

The Messenger

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH

FEBRUARY 1977

ALMIGHTY GOD, we make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt keep the United States in Thy holy protection; that Thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government and entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another and for their fellow citizens of the United States at large. And finally that Thou wilt most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, without a humble imitation of whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy nation.

Grant our supplication, we beseech Thee,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

George Washington

Now Consider This —

"Look at the Seventh - Day Adventists. Believing that a Christian's body is a temple of God, to be kept clean, members are not permitted to use tobacco or alcohol in any form. They do not eat such foods as pork or lobster, regarding them as unclean. Tea and coffee are banned.

They must give 10% of their income to spread the gospel. Money for any other purpose, such as an addition to the church building, must be raised above the tithe. Many members give as high as 20% and 25% to the church.

They are conscientious objectors. During war time they serve in the medical corps and in peace time they maintain disaster units.

All members must observe Saturday as their holy day for worship. This creates a hardship for many people, especially the owners of small businesses who would do most of their business on Saturday.

Despite these high standards, the church is among the fastest growing of all denominations. They have missionaries in more countries than any other group. In South America a new congregation is formed every day with at least 100 members.

They also operate the world's largest Protestant parochial school system, complete from kindergartens to universities and medical schools."

The above information comes from a recent Missionary Alliance magazine. It makes you think and it raises a number of questions. Have we made it too easy to join the Swedenborgian Church? Do we expect too little of our members after they do join? What about those of us who were born and raised in Convention — how many of us have this kind of zeal and commitment? We believe in the teachings of the New Age. What difference does this belief system make in our daily affairs? Something to consider.

NEXT MONTH

A special issue on:
Religion and the Arts

HORIZONS

At a local bookstore I recently came across the newest book by the controversial Swiss Catholic theologian, Hans Küng, entitled, "On Being A Christian". At \$14.95 and 720 pages in length, I didn't buy the book, but leafed through the opening section, which he calls "The Horizon", and in which he speaks to a number of questions, including:

"What can we know? Why is there anything at all? Why not nothing? Where does man come from and where does he go to? Why is the world as it is? What is the ultimate reason and meaning of all reality?"

"What ought we to do? Why do we do what we do? Why and to whom are we finally responsible? What deserves forthright contempt and what love? What is the point of loyalty and friendship, but also what is the point of suffering and sin? What really matters for man?"

"What may we hope? Why are we here? What is it all about? What will give us courage for life and what courage for death?"

Good questions these, suitable for a local study group, or for personal reflection. Not that we need to answer them all, right now. The spiritual life is not greatly advanced just by the act of answering questions. But it's a good place to start. This inner searching and wrestling may lead us to the place where we "minister to others in unconditional trust, goodness, giving, loving good will, in advance and without any compelling reasons", which is Kung's description of being a Christian.

P. Z.

THE MESSENGER

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The Starting Line by Eric Zacharias

In early December, Convention's Advisory Placement Committee met with the three theological students now looking ahead to their graduation and active ministry. This was an opportunity for us to share with one another the ideal and also the reality of ministry, and in this sharing we felt a response to the Lord's commission, "Therefore go and make disciples in all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . . and know that I am with you always."

What is ministry in today's society? And more specifically, what is ministry in the Swedenborgian Church?

I left Boston for the flight to Kansas after five days of intensive meetings. Weariness settled deep into my bones, I drew the cloak of isolation around me — and relaxed — with not even the responsibility for conversation pressing me.

The jet quickly left behind the picturesque Boston harbor, its lighthouses and the ships plying the water - ways. In my coat I carried a letter given me by Rev. Edwin Capon. I read it hastily, closed my eyes — to doze. Then a voice beside me said —

"Sir, I must first apologize. You are Rev. Zacharias, I presume. I read the letter addressed to you and I would like to talk with you. The letter said something about ministry in the small church and the training of lay people to serve more effectively in the church. My wife and I have been married for only five months. We are active in a small church in Missouri."

My conversant was a young man in his early twenties. For two hours we talked of ministry, the role of the laity, marriage, and the general state of society. In Chicago we shook hands, wished one another a merry Christmas and separated — in all probability never to meet again.

The impact, however, of my experience with this young man lingers. What is the future of ministry in our society? Are we in Convention preparing ourselves to meet this future and the demands it will make on us? What is the nature of the opportunities and challenges we can offer our theological students?

The General Convention has established and maintains through its Board of Managers the Swedenborg School of Religion. A primary purpose of the School is to train ministers. The students recently interviewed by the Advisory Placement Committee appear to have a good grasp of the significance of ministry. I greatly appreciated what I heard from them.

From this point, that which I write is highly subjective and is in essence a portrayal of personal experience in the ministry for the past twenty - five years.

The Swedenborg School of Religion has the responsibility for providing a climate which nurtures both the academic and the emotional needs of its students. A steady growth in the appreciation of the power and the beauty of God's Word, in the revelation given to the world through Emanuel Swedenborg and a consistent faith in the potential for salvation given by God to all persons must provide the basis for an ever enlarging vision of ministry. *Growth is not only a life time process; it is an open - ended gift given us by our Creator.* It is essential, it seems to me, that a minister recognize this in himself and that sensitivity to this divine reality govern his relationship with all persons in a spirit of acceptance and support.

In the Arcana, we read, "As concerns priests, they must teach men the way to Heaven, and also lead them. They must teach them according to the doctrine of their own church, and must lead them to live according to it."

The thrust of the writings, concerning priesthood and ministry, is *involvement* — active immersion in the processes of life. And certainly this is the strength of the Lord's ministry. Yes, he "went up into a mountain, and opened his mouth and taught them", but he also was known as a "friend of publicans and sinners", he held the sick in his arms and forgave the adulteress. Indeed, was it not here, as he squarely confronted the perverseness of human nature and life that his teachings spoke with an authority never before demonstrated? He reached down to draw to himself a bleeding, hurting, troubled humanity — and made himself one with it.

This must become, it seems to me, our urgent sense of ministry. It is not an easy life. Ministry is to walk with people along the road of life, to share something of one's self with them in their joys and sorrows, to discover with them something of the beauty of life, something of the Lord's goodness. Ministry is holding to an abiding faith in the ultimate triumph of good over evil.

And to the degree that we accept the principle of the priesthood of all believers — ministry finally becomes the way of life for us all.

BACK-TO-BASICS LIVING

**These Swedenborgians have chosen
to live simply and naturally.
Here are their Stories.**

THE HEART KNOWS PEACE

by Jan Seibert

When young people move to the country, they're "doing their thing." When their elders move far from hamlet, village, or town, they're daft, oddballs, out of step with the human race, impractical dreamers, or among the fortunate few. Attitudes of judge and jury change the verdict, but almost all agree that as we age we should take it easy, should stick close to the medical and social amenities that inhere in urban settings, that no way should we opt for the physically hard life of the woods.

We enjoyed our city life and our jobs. We weren't frightened by the crimes and the smog of the city. We didn't feel our freedoms threatened because we lived with many thousands of others. We believed in, and capitalized upon, the realities of a rewarding city life. That life is still there; it's no longer for us.

We forsook the city for a solid reason. My husband had a catastrophic illness which forced immediate — and early — retirement. Our budget wouldn't support life in the city any longer, at least on our accustomed scale. We had a small log house on the bluff of the Pacific Ocean, and when our world seemingly folded in upon us, we forsook our home and the city, moved to our log house in the country, and revised our entire style of life to fit within the framework of new economic and physical limitations. The change was dramatic.

We've thrived.

From busy professional lives we embarked on what has turned out to be even busier self-sufficiency. No alarm clocks for us any more. No superiors sit in judgment on our accomplishments or lack of them. Also, no pay checks. Our pensions are small because of very early retirement, so our ingenuity has to make up for the missing income. For two years now we've lived well and happily. That shattered health has been regained in large measure. Two busier people are rarely to be found. There simply isn't enough time in our

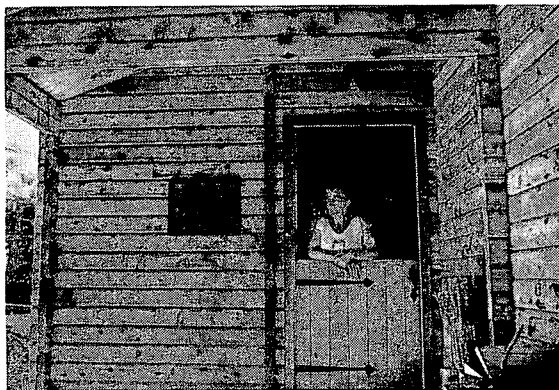
days for an outside job, and surely not for that rocking chair. We and God are in the business of life together, and He gives us vast responsibility for ourselves.

