, have always used fear as one of their most effective weapons, and they are at work visibly and audibly at the present time. Let us not forget that there are also spiritual powers at work in the world for good, and that they work for the large part silently and without ostentation. We can offer our greatest help to them by our state of mind. We can refuse to be afraid. We can refuse to be caught up in any collective emotion of hate or antagonism for those who are regarded as potential enemies. We can constantly pray for those in the world who are disinterestedly working for peace. We can practice in our personal life those attitudes of goodwill to difficult neighbors which are so much needed on the national level. Life and Death are not issues which are wholly within our power to determine either as to time or circumstance. It is only asked of us that both on familiar paths and in the crises of change, we are worthy habitations of an immortal spirit.

(cont. p. 224)

SECOND FLORIDA CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 19 – 23, 1977 (Including Travel Time)

SWEDENBORG HOUSE, DeLAND, FLORIDA

This is a Decision Making Conference geared to anyone over fifty who is planning toward the retirement years and those who are already retired. The focus will be on the opportunities available for a third career, for changes in Life Style with new freedoms to choose a mixture of leisure and use, of caring and sharing with others as opposed to loneliness.

We will use as resources the Swedenborgian religious heritage, planning and management skills (be sure to see a forthcoming article in the *Messenger* by Tom Zehner), the wisdom and experience of our combined ages, and our professional staff. Additional topics for consideration will be: Death As A Part Of Life, Time, and Usefulness to the Church.

The Conference is sponsored by the Adult Work Committee of the Board of Education. The director is Calvin Turley with Tom Zehner as Resource person. It is anticipated that one or two theological students will participate as at the previous conference.

COSTS: Registration Fee \$20.00 single; \$30.00 couple.

Room and Meals: *At Swedenborg House*

\$14.00 per day, double.

\$16.00 per day, single

At Motel — with meals at Swedenborg House

\$16.00 double, per day

\$19.00 per day, single.

If interested, please cut off and send in the application form below.

APPLICATION: PLEASE RETURN WITH

REGISTRATION FEE TO: Swedenborg House, Rev. Ernest Frederick
Rte. 2, Box 239, DeLand, Fla. 32720

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ NUMBER IN PARTY _____

WE/I plan to arrive on _____ at _____ We/I will travel by _____
(date) (time)

_____ and will arrive at _____. We/I
(car, plane)
will, will not, need to be met and provided with local transportation to Swedenborg House.

Please indicate housing preference: Swedenborg House
Motel

Make all checks out to: Swedenborg House

If flying, please fly to Orlando airport.

If you would like to stay at Swedenborg House for a few days following the Conference, please write to Mr. Frederick.

DOES YOUR CHURCH NEED A MINISTER?

by Rev. Richard M. Baxter

I have recently been through the experience of candidating — that clumsy dance of those two hat-in-handers — a candidate looking for a job and a society looking for a minister. This is an area in which the society and the applicant have little experience and few guides to call upon. I would like to share with *Messenger* readers some of my experiences and thoughts on the subject.

The society should do its homework well before any candidate visits.

First — assess the society's situation, asking such questions as: What are the society's strengths and potentials as found in (a) individuals, (b) present ministry of congregation (without ordained minister), (c) location, (d) physical plant, etc.

Then compile a list of goals, both short and long term objectives. This provides the necessary basis for discussion with any prospective candidate. It establishes a framework from which an actual program can be delineated. You will find that the goals can be carried out in many forms. At this point it might be helpful to read a short book that I am very excited about called, *Hey! That's Our Church!* by Lyle E. Schaller. It describes different types of churches and the stages they have passed through. While none of the examples fit exactly, the various descriptions do help illuminate the various phases through which your church has passed. The descriptions are coupled with some specific and practical suggestions about "where to go from here" (i.e. goal planning and implementation). With a list of goals and thorough reading of *Hey! That's Our Church!*, your Church Committee will be in a stronger position to do some creative program planning that will help achieve your goals and objectives.

Consider also your society's particular ministry in addition to its present program. In this kind of review it is good to utilize a qualified outside person to help bring out all the factors involved. It is my observation that congregations tend to undervalue their strengths and potentials and overrate their weaknesses. The outside person may be useful in putting any weaknesses in perspective. The weakness could become a strength — it could attract a minister. If there is no room for improvement, there is no reason to come!

