

The Messenger

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH

JANUARY 1977

TIME'S PACES

When as a child I laughed and wept,
Time crept.
When as a youth I waxed more bold,
Time s - t - r - o - l - l - e - d.
When I became a full - grown man,
Time RAN.



When older still I daily grew,
Time F - L - E - W.
Soon I shall find, in passing on,
Time g - o - n - e.
O Christ! wilt Thou have saved me then?
Amen.

These lines, by Canon Henry Twells
(1823 — 1900) appear on an old clock in Chester
Cathedral, England.

(Cover Photo by Nick Czudjowycz)

The Starting Line ————— by Eric Zacharias

Reflections —

Past, Present, Future

A common experience is periodic reflection upon those events which have left a marked impact upon us. One such happening in my life has been a response to a sermon preached by the late Rev. Leonard Tafel, a former President of Convention. I was very new in the ministry — indeed, my ministry in Pretty Prairie was only a few weeks old when Rev. Tafel was called by the Kansas Association to preach at its annual October sessions in 1950. How vividly I recall the choice of his text, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Proverbs 26: 18.

In his sermon, Rev. Tafel spoke of the need that each of us has to remain alert to forces of life moving about us, the need to remain sensitive to the voice of God and His life dwelling within us, and that our concept of the church be always fresh and growing.

The message left an abiding impression upon me — so much so that for many years there was a note to myself on the wall above my desk, "Without vision, you die."

This time of year, January 1977, is a good time for us to stretch our vision, to expand our sight. We are now stepping out — as if into a field of unspoiled, freshly fallen snow. We hesitate. Once entered, its virgin beauty will be marred by the deep imprint of our feet. Still — time makes the decision for us and we venture out.

Let me, then, look out across the expanse that is 1977 and share with you that which comes into focus.

The view of the organizational structure of the General Convention is essentially sound. The leadership of the past has planned wisely for the proper functioning of our Church. We have the capacity to approach difficult problems justly and with compassion. Tradition is important to us but we are not restricted by it. We can think creatively and change our direction in accordance with newly discovered insights.

The Central Office is functioning well. The staff is dedicated and has the necessary skills for the performance of its duties. We have a structure of boards and committees which is geared to the service of the Church across a broad spectrum of human need. Then there are those areas where we are not functioning as effectively as we would like. Two such areas

may be public relations and our response to social concerns. We do appreciate the part that the Wayfarers' Chapel and Urbana College are taking in meeting this need. We look happily to that day when few rather than many will be asking, "The Swedenborgian Church? What is it?" — and most will have knowledge of this New Christianity.

In the year 1977, I envision few changes in our organizational structure. However, there has already begun to emerge the need to strengthen and to clarify the functioning of that structure we have so that it may serve us more usefully.

Our Constitution provides that the on - going work of the Church be over - seen by the General Council elected by the Convention. Those chosen for this vital purpose meet twice each year — in January and again during the annual convention sessions. I would encourage this body to lead the Church with increasing effectiveness, not by intruding into areas of committee responsibility, but by pointing to those directions the Church must move, by assisting in the co - ordination of programming, by holding before the Church - at - large those goals that we have set for ourselves. The Council is to be commended for the establishment of the Planning and Development Committee charged with the assignment of taking under view the over - all life of the Church and exploring new, uncharted fields of usefulness.

The Advisory Placement Committee has the responsibility for assisting our congregations in their plans for ministry and to assist ministers seeking ministry. The role of this Committee must be strengthened. We see the

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necessity for working closely with SSR and graduating students. The need and the potential of the congregations of Convention are factors to be carefully considered. It is our hope, too, that we can assist our congregations in assessing their potential and help them grow in appreciation of their strengths.

Vision is of primary importance. What are the ministries to which we can most effectively address ourselves? What new ministries are open to us? And in these days of spiraling costs, how can we most effectively use our resources in this growth toward a stronger Church.

There is a call coming, too, from the administration and the Board of Trustees of Urbana College urging a clarification of the Church-College relationship. The Board of Trustees has expressed the desire for aggressive involvement of the Church in shaping the future of the College.

Can we build a College that will both in its academic program and in its campus life exemplify that spirit which best gives expression to this New Age? Can we so blend the secular and the spiritual values that those who graduate from the College will have caught a glimpse of the Lord's government which supports and nourishes all of creation?

Recent meetings of the Board of Trustees, composed of Church and non-Church membership, has devoted a significant portion of time to this concern. This will continue to be pressed. I anticipate decisions in the future which will help to carry out a viable, imaginative academic program at the College and also help to broaden the uses of the Church.

This new year holds before us its promise and its rewards and, yes, also its pains. We pray that along the way, we as a Church will come to know with increasing certainty the presence of the Lord as we, with vision, seek to do His will.

I share with you these lines of verse penned many years ago by Philip James Bailey.

We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;

In feelings, not in figures on a dial.

We should count time by heart throbs, He most lives

Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.

And he whose heart beats quickest, lives the longest;

Lives in one hour more than in years do some
Whose fat blood sleeps as it slips along their veins.

Life is but a means unto an end; that end,
Beginning, mean, and end to all things — God.