We were used to city services: water and gas and sewers in pipes under the street, garbage trucks that regularly removed our refuse, dependable electricity and telephones, shops and markets that delivered to our door, banks and post office a few minutes from home or office, our church close by, our friends all around us. And now?

Now we don't live on a street. Now no pipes or trucks serve our needs. Except for electricity and telephone, we're on our own. When the power fails, the fireplace keeps us warm, kerosene lamps light our way, a camp stove cooks our food, and we entertain ourselves, with music from a folding pump organ and an old music box, or with games and books.

Now we get water from our own well. It's delicious — nothing added or taken away. It's wonderful, pure, clear, and hard as a rock. It's our responsibility to keep it unpolluted, for there's no filter plant betwixt its source and us. Sometimes our well goes dry, so we've learned to husband our resource more carefully, to cherish how much water means to life, to hold in awe the underground stream that makes our country life possible. In the city we rarely thought much about water except for its utility. Turned on the faucet; water came out. It was simple. Now water is profoundly important, to be treated with great respect, to be savored, not to be poured thoughtlessly down the drain nor left to flow wastefully onto earth that's drunk its fill. Now we know one aspect of the meaning of "heightened consciousness." We're conscious of water.

And we're conscious of the joy of being warm. When the wood is split and stacked high against the house, we know we'll revel in the snap and pop of the fire and in its vivid red and gold light as it drives the cold and the shadows back beyond the walls. Our city furnace kept even the corners warm, but it was an impersonal heat, requiring nothing of us but to



After baking 24 pie crusts, Jan Seibert takes a breather.

turn up the thermostat. This is living warmth that responds directly to our care after we've had the foresight to lay in adequate wood. Wood isn't simply "there," as furnace fuels are. It's to be gathered, split, chopped, stacked, carried. It's to be tended by human beings — by us — and then it meets our need. Wood gets to be a very personal responsibility in the country.

We're always aware, also, that no sewer pipe runs out to the street from this house. It's our responsibility to keep our septic system in balance, not to overload or mistreat it. To manage our waste products we're careful to compost everything compostable, burn everything burnable, recycle everything recyclable, and as a last resort to make that fifteen - mile round trip to the county dump. The garbage truck route stops twelve miles from our house. We manage well, or we're in trouble. Self-sufficiency, even in this, brings a responsibility the city dweller never feels. We accept our accountability in this. We're in charge.

We're more than conscious of the world immediately around us, too. We race to the window in the morning. Will the day be warm or cold, wet or dry, bright or grey, windy or calm? It matters. In the city we went to the same offices regardless of the weather and did the same jobs. Oh, sometimes we wore raincoats, or were booted, scarved or gloved, or wore sunglasses and wilted in the heat. But aside from comfort or discomfort, what the world was up to didn't impinge on us as far as how we spent the working day. Now the portents of the sky dictate what the chores will be and how we'll apportion our time. It's a hand - in - glove sort of living, with the weather as dictator.

There's another consciousness of the world about us, magnificently heightened, and that's of the beauty and sometimes of the terror of the

natural world that surrounds us. There are no soaring works of man within our view, works we enjoyed in the city, still go to visit sometimes, and never miss in the country. We listen to the raucous creek in early spring, hear the pines and firs shrieking in protest against the howling winds of winter, feel a resurgence of soul in response to the wildly alive and writhing ocean that pelts the foot of our bluff, bristle at the sounds of raccoons screaming in the trees, laugh as the squirrels bombard our roof with pine cones, watch closely as the river, rising the flood, pummels the bluff with huge redwood logs. We're very much a part of our world, and what it does matters to us directly.

We're also gloriously conscious of serenity and peace. No police, fire, or ambulance sirens scream in our ears. If we needed help, those services would get here, but it might be in hours rather than in minutes. Thus we savor a silence from manmade sounds, and because we must prevent the need for sirens, we give more heed to the safety of home and each other, to reliance on ourselves. We're more conscious of our responsibilities to ourselves and to our surroundings. We have a more cogent sense of importance and worth to each other, for we're all each of us has. We're needed, and we're superbly useful in ways new to us, deeply satisfying ways.

As a dilettante city gardener, I raised pretty flowers. Now I raise food. The flowers will come when the essentials of food production are satisfied. In the interim, wildflowers in their seasons fill the house with color and beauty of form. It's heady business to raise your own produce, to be able to dash down to the garden and harvest the vegetables and salad greens for dinner. It's hard physical labor to make a garden plot on a steep slope entangled with poison oak, blackberries, and bunch grass. But the excitement of watching your own food grow in response to your care cannot be matched, especially when your garden, hanging on the brink of the ocean, has a view to the far horizon and every spadeful is lifted to the obligato of the waves.

While I'm busy with house and garden chores, my husband is busy finishing building the house. His progress was mortal slow at first, but with his increasing strength comes faster accomplishment. In a few months more the house will be completed and the living easier in consequence. Then he can get on with the enriching projects which have had to wait while the necessities were built. When each step of the building is finished, we take time to

glow together. He accepted the responsibility of housing us well. He met the challenge, beautifully.

We could have ample venison and rabbit on the table if we could bring ourselves to shoot those predators who wreak havoc in the garden. But that we can't do, so we eat more vegetables — I plant too many anyway — and buy meat from local farmers or from the supermarket when we make that fifty-mile round trip to town.

In trying to tell you about our back-to-the-basics life, I've done some thinking while my hands continued to do some physical work. (Pulling weeds, shelling peas, spading the garden, or cleaning the house all leave the mind free for flights of fancy, thinking, or planning.) The word that keeps cropping up as I think about the rewarding fullness of rural living is responsibility. Over and over, responsibility. Surely there's a deep human need to be responsible, to be accountable, to be in charge of a big slice of your own destiny. When you depend on yourself to supply or to manage the many faceted ramifications of living, you become important — really important — to yourself and to the others in your microcosm. You count. You're a being of purpose, of worth, of use.

WHY WE DWELL AMONG GREEN MOUNTAINS

by Tina Wood

Willis and I and our year-old son, Joshua, live on a 90-acre farm in Vermont which has been in Willis' family for six generations. But it is not the kind of farm most people think of — there are no herds of cows, or big tractors, or big fields of grain. It is more like a farm you would have found around the turn of the century — a small-time, diversified farm, more concerned with self-sufficiency than progress. A look at the seventeen out-buildings gives you an idea of the kind of farm it is: there is our newly built sugarhouse with its new 4' x 14' stainless steel evaporator and the old pre-Revolutionary War built cider mill; there is the nice old complex of attached barns which form a long L shape but which separately comprise a cow barn, a hay barn, a horse barn and a silo; there is the much-used sawmill and the little-used carriage house (with its horse-drawn buggies, wagons, and sleigh); there are countless sheds for storing wood, machinery, tools, and animals; and finally, the ice-house which fell down. Willis spent this summer

A city full of people is like a huge centrifuge. The larger the whirling mass, the farther the individual can be flung until he loses contact with the vortex of his own life or the life of others. On the rural fringes of society, each person interacts more closely with the few in his orbit and gains proportionately more importance and responsibility. The few people weave a web of friendship and mutual need to hold each other close. Then they let the centrifugal forces of life spin spaces between them wide enough for individuality. But the threads are never allowed to snap. Each of us needs the other, yet each of us respects the needs for separateness, for differentness, for individual perception and execution of the meaning of responsibility. As long as God gives us the strength, we'll stay on our land and live with it in harmony.

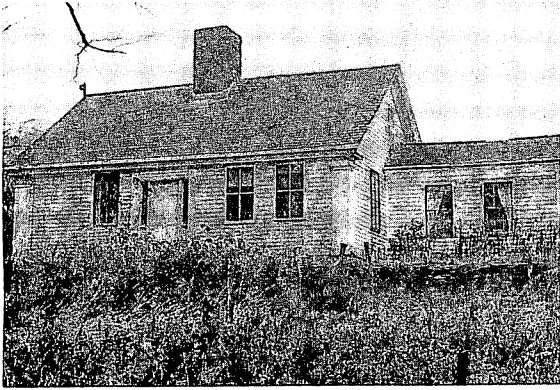
Our good friend Willard M. Smith summed up for us what our country life means.

Veils of the summer sea fog
Wrap it in misty fleece
And there, 'twixt wood and water,
The heart knows peace.

either sawing lumber from our trees to use repairing various buildings or actually doing the repair work. He'll probably be doing the same for several summers to come.

Our work changes with the seasons and the weather. The weatherman is our only boss. In the fall we make cider in our press which squeezes 200 gallons of cider each pressing, which we sell both wholesale and retail. We also make cider jelly by boiling cider in the same evaporator we use for making maple syrup in the spring. Last year we made 3½ tons of jelly. We also make hard cider and vinegar for our own use.