Another area that the Church Committee should review beforehand is, "What do we want from a minister?" It really is more than weddings, funerals, baptisms and a sermon 20 minutes long! Is the minister to be a friend, with lots of congregational sociability? Should he be involved in specific community projects or be a hired holy man who stays away from worldly matters? Do you want to emphasize the Sunday School, teenagers, young marrieds, middle life, or senior citizens? (Does this reflect the make-up of the

congregation now or the way you want it to grow?) Recognize that each candidate will have varying abilities with each group. Is it realistic to expect a minister to excel in every facet of church work? How do you want the minister to spend his time? Should he be at the office all day and then do visiting and church meetings at night? Have each Committee member sketch a week in the life of a minister including such things as sermon and class preparation, meditation, correspondence, writing articles for *The Messenger*, keeping up with literature in the field, formal continuing education, etc. How many hours are involved? How balanced is the minister's work-load?

Finally, draw up a list of open-ended questions to which the several candidates can respond. Then you will be in a better position to judge which candidate shows the doctrinal outlook, imagination, initiative and life style you want.

Now comes the time for the candidate's visit. Of course you will ask the candidate to lead a worship service. In addition, try to have the candidate for a full weekend so that you can also arrange (1) an informal question and answer period with the entire congregation, (2) a more formal meeting with the Church Committee to openly discuss the "brass tacks" of the job, including such things as a tentative salary package, the society's present financial conditions, the amount of outside funding that would be needed to hire the candidate, (3) time alone with members of various shades of opinion so that a particularly frank exchange of views can take place over issues that might not arise in a group situation. This latter exchange can occur as the candidate spends a morning, afternoon or evening with various people or sub-groups, or is shuttled around to the planned activities.

Since the number of vacancies exceeds the supply of ministers, the society might well do some thinking from the candidate's perspective of "Why should I come here rather than one of the other vacancies?" What is the minister looking for? Here are some of the factors that a minister considers: the possibilities for service to the Lord and fellow man; challenge; recognition; a feeling that his talents will be well used — that he would be allowed to use his talents; pay; vacation; educational advantages for self, wife and children; interests; hobbies; time on and time off; location; climate. An allied consideration might be the availability of part-time or volunteer secretarial help for the minister. What combination of these features can your Committee offer to obtain the minister you want?

The suggestions made here will require a lot of work. I think you will find them useful, for both the local church and the potential candidate.

REVELATION REVISITED

George Dole

31. Further, intention and discernment make up a person's spirit, since his wisdom and intelligence dwell within them, and so in general does his life. The body is only obedience.
32. The most important thing to know is how in -
tention and discernment do make a single mind. They make a single mind the way the good and the true make a single entity. There is in fact the same kind of marriage between intention and discernment as there is between the good and the true. The nature of this marriage may be amply determined on the basis of the information cited above about the good and the true. In specific, as the good is the actual reality (*Esse*) of anything and the true is its consequent presence (*Existere*), so in the case of the human being, intention is the actual reality of his life and discernment is his life's consequent presence. For the good which is proper to intention takes form in discernment and presents itself (*se sistit*) to view.
33. People who are involved in what is good and true possess intention and discernment. But people who are involved in what is evil and false do not possess intention and discernment, having rather desire instead of intention and information instead of discernment. In fact, a truly human intention is the recipient of what is good, and discernment a recipient of what is true. So intention cannot be predicated of anything evil, nor discernment of anything false, these being opposites, and an opposite being destructive. This is why a person who is involved in something evil and therefore in what is false, cannot be called rational, wise, and intelligent. People seem to believe that evil folk also have in -
tention and discernment, since they describe them as intending and discerning. But their intending is only desiring, and their discerning is only possessing information.

Notes

32. *Esse*, usually left untranslated, is the infinitive, or verbal noun, "to be," or "being." Since it denotes the actual existence of a person or thing, it is here translated "reality" — "the property of being real . . . real existence (Concise Oxford Dictionary, s.v.)."

Existere, also usually left untranslated, unfortunately suggests its English derivative "exist." It is compounded of *sistere* "to stand, set" and *ex* "from, out of," and refers to the "standing forth" or taking perceptible form of any substantial entity — its "presentness" or presence.

Swedenborg's conscious use of this etymological meaning is here demonstrated by his use of *se sistit* (from *sistere*) — "presents itself" — in explanation of *existere*.