In the winter our work depends on the weather but it is less demanding. We spend more time on our various interests and crafts (I spin and weave; Willis is a furniture-maker and is turning one of the barns into a wood-working shop). We cross-country ski for amusement. Or we work outdoors getting in wood, an endless task. In both sugaring and jelly-making the evaporator gobbles up cords of wood and we also use wood in heating the house and cooking. Even our hot water is wood-heated. Winter is also the time for getting in logs for our sawmill to be used in the summer.



The Wood home was built in 1790 by a great - great uncle.

Sugaring starts as soon as the days warm up to above freezing and the nights remain cold. We tap 1200 trees and make about 300 gallons of maple syrup. When the weather is right, the sap runs fast and we have all we can do to keep up with it. The sap must be boiled down into syrup as quickly as possible which sometimes means boiling around the clock. At other times, there may be a stretch of days without any work to do as it is either too cold or too warm for the sap to run.

The thing I love most about sugaring is that it gets me into the woods in the early, early spring, which most people miss. It is always exciting to find the first patch of bare ground and the first wildflower.

When the last sap bucket is washed and put away, it is time to think of the garden and planting and plowing. Our garden is big enough to feed us through the winter and living this farm - life certainly does provide us with good eating. It is a wonderful feeling at Thanksgiving dinner that only the turkey was not home grown (only because we haven't been brave enough to try raising turkeys).

In the summer we seem to live outdoors haying, fencing, sawing lumber, fixing buildings, gardening, clearing fields, whatever needs doing. And before we realize, it is cider - making time again.

As to why we chose this life - style, there are many reasons. A poem comes to mind called "Conversation in the Mountains" by Li Po which partly answers:

If you were to ask me why I dwell among
green mountains
I would laugh silently; My soul is serene
The peach blossom follows the moving
water;
There is another heaven and earth beyond
the world of men.

It is a peaceful life - style — there is silence and serenity always to be found. There is a slower pace of living and it is a life close to nature and in harmony with it. The opportunity for noticing details of nature is always there — an apple blossom floating on the pond; a catbird's nest — and to be constantly surrounded by God's handiwork gives one the opportunity to know the Lord and be closer to Him.

A farmer deals with cycles and the closer you live to nature the more cycles you deal with. Seeing a cycle through — being involved in each part of it and knowing its beginning and ending — gives a wholeness to your life and a feeling of purposefulness. This is why we dwell among green mountains.



Tina Wood, daughter of Ray and Betty Guiu, in the apple cider

LIVING THE WHOLE LIFE

BY Matthew Zacharias

"Simplify, Simplify, Simplify," wrote Henry Thoreau. At times I see the inner truth of these words — times when I'm rowing across a calm lake and dusk is settling in, or lovingly turning the soil of the garden with a hoe, or watching and *seeing* into the eyes of a creature of the forest. They've learned this lesson a long time ago. They've never known any other way to live.

To what extent does my physical environment influence my spiritual life? This is a big question for me right now. I'm finding that certain spiritual needs are not met in man-made surroundings. I see that other people have survived and progressed well in the city. Man is an extremely adaptable creature and seems to get along alright in this unnatural environment; some even thrive on it. But as for me, I find that living with the continuous noise of engines and neon lights and the stench of factories dulls my senses. Soon, (sad to say), to escape such afflictions, I don't even notice these sights, smells and sounds — nor anything else — except in powerful doses. My spiritual body uses the five physical senses for a stepping stone. So without a place to "take off" from, I feel rather stranded. Life today has taken us away from the existence our not so distant ancestors once lived. The city has taken away the feeling of oneness with nature. Until I moved to a farm I never knew what I was missing.

However, after having lived both in the country and the city, I think the Good Life can be found anywhere. Each person has to decide for himself where it is he feels most at home. Man made pressures cannot force us to live a certain way — always we are free to choose. The trouble is that succumbing to an artificial culture pulls us out of touch with ourselves and God. Then we become nothing more than an electrode in a vast network of wires.

Life is between the individual and the Lord. There is nothing more important than this, nor are there any substitutions. When we have a good relationship with the Lord, then the people we come into contact with are greeted with love, and ideas and feelings flow freely between us.

The Lord wants us to live a simple, natural life. I find this way of life best expressed in nature. The growing, healthy landscape in summer; the bleak barrenness of the late fall;



Matthew and sister Jeannie "on the farm"

the crisp, fresh coldness of a walk across a snowy field; and finally the warming, soothing heat of a springtime's sun. Every season describes perfectly the changing inner states of our mind. Nature seems to ask us to change with it and to accept the dark, bleak periods as any other. Always the growth of new life will begin again. We see it happening outside of us — why shouldn't it happen inside as well?

To feel the oneness of nature is to see God's grand plan happening right now. To learn about and to utilize the growing plants of forest and field is to feel even more keenly and see even more acutely the perfected life that does exist if only we open our eyes to see it. In their proper place, the physical body and the material world are good. But today, the physical self has been sadly neglected, *except for appearances*.

The physical, mental and spiritual qualities must all work together — they accent one another. If one of these three basic parts of a human being is neglected, the others suffer as a result. These three "stories" must be in harmony.

When thinking about the natural, whole existence we need to remember the original natives of this land. The Indian's life style seemed to blend perfectly with their surroundings. The two were inseparable. I know the primitive's way of life is gone forever, n'er to return, but certain elements can and should be retained. I see some of these wholesome qualities coming to the surface in this modern age. The Lord works in mysterious ways, difficult for us to understand, but He is never wrong. The beginnings of this Divine plan — to unite the world even as a heaven on earth — are now visible. This is the simple, natural process planned from the beginning. To believe this gives life a glow.

con't on page 34.

Needed: A United States WORLD FOOD POLICY

by Bronson Clark

This fall produced a good grain harvest, in developing and developed countries alike. The acute food shortages experienced during the past years in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Chad with resulting deaths in the hundreds of thousands is now but a dark memory. While world food reserves have not been rebuilt to meet disasters caused by weather or political upheavals, still the community of nations and especially the United States, has a brief respite to develop a coherent world food policy before the next crisis which is bound to come. Our special responsibility stems from our role as the world's greatest producer of food, most of which is consumed domestically or sold for dollars abroad. To understand how food deficit countries view the United States, we have only to think how we view the OPEC countries who have the world's greatest oil reserves. Will these oil reserves be used in legitimate ways to power the world's economies; or will oil be priced at what the market will bear, with serious political and social consequences?

Thus, it can be asked, will the United States utilize its grain production solely on the basis of market factors with the developing countries left out, an all too recent reality? Will the United States, which in the years 1968 — 1972 gave 9 million tons to food deficit countries each year, but which in the last few years has reduced these grants to 4 million tons, reduce this modest amount even further? And will even this amount continue to be "politicized" with 90% of it utilized, as it has in the past, by Presidents in support of U.S. military and political goals in places like South Korea, South Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand; countries not on the list of the United Nations food deficit countries?

A new start was made at the United Nations World Food Conference held in Rome in 1974. For the first time the governments of the world sat down to see what orderly plans might be drawn up to prevent famine from overwhelming those nations struggling to free themselves of colonialism, and their own feudal ways. With United States support a World Food Council, composed of member governments, was established and made responsible to the United

Nations Assembly. The purpose of the Council is to monitor the food alert reports flowing to it from the Food and Agricultural Organizations (FAD) and to set quotas of food reserves, and establish plans to meet any food catastrophe. The Council is to be the link between international needs and the international communities' response to these needs.

The World Food Conference rejected the one-crop economies of the past and established an "Agricultural Development Fund" to help each nation eventually achieve the capacity of feeding its own people. The fund would help create the infrastructure of agricultural colleges, research institutes, and crop and fertilizer development programs that must go forward in each food deficit country. Contributions to this Fund, which has as its goal one billion dollars (\$300 million has already been pledged by the oil producing countries), are lagging and require a new commitment by the developed countries. No doubt financial support for the Fund would do more to increase world stability than the current hundreds of millions spent each year by the nations on arms.

As for the United States, an opportunity now exists to re-examine our own national commitment to international aid. A reasonable level of aid should be established by Congress. The largest percentage of our aid should be utilized through the United Nations because the U.S. cannot shoulder the burden of aid alone; and only by working with the UN system can the demands be met equitably by the developed nations. The new administration should not divert aid voted by Congress to political purposes which are not related to the food deficit countries. Some of our aid should include the transfer of technical skills which have made U.S. agriculture and the American farmer the wonder of the world.

As individuals responsive to the story of the Good Samaritan, helping our fellow human beings in need is not only the 'right' thing to do, but it is imperative for our own health as well. To watch millions of the human family starve on our TV screens without response is to become so brutalized that social norms within our own society would collapse.

Our first task is to make certain our government responds with adequate planning and UN participation. But an additional personal task is to examine our own society which stresses consumption as against conservation. At the Rome World Food Conference, those from affluent countries who lobbied among the delegates of the developing countries for family planning received the response, "Get your over consumption under control and we will take care of our population problem!" Not only is our meat oriented diet wasteful in terms of grain resources, but many believe it is an unhealthy diet which may lead to stroke and cancer. Our diets need reexamination as well as all consumption patterns including everything from energy to pet foods and lawn fertilizers.

Good beginnings, both on individual levels and on national levels have been made. For the wondrous miracle of life aboard spaceship Earth to continue, these beginnings must be strengthened into a strong life support system.

(Bronson Clark is an international affairs analyst. He is a former executive secretary of the American Friends Service Committee, and attended the World Food Conference in Rome in 1974. Bronson was raised in the Swedenborgian Church in Cleveland, Ohio.)

Living The Whole Life
con't from page 32

"God is Love itself and Wisdom itself: the affections of His Love are infinite, as are also the perceptions of His Wisdom, and of these all things which appear on the earth are correspondences. This is the origin of birds and beasts, trees and shrubs, corn and grain, herbs and grass. For God is not spacial, but is in space everywhere, so that He is in the universe from first things to last." TCR 78.3

The Way of Holiness

One eats in holiness, tastes the taste of food in holiness, and the table becomes an altar. One works in holiness; one walks across fields in holiness, and the soft songs of birds, which they voice to God, enters into the song of our soul. A husband is united with his wife in holiness and Shalom rests over them.

Martin Buber

CONVENTION CALENDAR

Dept. of Publications, Phila.	Feb. 17 — 19
Florida Conference, DeLand	Feb. 19 — 23
Directors — N.C.T.S., Newton	Feb. 26
C.O.M. Exec. Committee, Newton	March 2 — 3
Planning and Development, Newton	March 20 — 22
C.A.M., Newton	March 23 — 25
Board of Education, Newton	March 25 — 27
Com. on Human Sexuality, Newton	April 15 — 17
Mid - Atlantic Retreat	April 29 — 30
Swedenborg Foundation, New York	May 9
S.S.R. Board of Managers	May 20 — 21
General Convention, San Francisco	June 29 — July 3
Post - Convention Conference, Mill Valley	July 3 — 8

Summer Camp Reports
con't from page 41

Also in the kitchen but very much a part of the camp were two enthusiastic and energetic young women, Debbi Skillings and Sara Benson. They were in the kitchen to help Sandra and wash dishes but they also played games with the campers and helped out wherever needed. These two women were more help than any director could ask for.

The 1976 Camp season of Blairhaven by all indications was a great success. Campers were given necessary guidelines plus enormous amounts of love and affection from all staff members. Each camper was encouraged to participate in new and old activities. We had the opportunity to see the "tall ships" pass through the Cape Cod Canal on Friday, July 9th. It was one of two field trips. The other was a tour of Otis Air Force Base.

MY JOB AS NEW CHURCH MINISTER IN NIGERIA

BY Joseph Agbaje

My job in Nigeria is broadly divided into two spheres — my duty in the New Church, and my outside connections. The New Church field in Nigeria is divided into five main districts, with a minister in charge of each district. The Owo District is in Western Nigeria, and the other four are in the eastern territories of Nigeria.

My job as the resident minister at Owo is to conduct the holy services in the local vernacular — Yoruba — and arrange for child-naming ceremonies, baptisms, and burials. The average number baptized in a year is about ninety. Classes where women are taught the basic doctrine or prepared for baptism or confirmation are held on Friday evenings, with not less than sixty coming regularly. There is prayer meeting at 5:30 every morning, Monday through Saturday. The men's class meets on Sunday morning at 7 a.m. before the morning service. The Bishop S.K. Asawo is responsible for over all direction and for the celebration of the Holy Supper. The church building at Fajuyi Road in Owo, seats one thousand people, with a wide veranda to accomodate extra. From three hundred to over a thousand attend the holy services, depending on the season and occasion, all year round.

My duty as District Superintendent for Western Nigeria, (I am the ordained minister for the district,) is to go around at least once a quarter to each society for the leading of worship services, including baptisms, festivals like the harvest, and special services; to discuss the progress of the society; to meet and teach the young people; to meet with the Women's League; to inspect the books and premises; to watch the lay leaders in action in order to advise on procedures and improvement in the work of the society. There are four societies in the Owo district. The lay leaders are paid from a central district fund raised by assessing each society.

My work as the managing director of the New Church Bookshop involves ordering books for pupils, stocking the Writings, and printing standard hymn books in Yoruba for the district.

As Vice President of the New Church Conference in Nigeria, I have also enjoyed the conferences in many places in both Western and Eastern Nigeria, and I have met friendly,

staunch members who have worked hard to make the church felt in their areas. This entails sometimes driving three hundred miles by land and spending two days journeying by motor powered canoes before reaching the farthest point east — Kula, situated by the confluence of the River Niger and the Atlantic Ocean.

In 1972 the time came when there was need to open a college to train church workers and student ministers. I was appointed the liaison officer responsible to the New Church College in England. Two students have qualified through that training as Senior Leaders. Many others are enrolled, but do not have the finances to complete the course. Notwithstanding, I did have students from both sections of the church, and recently from Ghana, a sister country on the West Coast of Africa.

Periodically, the Overseas Committee in England and the Swedenborg Foundation in America have jointly sponsored my visit to Ghana. It is heartening to note that as a result of the last visit in 1973 — 74, Pastor Moses K. Awortwe, with his church, has accepted the Writings. Pastor Awortwe was baptized and confirmed into the New Church in the open conference at Umuahia in Eastern Nigeria in December 1975. I had given him a short course in the Heavenly Doctrines and the Arcana when he spent a month at Owo last year. I have the hope that from Ghana the New Church may spread to Togo and Benin, the two French speaking countries between Nigeria and Ghana.

My work outside the New Church has been mainly teaching. For some years past up to last year, about 240 students graduated out of New Church Schools in Owo alone. The schools range from elementary to junior high, to the Grammar Schools. I have organized a sort of young people's organization, like Scouts, known as "The Fire Fellowship". Like other voluntary organizations, the New Church Fire Fellowship joins in national activities and parades. They camp and learn something of the life and doctrine of the Church. A church choir exists, and the members join with the junior and senior youth movements during the Easter vacation to attend discussion meetings on the doctrine of the Church.

Apart from teaching the first grades in the Local Authority School at Owo, I work with other church denominations especially through the Bible Society, whose aims are to teach, to

distribute, and to print the Bible at reduced cost in the various national languages. I held the post of Secretary for four years, ending in October 1976. This gave me opportunity to live a New Church life among other churches.

In 1973, when inflation led to the scarcity of many essential goods, I organized a consumer cooperative society, and held the post of Vice Chairman up to October when I left Nigeria.

The Head Chief in Owo is a member of the New Church. In order to help his council in decision making, I became interested in the Owo Community Meetings where, without force, ideas of the Word affect the community's resolutions.

I became the secretary of the Owo Progress Committee, a body of men who dedicate themselves to the progress of the town, but having no political bias. Cases in churches have been settled amicably, and our advice in the field of education has yielded good results.

I organized a club for traditional plays. This was so successful that three of the groups will perform in the World Black Festival of Art to be held in Nigeria in mid - January, 1977.

I have come to see in the past few years that the Message is for both "the Jews and the Gentiles." This attitude of reaching outside the formal church into work in education and elsewhere in the community, in the end strengthens the position of the church both now and in the future. One of the most rewarding things for me has been the putting across of the doctrines on the basis of the life of the church through this avenue. I hope that my study in America will make me more able to further this aim.

Last and not least, I seize this opportunity to thank all concerned in making my coming to Urbana possible. I bring everybody in the New Church in America fraternal greetings from Nigeria.

(Rev. Agbaje is presently studying at Urbana College, majoring in Religion and Education. After obtaining his B.A. degree this summer, he hopes to continue his studies in United States so that he can return to Nigeria with a Master's Degree. He was ordained in London, England, after spending three years at the New Church College. Rev. Agbaje is thoroughly enjoying his new life in America. He has been involved in several Church activities, including that of staff member at the Dec. 28 — 31 League Retreat at Almont. Mr. Agbaje, 50, has a wife and seven children awaiting his return to Nigeria. We wish him every success during his stay in America.)

THE NEED FOR SPIRITUAL DEFENSE

by Galen Unruh

Every day newspapers and television news programs feature some weird human actions which we find difficult to believe. The main reason this kind of material is news is because the actions *violate the expected standards* of normal human behavior. This is a positive service of the news media — telling the world that this is *not* what we expect decent and normal people to do. Often some person who has committed such a devilish act will say, "I don't know what made me do it. Something came over me and I just did it before I knew what I was doing."