33. The distinctions here made between intention and desire, and between discernment and information, are not always observed elsewhere in the Writings. Cf., e.g., A.C. 88854 and D.L.W. 361, A.C. 100642 and D.L.W. 144. The thought remains consistent; the terminology does not.

(Dear Reader: I urge you to read this brief article once more, and then once again. It was only after the third reading that the beauty and the power of these words began to sink through this thick Dutch skull. Ed.)

BOOK REVIEWS

LIFE AFTER LIFE, Raymond A. Moody, Jr. Ph. D., with Foreword by Elizabeth Kubler - Ross, M.D., Mockingbird Press, Atlanta, 1975, \$2.95, pp. 125.

This remarkable little book, including its timely title, is already in its third printing. It is of particular interest to New Church people in that following quotations from Plato, an entire chapter consists of extracts from Swedenborg's writings on life after death as found in our familiar Warren's "Compendium." In his introduction the author says, "My hope for this book is that it will draw attention to a phenomenon which is at once very wide spread and very well - hidden, and, at the same time, help create a more receptive public attitude toward it. For it is my firm conviction that this phenomenon has great significance, not only for many academic and practical fields — especially psychology, psychiatry, medicine, philosophy, theology, and the ministry — but also for the way in which we lead our daily lives."

According to analysts of public opinion there is a growing interest in whether or not there is another world, that is, a world of the spirit. The press, always sensitive to what the public wants, is giving increasing space to such things as horoscopes, prophecies of things to come, dying persons' last words, etc.

This book is recommended not only for personal interest but, especially at the modest price, for wide distribution.

Leslie Marshall

Insights into the Beyond

by Paul Zacharias

Here is a little gem for new readers of Swedenborg and a review and new insight for those who are already familiar with the book, "Heaven and Hell".

In a small paper back book of some sixty pages, the author in his preface tells why he believes in a personal existence after death. After a sketch of the life of Swedenborg and a brief presentation of the Church's teachings on "God, Man and Spirit," he describes simply and beautifully what heaven is like. He quotes from many of the pertinent passages of "Heaven and Hell" with interpretation and examples. He often asks the reader some soul searching questions as "How would I act if I were completely free to act, with no fear of the law, no fear of personal injury, with no outer restraints, with no loss of reputation?" The author believes it is up to the reader to feel one's way through these spiritual truths and to make them his own.

At the end of the book he devotes three pages to "Intimations of Immortality," quoting such well known people as Helen Keller, "Heaven, as Swedenborg portrays it, is not a mere collection of radiant ideas, but a practical liveable world. It should never be forgotten that death is not the end of life, but only one of its most important experiences". And Joseph Fort Newton, "Life is eternal, and love is immortal, and death is only a horizon; and a horizon is nothing save the limit of our sight."

This is a book not only to give to enquiring friends, but one to keep by your bedside table to read and ponder before falling asleep, and perhaps to dream of heaven.

Corinne Tafel

This book may be purchased from your bookroom or
The Swedenborg Foundation, Inc.
139 East 23rd St.,
New York, N.Y. 10010. Price \$1.00

THE SWEDENBORGIAN SPIRIT

by Paul Miloloski

It is amazing how we take for granted the opportunities to expand our minds using places and people located within the Bath community. One of these is the oldest church in Bath, the Swedenborgian. It is located on High Street near the Penthouse Dormitory, and resembles a doric - styled Greek temple.

Zina Hyde, the direct ancestor of the Hyde family who gave the Elmhurst mansion to the Pine Tree Society, (who in turn sold the mansion to our school), was a founder of the Swedenborgian Church in Bath. He is said to have copied its design from "the Madeline" in Paris during one of his trips to Europe. Zina went to a convention in Philadelphia in 1820 to discuss the works of Emanuel Swedenborg. He came back to Bath to institute the strange new religion. This was a real risk for Zina Hyde because churches at that time were the social centers of the town. It was considered sacrilegious to have faith in other religions, especially one that was relatively unknown. You can imagine how some people must have felt about Zina, a man who had been a devoted Christian and member of the Old North Church.

The church itself is called "The Church of the New Jerusalem" or "The New Church." Newer, younger converts, however, have been calling it "Swedenborgian". Followers believe that the second coming of God has already occurred. Like most Christian religions, they believe that the first time was through a woman, the Virgin Mary, as Jesus. The second time was through a man. They believe that Emanuel Swedenborg, a brilliant, well - educated man from Sweden, was divinely inspired. He spent most of his later years interpreting the real, deeper meaning within the Bible. This interpretation is what, a century later, made Helen Keller a convert to the religion. She praised Swedenborg and said that his books gave her a spiritual understanding of the Bible, which before had so baffled her.