After reading a recent article in the Wichita Sunday *Eagle - Beacon* with the title, "If You're Ill, The Aura May Be The First To Know," and coupling that with a topic out of William Frederick Pendleton's book *Topics From The Writings*, I began thinking about the possibility of finding some way to generate a kind of spiritual defense against the influences of evil in human life.

The story about the aura in the *Sunday Eagle* reveals that experimental work has been progressing with the use of a special kind of photography which clearly outlines the aura, or sphere, which surrounds the human body. This special brand of photography is known as Kirlian Photography, where actual color photographs can be made of the changes in the aura. The experimenter, Dr. John Lester, said that when he was in a good mood the color of the aura was a pleasant blue, but when he "thought mad" the aura erupted into "fire - like billows and shooting white spires." He is working with another local medical doctor in further experiments in the hope that something will be uncovered which may help in the diagnosis of human illness, among other things. He also indicated that the aura is affected by the relationship between two people and that plants and other things are affected. People who have lost a limb still have the aura, indicating there is still a "limb" there, at least for some extended period of time.

Peggy Howland of Wichita, Kansas, saw the article and commented that Swedenborg wrote about it over 200 years ago, saying that there is a sphere around every created object, and that it is especially active with people. She quotes Swedenborg in *Apocalypse Explained* 889:

"all things in the world, both animate and inanimate pour forth a sphere from themselves, which sometimes is perceptible to the senses at a distance But these are natural exhalations. The case is similar in the spiritual world; from every spirit there flows forth a sphere of his love, and thence a sphere of his truth or falsity, and this in every direction. Hence it is that all spirits, as respects their character, may be known from the spiritual sphere alone that goes out from them; and that in accordance with these spheres they have conjunction with societies which are in similar love, and thence in a similar truth or falsity I am able to affirm that *neither a spirit nor a man* has ever a single thought that does not *communicate by that sphere* with some society."

Swedenborg knew about the aura from what he saw in the spiritual world; there are those here on earth who do have the ability to "read the human aura." Much remains to be done, however, in order that we may use the knowledge properly and teach its use to others.

It is established both metaphysically and scientifically that emotional changes do affect the spheres which surround us. We often say, "There is something about that person I don't like. We clash." Probably, if we could see the two auras, we would see an actual "clash" of the spheres or auras.

We can only speculate about what the aura of an evil person intent upon some devilish mischief might be like if we could see it. But as I wrote earlier in this article, I happened upon a topic from Pendleton's book, *Topics From The Writings*, which set me to thinking more about this matter.

Pendleton wrote (p. 30) that it is harmful to think ill of other people. With a speed faster than light a thought puts one in association with like minds in the beyond. If one thinks evil, he is immediately connected with hordes of departed evil spirits. If he thinks well, he is in association with angels who give him support. He suggests, and I raise the hypothetical question; when one speaks ill of another, is that person affected by the influence of evil spirits? Who put the idea in Oswald's head which resulted in the bullet finding its way into the brain of Jack Kennedy? And was Kennedy somehow lacking in spiritual defense that he

was *insensitive to the danger* lurking in the "shadows" on that fateful day of his death? Both Oswald and Kennedy were certainly involved in something demonstrating the terrible power of evil. Or what is the reaction on a person who is the butt of gossip in any given community? Does he not "feel" the effect of it — and does he not then suffer a terrible hurt?

In addition to this, Pendleton throws a tremendous challenge down to all Christian people when he quotes from Swedenborg's *Spiritual Diary* that the "inferentials are to be pitied, and not to be harshly spoken to" "they would in this case have torments added, which would be against mercy and charity, for, *to will well even to them is a Christian duty.*" The question here is: Will we have justice tempered with mercy, or, will it be with vengeance? Continues Pendleton — "In the light of this teaching, we can well imagine the distress or ill affect, even upon a good spirit preparing for heaven, of words harshly spoken to him, inspired by one still in the world who thinks ill of the departed one. Let us remember, then, the intimate association of the two worlds, and the quick extension of thought from the one into the other."

If we could tie these bits of information into something of an organized whole, I am certain we would recognize the inter - relatedness of all things, both in the physical universe and the spiritual.

The need for instruction in these matters is urgent. With "all hell breaking loose" around us every day, it would seem to be of the utmost importance that the teachings of the New Jerusalem be made as widely known as possible. Many evil acts could be stopped before they become a tragedy, if only that person knew that he had a power available at his instant command, by willing for himself a change in his thought pattern, thereby putting himself in close association with the all - powerful angels of God.

What has the aura to do with all this? A great deal. Although an angel, according to Swedenborg, can put to flight whole legions of evil spirits with nothing more than a single glance, it is just as probable that we here on earth can "put to flight" a lot of the evil that desires to infect us by developing a good aura of our own. We can keep the flame of heavenly light burning at a steadier rate, if we will. Yours for a healthier and safer New Year in 1977.

THE HIDDEN STRUGGLE

by Steve Koke

I see in Rev. Gutfeldt's description of the liberal and conservative positions in the Church (*The Messenger*, October, 1976) a conflict I have often felt in myself — a tug of war between, on one hand, the desire for spiritual change, new experiences and participation in an ongoing spiritual search, and on the other hand a desire for rootedness, dependability, and the ability to contain life within a protective faith.

I began to realize some time ago that the things I said and wrote about the Church were only partly in response to the Church itself. They came primarily from an inner argument between the liberal and the conservative within myself. These exchanges could continue indefinitely and insatiably as long as I never realized that I had to find my own point of equilibrium and self-acceptance. But once I do find it in any situation (which is not always), what other people say on one side or the other doesn't matter so much. That is, what they say doesn't seem to be so contagious.

Consequently, I suggest that conflicts between liberals and conservatives are symptoms of an inner uncertainty about who we are. As long as this uncertainty exists, we will continue to be vulnerable to the differences between ourselves and others and give those differences more power to become upsetting than they ought to have.

It is more important to be oneself than to be either liberal or conservative. That is a generalization that can be extended to almost any cause; for as beings of free will, we are meant to integrate causes within ourselves and thus pull life together, not become the instruments of any one cause, unless it is the cause of Life itself.

Once one decides to simply be what he was designed to be, the problem of how to defend either the liberal or the conservative position can be seen for what it really is, a problem of how to find oneself between two very real inner challenges, neither of which is supposed to claim all of our loyalty, and neither of which is really supposed to go away: *How to be strong*

and dependable in caring for the purest values we know, and how to be open to change and new visions, even though they may seem to threaten old feelings. Balancing these challenges is not easy. But the problem they present is so fundamental that it is too rich to let large philosophical groups take possession of it and climb on a bandwagon. It is the problem of how to stay and how to move that lies within almost every spiritual decision each of us makes.

Generally therefore, for every basic issue prevailing between liberal and conservative groups, there will be some variation on it which will evoke this inner contest and challenge each person involved to come out of any fortress he has erected on one side or the other and become his own peacemaker. This is why the arguments can become so heated. The words may be civil enough, but typically they are the fragile outer edges of tense and insecure feelings that are hard to manage.

It is this touchiness and intensity of feeling that has been our main problem in working together, not the issues. Among the strongest feelings one has are those which are driven by the sheer necessity to get one's soul to pull together as a unit under some meaningful sense of purpose. Interpersonal relationships are usually not very clear until this inner unity becomes real. But if one's sense of purpose is too onesided and these primal feelings are allowed to spill over into outer confrontations, one becomes inspired with a dangerous compulsiveness. The other person may seem like a personification of some kind of adverse spiritual force. The sheer necessity to become one within oneself then becomes an urgency to convert him or at least neutralize his contagious influence and end a threat to spiritual values. Rationally, we wouldn't always agree that this involves an accurate picture of the other person. But these feelings see it differently, probably because they are oriented toward powerful inner issues and are not very conscious of the difference between issues and people.

Once compulsive feelings about other people and their ideas are translated back into the internal issues from which they come, one becomes free to determine just who he is in relation to them. A third position capable of synthesizing the best values of either side appears, occupied by oneself. Issues need free minds to resolve them, which means that to a certain extent *we must become detached about them*. Beyond a point, taking up one's cause is less important than the need to care for truth wherever it may be found and see if the opposite value doesn't carry a basic insight or two.

If both liberals and conservatives can acquire this kind of inner objectivity, then they can get together. For although a particular cause may

be important, a larger cause that everyone can contribute to as a secure individual will be even more important and (strangely) the fulfillment of any isolated conservatism or liberalism. The reason is that under these conditions the larger cause is not a compromise but a higher synthesis. In it, each side is raised to a level where it loses much of what then turns out to be its narrowness.

It is difficult to predict what a higher synthesis of two points of view will be like. It seems to come spontaneously, like an act of creation. But for any strong liberal vs. conservative issue, we may have to begin with a strong suspicion that it has more to do with the struggle for balance and self-definition within us than with what is happening to the Church.