Upon entering the church, I was struck by its simplicity. There were no statues, idols, or religious paintings. The only bit of decoration was the stylized saying above the altar, which reads: "SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES: FOR IN THEM YE THINK YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE AND THEY ARE THEY WHICH TESTIFY OF ME."

The congregation is extremely small but is a close - knit and friendly one. Their spirit is one that is not present in many of today's church communities. The service itself is like a typical Christian service, except

for two things. One is that instead of just hymns, chants are read throughout the worship service. A chant is a slow reading of sayings in a steady musical voice.

The other difference is the sermon itself. In the sermon, the usual reading from a book of the Bible is done, but afterward, the deeper, sometimes figurative meaning is explained by the minister. There is also an informal discussion about the sermon after the church service. The members don't seem to worry about their small number very much because they believe that when the time is ready, people will convert to the Swedenborgian faith.

It is amazing what can be learned from just a few visits to one institution in Bath.

(The following letter accompanied the above article.)

Dear Mr. Zacharias:

We have been happy to welcome several students from the Hyde School to the Bath New Church this Bicentennial year. The school teaches character, integrity, caring for others, the courage to grow.

This past year the students wrote a very moving musical drama as their Bicentennial contribution. This production was performed several times in Bath; then in Lexington, Mass., Rockefeller Center in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia, Pa.

After three visits to the Bath New Church, Paul Mikoloski, a Roman Catholic senior at Hyde School, wrote this essay. Pauline Lawrence)



Parables for Today

Luke 11: 5 – 13

Jaikoo E. Lee

LEARNING TO ASK

Surprisingly enough, the trouble with some people is not that they ask too much of life. The trouble with them is that they ask too little of life. As a result, they receive far less than life is ready to give them; and they, in turn, give far less back to life than they potentially can.

One summer I heard a conversation between a mother and her daughter who was getting things ready for the beginning of another school year. The mother said to the daughter, "Don't try to get A's all the time." And I said, "Work for A's all the time!" To this the mother reacted by observing, "That would be awfully frustrating. Think how discouraging it can be if she doesn't get A's." "Imagine," I came back, "how satisfying it can be if she gets A's!"

Christ, the bringer of good news about the Kingdom of God, said many things. But all of them may be condensed into one powerful statement: The Kingdom of God, that ultimate fulfillment of life in the present and future, will be given to anyone who asks!

One day he gave this message in the form of a parable. Suppose you have a friend. And you go to him at midnight and say, "Friend, lend me three loaves of bread. A friend of mine has just arrived, hungry and tired. I'd like to give him something to eat, but I don't have much of anything and the stores are closed." You hear your friend's sleepy and grumpy voice, "Don't bother me. Everybody's gone to bed. The door's shut. I can't get up and give you anything." But you persist. You keep knocking. You use a louder voice. At first he may not get up and give you anything, but because of your persistent asking, he will rise and give you whatever you need.

So the highest achievement and the greatest satisfaction which comes from them are granted to those who keep asking for them.

In the parable the granter of these good things in life is God the Creator. And He is portrayed by the friend to whom you went for the things you needed. Of course, God will not wait until you force Him to give you what you need by your importunity. God knows what we need and He is ready to give it to us at any time.

What the parable is trying to stress is whether we are persistent or not. Persistency may not be needed to influence God. *But it does a lot in shaping our own personality and life.* You see, we value things according to how long and how earnestly we have desired them and worked for them.

The voice — the sleepy, grumpy voice — of the friend points to something quite instructive. Instead of thinking that the voice stands for that of God, try a different approach. Imagine that the voice from within the house is your own voice: your inner voice which frequently tells you in an unexcited, irritable tone that you are unworthy of all these good things in life. This is your inner thought from within. It is not the Lord that says, "Go away! Don't bother me!" It is we that say to ourselves, "Go away! You are not worth the trouble!"

LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

Editor of The Messenger

Can we guess what Swedenborg's formula would be for "the pursuit of happiness?" Something like this?