OUR CONVENTION APPEAL

Received to date

\$8,370.

Our Target — \$25,000

Send your contribution today to —

The Convention Appeal
48 Sargent St.
Newton, Mass. 02158

Christian stewardship springs from the recognition that we are not our own, but, with body and soul, in life and in death, with all that we are and have, we belong to the Lord. We are trustees, or stewards, of our time, our talents, and our material possessions.

Does our support of the Church reflect this fact of life!

LEAGUE RETREAT HELD IN WASHINGTON, D.C., NOVEMBER 12 — 14

The Church of the Holy City in the nation's capital was the setting of a recent young people's retreat. The theme was, "Regeneration — relationships between life now and life after death." Staff included the host pastor, Rev. F. Robert Tafel, Washington Church youth advisor Mr. Frank A. Bell, Jr., and League Chaplain Rev. Dr. William R. Woofenden ("Pop Woof").

A total of fifteen young people participated, eight from the Washington Church, and seven from out of town.

The Leaguers arrived in time for a delightful supper Friday, prepared and served by Gwynne (Very) Blundon and Selma Swing. The opening study session was a workshop on the Book of Proverbs, planned and led by Frank Bell and Washington Leaguers. All of Saturday morning was given over to the main theme, led by Pop Woof, whose presentation included detailed references to Dr. Raymond Moody's best-seller, *Life After Life*.

Favored with very pleasant weather, the group set out Saturday afternoon to tour the Washington Mall, visiting several of the branches of the Smithsonian Institution. Here the group was ably guided by former Smithsonian docent Bill Etue.

Saturday evening it was back to the serious matter of study, with "Meaning of Life" statements by Bob Tafel, Frank Bell, and Pop Woof, followed by small-group discussions. Following the session, the gathering was favored by a performance by a live rock band, including the son of Dr. Williams, leader of the Forum which meets every Sunday morning in the Church.

Sunday morning the Leaguers met after a sumptuous breakfast to have an evaluation session, adjourning in time to allow those who wished to attend the Forum. Worship at 11:00 was led by the host pastor with Dr. Woofenden giving the sermon.

Within minutes after the service, the good Washington ladies had a buffet lunch ready for the visitors, following which there was the

packing, the sad farewells, and the "See you at Almont at Christmas!" greetings.

It was another milestone in the growth of the young people in their understanding and devotion to our Church.

William Woofenden



"Pop Woof" and two Leaguers visit the Smithsonian Institute.

SUMMER CAMP REPORTS

At its fall meeting the Board of Education met with representatives of the summer camps to exchange ideas concerning their religious education programs. We wish to share with *Messenger* readers more detailed information about each of the camps which are a vital part in the life of our church.

The following report was written by Jean Gilchrist of the Edmonton Society on Paulhaven.

PAULHAVEN

We had a very good camp at Paulhaven this summer. There were 42 campers in the 11 — 16 age group and 10 pre-campers (those under 11 whose parents are on the staff). We had 6 teachers, 6 cooks, and 6 supervisors. All staff is voluntary. We charged \$25 for the week. Any New Church child of the W.C.C. may come to

the camp and is subsidized (W.C.C.) if he cannot pay. Western Canada Conference pays all the deficit. Since the distances here are great, we've had children come as much as 2,000 miles. We serve really great meals, roast beef, turkey, pork chops, etc., and always have lots of fresh fruit and vegetables. We have found that good meals keep the children healthy and less homesick. We are also blessed with fantastic cooks.

Our camp is situated in the middle of 40 acres (our property) of forest right on a small lake which is rarely used by anyone but us so it is completely private.

Our curriculum of studies is based on a 4 year study of "Parables." Each year we take chapters that include, "Senses, animal, mineral, vegetable."

One of the high lights of Camp is a Saturday afternoon "treasure hunt" devised by Gertrude Tremblay and based on the weeks lessons with a "treasure" the reward of the winners. All the children know of the hunt and really listen more attentively, we think, hoping to pick up useful clues during the week.

We usually have the same campers for 4 years from 11 — 15. After that they get jobs and don't come any more except as Staff. They all seem to enjoy it very much.

We try to choose a date when the weather (always a problem here) is most likely to be good. Generally the second week or third of either July or August. We set the date by Dec. or Jan. then contact possible staff and try to have these all lined up by May 1. Staff comes from all over the West. It is too difficult to assemble such a widely scattered staff for more than one week.

CAMP BLAIRHAVEN DUXBURY, MASS.

Note: Blairhaven is a camp for children held for 4 weeks each July on property owned by the Massachusetts New Church Union situated on Plymouth Bay. The camp is divided into two two-week sessions, the 8 — 10 year olds meeting first, followed by the 10 — 13 aged children. Lois McCurdy, who is the Religious Education Director, presented a fine report to the Board of Education on the techniques she used to teach the Ten Commandments.

The following report is by the Camp Director, Peter Banus.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT SUMMER 1976

Camp Season 1976 for Blairhaven brought many interesting challenges to all members of the staff. With combined efforts and enthusiastic support, the staff was able to provide an exciting four weeks for all campers. This year we were fortunate to have a staff consisting 90% of members from the Swedenborgian Church and we were also fortunate in our attendance level. The first two weeks saw a full camp of ten girls and ten boys. The second session attendance was about 95% full with fourteen girls and five boys.

The Religious Education theme this year, under the leadership of Lois McCurdy, was the Ten Commandments. In the classes, the campers made a replica of Moses' cradle, learned the Ten Commandments, and helped to make an altar cloth plus candle holders. Lois was a tremendous asset in providing the campers with their spiritual education.

Debbie Sjostedt and Mike Serpa did an excellent job in providing the campers with group activities such as kickball, flufferball and soccer.

In the evenings Debbie and Mike organized activities that started about 7:30, ending before Vespers. Capture the Flag and Ring - o - levio were a few of the favorites. Some evenings we took walks to the Miles Standish Monument. Debbie was also in charge of the waterfront. She did an outstanding job in making sure the waterfront was properly guarded and adequate safety measures enforced.

This year as our Arts and Craft staff member we had Bonnie Aldrich. When half the campers were at Bible Class, the other half were with Bonnie. Craft projects included: working with rock gardens, fuzzy animals, making posters and paper mache.

Kay Banus was our House Mother and Camp Nurse. Kay was one of the last staff members to see the campers in the evening and one of the first ones to see them in the morning. Under Kay's supervision a daily inspection program was enacted. This was a big help in keeping the camp and sleeping areas clean. In the evenings she was greeted with the days cuts and bruises, providing the proper mixture of technical skills and loving attention.

Our very able cook, Sandra Newcomb, provided the proper amount of food for all the energetic campers and lagging staff members.

1977 CONVENTION — ADVANCE INFORMATION

If you haven't begun planning your itinerary for the 1977 Convention in San Francisco, you should do so now! Be sure you investigate the reduced "Freedom Fare" which saves 20% of the cost of your trip in the United States. There are some restrictions however. Check with your travel agent.

The site of the 1977 Convention is the University of San Francisco located in the central residential area of San Francisco, close to public transportation. You'll want to have a ride on the picturesque cable cars that ply the many steep hills. Chinatown and Fisherman's Wharf are easily accessible by public transportation. The Convention site is one and one-half miles from the San Francisco Church, Lyon Street at Washington.

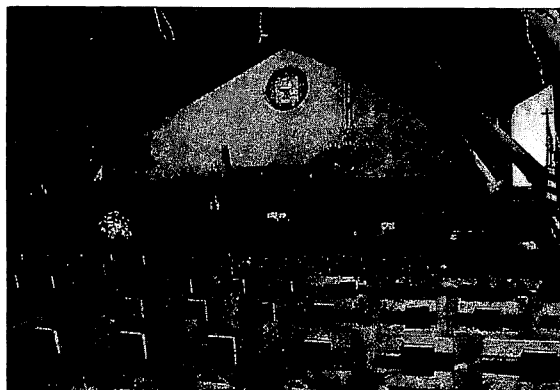
Dates of the Convention are June 29th thru July 3rd. Council of Ministers' meetings will begin on June 27th. If you would like to extend your stay by one day to include the 4th of July (a Monday), you may do so at the same favorable rate. It must be booked **well in advance** however.

Cost of rooms (double occupancy) with meals will be about \$11.50 per day. The University has not published its final room rate for 1977 as we go to press. No air conditioning is provided in rooms, and none is needed. A firm room rate will be published in the next Convention announcement.

Registration fee of \$15.00 per person does not apply to cost of rooms and meals. This fee helps pay for costs of common meeting room, receptions, banquet and the many miscellaneous expenses of holding our Church Convention.

Register as early as possible following the appearance of the registration form in *The Messenger*.