1. Belief that God brings everyone into the world with the intent that while here each of us will be prepared for a useful life in heaven. That is the only purpose of life on earth. He provides angels to guide and help us.
2. Belief that God is Almighty. Nothing is of more importance to Him than that everyone become prepared for life in heaven. He arranges for our whole lives with that in view, even to the minutest detail. He even permits problems and temptations with that in view. A.C. 8098, 8099. But he leaves us in perfect freedom to accept His bidding. Our prayer, "Thy Kingdom Come."
3. We should keep that in mind and act accordingly. Unless we accept that He is concerned over our every move, our prayer that His will will be done is rather meaningless. Our prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."
4. We must recognize that all good thoughts and desires come from Him. Our prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Sincerely
Gordon C. Mack,
Akron, Ohio.

Change of Address

Rev. and Mrs. Horand Gutfeldt
579 Vincente Ave.
Berkeley, Cal. 94707

MINISTERS' WIVES 1976

GROUP A

For two and a half days prior to the beginning of the business sessions of Convention, thirteen women having the common denominator of being wives of ministers met under the direction of Beth Wales, who had led the group previously in Edmonton and twice in Urbana.

As a new minister's wife I approached these meetings with a certain amount of apprehension — what would they be like? The result: It was a time of generation and regeneration. It was a time to sit back and look at where we had been, where we were and where we wanted to go — a time for personal inventory. It was a time to share ourselves with one another and to build new friendships and to strengthen the bonds of many relationships that have been growing over the years. In many ways, it was a time to experience the essence of "church" — the banding together of individuals with a common goal.

As our sessions came to an end, we were faced with the dilemma of finding a new leader for next year. Beth Wales has been a great asset to our meetings and will be sorely missed. For me, our meetings as Ministers Wives was a high point of Convention and I can't wait until next year!

Polly Baxter.

GROUP B

Joan and Jack Raymond of Toronto, Ontario, were again our able leaders for this group of ministers' wives. They presented some films on "Dying" by Dr. Kubler - Ross. In connection with this topic our discussion centered around the Biblical account of Lazarus, Mary and Martha.

We also viewed some excellent films on "Correspondences." These are always good times for fellowship. Isolated as we are during the year, it is a time to catch up on our experiences — our concerns — our aims and goals — to last another year.

Lisa Reddekopp.

AGER — Mr. John Ager, 95, died in Birmingham, Alabama, on Oct. 1, 1976. Mr. Ager, son of the Rev. John C. Ager, was a devoted New Churchman throughout his long life.

CHURCH RECORDS

BIRTHS

THE REDDEKOPPS, Wayne and Libbie of Detroit, Michigan, are happy to announce the birth of their son, Marc Arthur, born August 4, 1976.

BAPTISMS

FAIRFAX — Doris Gertrude, daughter of Mrs. Alice Fairfax, was baptized at Swedenborg House, DeLand, Florida, on September 5, 1976, the Rev. Ernest L. Frederick officiating.

FUNK — Derek Robert and Lisa Tanya, infant children of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Funk of White Horse, Yukon, were baptized in Roblin, Manitoba, on September 26, 1976, the Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiating.

HOWLAND — Roger Eugene and Marvin Ray, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Garland Howland of Pretty Prairie, Kansas, were baptized on September 19, 1976, the Rev. Eric Zacharias officiating.

UNGER — Tamatha Charlotte, Trevis Keith, and Connie Fay Unger were baptized in the Pretty Prairie New Church, Kansas, on September 19, 1976, the Rev. Eric Zacharias officiating.

CONFIRMATION

UNGER — Mrs. Connie Fay Unger of Pretty Prairie, Kansas, was confirmed into the faith of the New Church on September 19, 1976, the Rev. Eric Zacharias officiating.

MARRIAGES

BENNETT — ERDELY — Gordon Bennett and Diana Erdely were married at the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, Alberta, on July 31, 1976, the Rev. John Jeffery officiating.

DEATHS

BOERICKE — Mrs. John J. (Edith) Boericke died in Philadelphia, Pa., on May 8, 1976. The Rev. Richard H. Tafel officiated at the resurrection service.

DIENER — Miss Christina Diener died at the Good Samaritan Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland, on August 28, 1976. The Rev. Robert F. Tafel officiated at the resurrection service.

SWEENEY — Mrs. Paul A. (Edna) Sweeney died in Philadelphia, Pa., on May 24, 1976. The Rev. Richard H. Tafel officiated at the resurrection service.