A highlight of this Convention will be a pictorial review of Convention past. During a break in Convention sessions, friends are invited to share their prize color slides of past Conventions. If you "shutter bugs" can't get an audience in your home or from your family, you may have some at Convention. There is a restriction, however, *not* more than *five* slides should be submitted. If you treasure them, you may want to send copies. Mail them to the pastor of the San Francisco Church, the Rev. Erwin Reddekopp, 2107 Lyon St., corner Washington St., San Francisco 94115, with a covering letter, your name, address, etc., and a caption for each slide. Let's see how many are submitted!



Sanctuary, San Francisco New Church.

San Francisco in June is chilly as evening comes. Bring warm clothing for the evening and lighter things for daytime wear.

The city of San Francisco is renowned as a shopping mecca. Gumps and Cost Plus are two stores you won't want to pass up. For art enthusiasts Gump's Jade Collection is outstanding as is the exhibit at the Palace of Fine Arts. For your tour of the city you will be provided with a list of numerous outstanding restaurants. Everything from Russian to Chinese and Japanese cuisine is offered at moderate prices. Ghirardelli Square is a collection of small shops and boutiques housed in a very old former chocolate factory on the waterfront. Don't miss it. San Francisco is noted for sour dough, French bread, and the fresh crab offered at nearly all waterfront restaurants. The seafood industry is an important economic factor for the area, as are the wineries of the Sonoma Valley nearby. California wines are now ranked with the finest of the world's choices. Side trips to the vineyards are being planned. You'll want to go. Last but certainly not least is the hospitality of the Sunshine State. It's unparalleled!

Our charming old church at Lyon and Washington Street dates to the turn of the century. Very little has changed in the building since Joseph Worcester built it. You'll want to carefully examine the many art treasures in the little church. San Franciscans feel our church is a treasured landmark and it is often recommended by newspapers and local magazines as a tourist sight.

E.D. Reddekopp
R. D. Paulson

A NEW CHURCH RETIREMENT COMMUNITY?

by Edith Capon

As a self - appointed committee of one, I am trying to assess the housing needs of New Church elderly and their interest in the possibility of establishing a community for retired and senior citizens, in the hope that this survey may initiate some kind of official action in the near future.

This statistical survey from a wider group than those who will be at the Second Deland Conference this month may also be used in its discussions and by Mr. Zehner in preparing his article on Housing and Location to appear in a future issue of *The Messenger*.

It is not likely that such a retirement community could offer any nursing care or food service beyond what residents could do to help each other during an emergency, and all residents would have to be in reasonably good health and completely ambulatory (or one of a couple would have to be), caring for their own apartments and themselves. A community room for worship services and socials could be part of the complex. The facility might have to be open to all applicants with New Church members being given preference. It is impossible to estimate rates, but something in the range of \$175 — \$275 monthly is a rough guess, to include heat, hot water, utilities (not phone), with no entrance fee or life care arrangement.

Those who now have or who anticipate having a housing problem could help by answering the questionnaire below and sending it to: **Edith S. Capon (Mrs. R. L.), 17 Duffield Rd., Auburndale, Mass. 02166.** Results, if significant, will be sent to the Deland Conference and also to *The Messenger* for printing in a future issue. Replies need not be signed.

-
1. Is suitable housing (becoming) a serious problem for you because of age, aloneness, infirmities, and/or income?
 2. Are you presently living alone?
 3. Single? Couple? Male? Female? Age: 50 to 70? Over 70?
 4. Would you consider moving into a New Church retirement community?
 5. When would you wish to move into it? As soon as possible? Within 5 years? Within 10 years or more?
 6. There is church - owned property in the places listed below that might have possibilities for the development of such a community. Please indicate first and second choices:

Duxbury, Mass.

Deland, Fla.

Urbana, Ohio

Yucaipa, Calif. (near L.A.)

Other

7. Would you want or need (circle which) all meals? Lunch? Dinner?

8. Other comments and suggestions.

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF MANAGERS OF THE SWEDENBORG SCHOOL OF RELIGION

The meeting of the Board of Managers of the Swedenborg School of Religion was held at Newton on December 4. One of our main concerns is the growing budget deficit. Inflation and ever-rising costs have made it difficult to keep out of the red. At an earlier meeting, a budget-cutting committee had been set up, consisting of members of the Board of Managers and the Board of Directors, to study the situation and make recommendations. In the main, these were accepted, and it was voted that the committee be continued to work on the budget for 1977 — 1978 with the aim of effecting further economies and looking for new sources of income.

It was recommended that faculty sabbaticals be postponed and made non-compulsory until such time as adequate financing for these could be worked out. It was voted that a committee be formed from members of the Managers and Directors to look into the feasibility of combining these two boards into one in the interests of efficiency and economy. It was further noted that studies are being made about the possibility of moving the School to Urbana, but nothing can be done until it is known what economies can be effected by such a move, and whether or not this would be advantageous to the students, faculty and curriculum. Many other factors also need to be taken into consideration first.

The Board members met with the students on Friday evening and with the faculty the next day. One of the concerns of the faculty was that support be given to both new and traditional aspects of preparation for the church ministry. The Board's position was summed up by Dr. Wilson Van Dusen: "Although some have wished that Convention's Seminary represent one or the other view exclusively, it is the feeling of the Board that the Faculty should represent a spectrum of theological views; that, like heaven; it should reflect the richness of a charitable harmony of differences."

It was noted that on July 31, 1977, the Rev. Edwin G. Capon would be relinquishing the post of President of the School after having

held it for more than twenty years. It was voted that suitable recognition be given to the Rev. E. Capon for his many years of faithful service, during which many changes for the better have occurred. These include: moving the School from 48 Quincy St., Cambridge, to its present, larger, more desirable buildings in Newton, the upgrading and increase in the size and qualifications of the faculty, and improved library facilities, including the full-time services of a librarian. Dr. Friedemann Horn of Zurich, Switzerland, has been invited to become the new President of the Swedenborg School of Religion, and it is expected he will take office August 1, 1977. It is hoped that Dr. & Mrs. Horn will be over in time to attend Convention at San Francisco.

The meeting adjourned Saturday evening at 9:45, after plans had been made for all the Board members to attend the 75th anniversary of the Cambridge Chapel.

Ernest Frederick,
Chairman

Who Does The Work At Your Church?

A breakdown of the members in a certain church (no names mentioned) revealed the following:

Total membership.....	125
Can't be located.....	5
Left to do the work.....	120
Those who won't work.....	32
Left to do the work.....	88
Those who are too old.....	18
Left to work.....	70
Those too young.....	24
Left to work.....	46
Shut - Ins.....	8
Left to work.....	38
Those too busy.....	20
Left to work.....	18
Mad at someone.....	3
Left to work.....	15
Already overworked.....	13
Left to work.....	2

Just you and me. And you'd better get busy.
Surely you don't expect me to do it all.

(from Nov. *Emphasis*)

FROM CHURCH RECORDS

BIRTHS

CZUDYJOWYCZ — Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Nick Czudyjowycz of Kitchener, Ontario, on the birth of their daughter, Katherine Joy, on December 25, 1976. A blessed Christmas gift for grandparents Paul and Pat Z.

BAPTISMS

BOULVIN — Yves Boulvin of Meudon, France, was baptized into the faith of the New Church on December 28, 1975, the Rev. Claude Bruley officiating.

POULAIR — Christine Poulair of Meudon, France, was baptized into the faith of the New Church on April 19, 1976, the Rev. Claude Bruley officiating.

CONFIRMATION

CAMPBELL — Mrs. Lee Ann Campbell of Eureka, Kansas, was confirmed into the faith of the New Church on October 10, 1976, the Rev. Galen W. Unruh officiating.

MARRIAGES

BOULVIN — BRULEY — Yves Boulvin and Francoise Bruley were married in Meudon, France, on February 8, 1976, the Rev. Claude Bruley officiating.

BOULVIN — POULAIN — Phillipe Boulvin and Christine Poulain were married in Meudon, France, on June 26, 1976, the Rev. Claude Bruley officiating.

WRAY - LAWRENCE — Michael James Wray and Pamela Dawn Lawrence were married at the Church of the New Jerusalem, Bath, Maine, on November 27, 1976, the Rev. F. Waldo Marshall officiating.

DEATHS

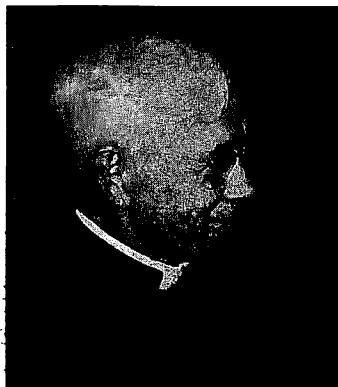
BROOMELL — Miss Grace Broomell, Philadelphia, died on Dec. 2, 1976. The resurrection service was conducted by the Rev. Richard H. Tafel. Miss Broomell was a sister of the late Miss Jeannette Broomell and the Rev. Clyde Broomell.