STEWART — Mr. James E. Stewart, a member of Gulfport Church, died in Mobile, Ala. on June 19, 1976. The resurrection service was held on June 22, the Rev. Ernest L. Frederick officiating.

AITKEN — Laura Sewall Aitken, 89, of Bath, Maine, died on August 13, 1976. Mrs. Aitken, a granddaughter of the Rev. O. L. Barler, was a devoted New Church worker through her long and useful life, first in Chicago, then in Bath. The resurrection service was conducted by the Rev. Franklin H. Blackmer on August 16.

CONVENTION PEOPLE AND PLACES

A few high - lights from the Pacific Coast Association meeting in Los Angeles from August 26 — 29: The theme was "To Be Young As A Church", introduced by the host pastor, the Rev. Chungsun Lee . . . Convention President Eric Zacharias consecrated Lois Miller as a lay leader for San Diego . . . Lisa Reddekopp officiated at the Women's Alliance Breakfast, which included an inspiring talk by Donna Barnhill of Riverside, California . . . Plans are being made for a Family Summer Camp to be held at Lopez Lake; and it's good to hear that Split Mountain Camp is to be re - activated next year . . . Per - Capita Tax in the Pacific Coast Association in 1977 will be \$10 instead of the current \$6 — and we wonder how many Associations levy a per - capita tax? . . . A Missionary Outreach Committee was formed, with the Rev. Andre Diaconoff in charge of the northern area, and Mareta Saul, Lois Miller and the Rev. Chungsun Lee serving the south - western states.

More Summer Camp News: Sixty - five adults and children enjoyed the camp experience at Paulhaven this summer. This is one of our newer camps, located some fifty miles north - east of Edmonton. Eric Osborne of Calgary was camp director. . . . And Kemper Road Center Camp, in southern Ohio, was a great success again this year. About fifty children attended over the two week period. The theme here was "Free to Be, You and Me", where each participant's uniqueness, creativity and self - worth was stressed. The staff included: Sue Harvie, Pat Harvie, Mary Lou Koenig, Dick Tafel, Gloria Toot, Tina Toney, Susan Wood and Carol Woodward And out in Kansas seventeen young people went on a different kind of "fishing expedition" this summer. Each day of their camp - out on Table Rock Lake in the Ozarks, the students spent an hour or more fishing in DIVINE PROVIDENCE or HEAVEN AND HELL. "The bait consisted of paragraph numbers, chosen at random, and given to the students. The first day there were a variety of interesting "catches." The second day it turned out that we must have gone "deep sea fishing". It was a little rougher going, but with some assistance we came in with full nets. The third day, each one provided his own bait. Our pur-

pose was to discover what kinds of fish there really are in the streams, lakes and seas which abound in the world of revelation. The response, from all ages, was most gratifying. This was the most attentive group of young people we have had at summer camp in the last ten or twelve years." Adult sponsors included Mr. and Mrs. Virgil Beougher, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Bowman, and the Rev. and Mrs. Galen Unruh

Karin Swedenborg, the great, great, great grand daughter - in - law of Emanuel Swedenborg, visited the Kemper Road Center in Ohio on August 5th. Karin was in the United States this summer on behalf of the International Children's Summer Village, and was able to visit several Swedenborgian churches on her tour across the country Members of the Wilmington New Church were asked to write down their primary concerns regarding the coming year in their society. What did they most want, and desire, for the life of the church? The responses indicated four areas of greatest common interest: 1. Growth in membership. 2. Regular and special worship services. 3. Pastoral care and the ministry of lay people to each other. 4. Continued and increased fellowship within the society. I suppose that in varying degrees these survey results would be similar in most churches throughout Convention.

IN THE DECEMBER MESSENGER

Special Christmas features

How to listen to a sermon

Photo Contest —

"How many faces can you identify?"

Our Church in Washington D.C.

That's a Good Question!

And more . . .

THE MESSENGER

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(cont. from p. 216)

You that have faith to look with fearless eyes
 Beyond the tragedy of a world at strife,
 And trust that out of night and death shall rise
 The dawn of ampler life:

Rejoice, whatever anguish rend your heart
 That God has given you, for a priceless dower,
 To live in these great times and have your part
 In freedom's crowning hour.

That you may tell your sons who see the light
 High in the heavens their heritage to take;
 "I saw the powers of darkness put to flight!
 I saw the morning break!"

Raynor C. Johnson.