HEISS — Edna L. Heiss of the Baltimore Society died on October 25, 1976. Rev. Clayton Priestnal conducted the resurrection service.

HOTSON — Mrs. Clarence Hotson, 86, of Romulus, N.Y., passed into the spiritual world on January 10, 1977. Throughout her long and useful life Cornelia was a staunch supporter of the New Church. She wrote several New Church books, and will be warmly remembered by a large circle of friends. A memorial service will

con't on page 47

IN MEMORIAM



The Rev. Horace W. Briggs died on December 6, 1976, at Mercy Hospital in Portland, Me. He was born in Providence, R.I., on September 29, 1899, the son of Benjamin and Ada Briggs, and grew up in the Boston area.

Mr. Briggs graduated from the New Church Theological School and was ordained in 1924, after which he attended the Harvard Theological Seminary for two years. His theological studies culminated in travels through the Holy Land.

On September 9, 1926, Mr. Briggs married Margaret Worcester of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

He was pastor of the Lakewood, Ohio, New Church; assistant pastor in Washington, D.C.; pastor for 17 years in Newtonville, Massachusetts, and in Fryeburg, Me. for 25 years. He was Secretary of the Board of Missions for one year.

Mr. Briggs is survived by his wife and four children: Jean L. Briggs of St. John's, Newfoundland; William W. Briggs of Bowdoinham, Me.; Horace W. Briggs of Los Angeles, Cal.; and Margaret E. Heffernan of Toronto, Ontario; six grandchildren; and a sister, Esther Wheeler, formerly of New York, now living in Norway, Maine.

Mr. Briggs pursued his ministerial activities until a week before his death. His pursuit of excellence extended from a professional concern about marriage to a love of photography in his private life. Because of significant growth in the Sunday School during the past few years, a new wing of Sunday School rooms has been added and named for him.

A Memorial Service, officiated by the Rev. Franklin H. Blackmer, was held at the Fryeburg New Church on Thursday, December 9, at 2:30 p.m.

WE GET LETTERS

THE AQUARIAN AGE BECKONS

Dear Editor:

In regard to those who seem to have doubts about "Life on Other Planets," and about the authenticity of Swedenborg's writings concerning same, I would like to give to all interested readers and seekers, some new and different information which will not only verify and confirm your present knowledge, but will give you much additional information that is positively priceless.

Recently, I have read three wonderful books by another great Seer, now deceased, and one of these books was written by Emanuel Swedenborg and the other Seer, posthumously — and this you may doubt, ONLY UNTIL you have read the books.

If the Messenger Editor will give my name and address below, I will answer all inquiries and give you the name of the books, the authors, Publishing Company and cost of the books.

Now is the time, in this AQUARIAN AGE, for all New Church people to awaken to the fact that the Angel Hierarchy is bending low to give us additional knowledge that will bring Peace to the world with True Spiritual Enlightenment.

M. E. Berent
1430 — 16th Street
Great Bend, Kansas 67530

BISHOP GORRES ON SWEDENBORG

Dear Mr. Editor:

In your October, '76, issue you published a letter I had written to the newly distributed Roman Catholic Encyclopedia which had called attention to a number of errors in its entry on Swedenborg.

At the same time reference was made to the eulogy on the revelator made years ago by the famed Roman Catholic bishop and professional theologian Johann Joseph von Gorres. (Wittenberg, 1776 - 1808)

Since the article, I've been asked just what it was Bishop Gorres said. It is given in full in Helen Keller's well known book, "My Religion," (Swedenborg Foundation, Doubleday, N.Y.) and is as follows:

"Throughout the voluminous works of Swedenborg, everything appears simple and uniform, especially as to the tone in which he

writes, in which there is no effort at display in the imaginative powers, nothing overwrought, nothing fantastic . . . In the cultivation of science, sincerity and simplicity of heart are necessary requirements to the attainment of durable success. We never observe that Swedenborg was subject to that pride by the influence of which so many great spirits have fallen; he always remained the same subdued and modest mind; and never, either by success or by any consideration, lost his mental equilibrium."

Lealie Marshall
St. Petersburg, Fla.

(Rev. Marshall also brings to our attention the fact that "Life After Life", recently reviewed in the *Messenger*, is featured in the January, 1977 *Reader's Digest* — U.S. edition. This condensation includes almost all of the passages from Swedenborg in Raymond Moody's book, thus some fifty million people around the world may have an opportunity to hear of Swedenborg for the first time. We have just learned that Dr. Moody will be the main speaker at the Swedenborg Birthday celebration in the Boston New Church on February 11, 1977.)

A NOTE OF HOPE

Dear Paul,

. . . I have a feeling that the Church is entering a new stage. It seems to be willing to work with its problems in a new way, rather than be overwhelmed by them or just resent them. We seem to be more willing to learn. This is a very vague feeling; but I am more optimistic about the future of the Church than I was only a year ago.

Steve Koke
Oakland, Cal.

SOUND ADVICE

Dear Paul,

I sure enjoyed the December issue, especially the article on how to listen to a sermon. In that connection, a friend showed me a little thing in a book she was reading. It said that some preacher told his congregation that his job was to preach and theirs was to listen. Then he said, "If you get through before I do, let me know!"

Galen Unruh
Pawnee Rock, Kansas

DIVINE PROVIDENCE

by Gordon Mack

We wonder why the good Lord permits so many disagreeable and horrifying situations to evolve. We feel that as God's children we are deserving of greater care.

We are taught that the overcoming of temptations is a normal part of life, but it seems that certain persons are given more to bear than others, and we don't understand this.

We are taught:

That spiritual life grown by means of temptations is because the truths which are of faith are thereby confirmed, and are conjoined with the good which is of charity. A.C. 8557.

It is generally agreed among Christians that God is Almighty and that He is the creator of the universe. Do we ever stop to question why He created the universe? Certainly one important factor — if not the controlling factor — was to provide a place for humans to prepare for a heavenly life. If he created the universe, and we do not doubt this; and if He is almighty, and we do not doubt this; it is apparent that He contemplated the possibility of our encountering difficulties and problems during our life on earth and, in fact, the earth was created so that we would have thunderstorms, earthquakes, tidal waves, volcanic eruptions, etc. That does not mean that He, for example, produces a volcanic eruption which wipes out an entire city.

We are born in freedom. We can lead a good life or a bad life. Certainly, the evil phenomena in this world and the future world emanate from those who elect the bad life. It seems that it is their influence which makes our free choices difficult and may induce us to lead a bad life; and it is their influence which brings about the catastrophic events which occur.

Whether or not we can agree that the foregoing is correct, the fact is that the world is so created that catastrophic events are possible and do take place. It must be that this is permitted for our own good, or that the world would not have been so created by the Almighty that such events could take place. It is the Divine Providence which created the universe, and it must be the Divine Providence which controls each situation and takes care of us individually to see that our environment is best adapted to lead us to live a useful life which leads us to heaven.

The Divine providence differs from all other leading and guidance in this, that Providence continually regards what is eternal and continually leads unto salvation, and this through various stages, sometimes glad, sometimes sad, which man cannot at all comprehend: but still they all conduce to his life eternal. A.C. 8560.

And what of minor occurrences? What of today's weather? Are we going to accept it and make the best of it, or are we going to complain about it?

On television we see a team or an individual praying for victory before entering into some contest; and everyone knows that both teams cannot win. We know of persons who pray that the sun will shine during a coming week - end because of some trip or other event that is planned. We are taught that when we read in the Bible "Ask and it shall be given you", this is not to be understood literally. TCR 226: DSS51.

What if prayers are not answered? Do we feel that the Divine Providence has let us down? Or do we recognize that He has provided what is best for all concerned? Aren't there religions that encourage such prayers — prayers that not only ask for what seems beneficial for others, but also beneficial for the party offering the prayer? Are such prayers ever contrary to what the Divine Providence has planned?

Should not our prayer always be:

THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE?

Deaths con't from Page 45

be held in the New York Church in the near future, with the Rev. Clayton Priestnal officiating.

MacGEORGE — William MacGeorge IV, of Wayne, Pennsylvania, died on January 8, 1977. The resurrection service was conducted by the Rev. Richard H. Tafel.

SAWATZKY — Mr. Frank Sawatzky, age 77, of Roblin, Manitoba, died December 7, 1976. The resurrection service was held on December 11, the Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiating.

STACKHOUSE — Mr. Ralph Stackhouse died suddenly in Ellinwood, Kansas, on December 7. Memorial Service was held at Beckwith Chapel in Larned, on December 10, the Rev. Galen Unruh officiating.

THE MESSENGER
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