Time

F. Robert Tafel

How do you think of time? What is your experience of it? Is time elusive, fleeting: "time flies"? Are you behind schedule, trying to "catch up"? Are you running out of time? Or, do you have too much time?

We experience time in uniquely different ways. In all eternity there will never be another you, or another me. Likewise, no one else will use or experience time in the same way.

One way of looking at time is as a puzzle which God gives to human beings. God gives us time to see what we will do with it, in it, and become from it, by our use of it. Each of us experiences this puzzle merely by the process of being born.

But time has no reality in and of itself. It is simply one of the given constants of the physical world, with respect to which changes of one sort or another are observed. In the spiritual world the only reality is the various *states of being* and changes in such states.

"In the other life all things are measured by progressions of state and their successive changes from beginning to end, as in the world by times. That this is so is because in heaven there are no times, but states in their stead." A.8750.2

Time, for us, is simply a vehicle for our regeneration. It has value and meaning only through our use of it.

If we did not have time binds, time frames, deadlines — we probably would not progress very far in our growth. This or that act of love and some heroic act of charity would be "put off" for "another time," when the interruption seems more convenient.

Setting up time frames ("I'll help you with that problem tomorrow") sets up possibilities of action and inaction. Will we use our time well so that when tomorrow afternoon arrives we will be available to help that other person? Or will we "waste time" and "run out of time" and thus miss an opportunity to grow, develop and regenerate through serving a use? Each "time bind" we face brings about a choice of our use of time; this choice furthers or hampers our regeneration.

No preacher is listened to but time; which gives the same train and turn of thought that elder people have tried in vain to put into our heads. — Swift.

Do you agree that time has no reality in itself, but has meaning only as a "vehicle for our regeneration?"

RELIGION IN POLITICS, 1977 *by John Harms*

The religious issue of the 1976 presidential campaign now moves to center stage.

During the campaign, it had a shadowy quality — that is, the President-elect publicized his Christianity for its vote-getting appeal but it didn't get into the TV debates. But now that Jimmy Carter has made so much of his frequent prayers and church-going, the world is wondering what sort of impact all this will have on the conduct of the office of President of the United States.

Will, indeed, having an avowed Christian — in fact, a "born-again Christian" — as President, make a difference? The answer, of course, is important to those who see moral decay in this country. It is important to all those who wonder whether a truly religious President will improve the quality of life in this country and in the world at large. Will it improve chances of peace? Will it strike the note of optimism among the people in which Christianity finds both its greatest expression and its belief?

No small order. The answers can only come from the actions of Jimmy Carter after he becomes President on January 20, 1977. And while the world is waiting, it might be profitable to sketch some thoughts developed from a reporter's notebook on the Presidential campaign trail. There are some disturbing aspects — which I put down because so little is known about Carter as a national activist, as compared with the activist governor of a rural state.

For perspective, note that the last election campaign in which religion was an issue was in 1960 — but there is a crucial difference in the quality of the issue. In 1960, John F. Kennedy's Catholicism was the issue, and it had a negative quality for it was based on *fear* — fear that Kennedy would "install the Pope in the White House." People voted *against* Kennedy because of the religious issue.

In contrast, in 1976, the religious issue of Jimmy Carter's "born-again" Baptist faith was largely *positive* in quality in that it helped him win the primaries, hence the nomination — and in the fall campaign win some rural and Southern areas normally voting Republican. Despite some marginal Catholic and Jewish opposition, for Carter the religious issue was a net plus.

When dealing with a man's religion — in this case, Carter's Christianity — it is dangerous *not* to look around for implications. For example, one well-known pundit went so far as to say that "Carter will be the first real Christian in the White House since Woodrow Wilson." (Remember, Wilson was the son of a Presbyterian minister in Virginia.) The only thing that sort of statement shows is how pompous political commentators can get.

But implied in this narrow dwelling on one candidate's religion, as this political campaign has managed to do, is that the President-elect is "more Christian" than the sitting President. In other words, the implication is that Jimmy Carter is more of a Christian or more religious than Jerry Ford. But is that so?

Implying it's so, or going to Church every Sunday, or saying you pray many times a day — these things don't necessarily make one Christian, or "better" than one who doesn't engage in such pious activities.

Naturally, the only test is the *actions* of the man. More specifically, whether you can see the hand of God in these actions.

This raises a serious question, the answer to which is not yet known to us, and which Jimmy Carter will answer in due course: How does the Lord manifest himself in the political leadership of this country? That's pretty heavy stuff. It will be debated and studied for years to come, but for now, look at it this way:

The Lord says to "*Love thy neighbor as thyself.*" "*Do not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.*" "*Do not covet.*" And "*Blessed are the meek,*" "*Blessed are the pure in heart.*"

These admonitions apply in a special way to politicians, because leaders do occupy positions of great responsibility and power. These Divine laws have to do with what sort of person you are in dealing with other people.

The comparison, if you will, between Carter and Ford as they are perceived by the people at large, is not favorable to Carter, the incoming President. It may be that future events will alter the fact, or the perception.

Ford is almost universally perceived and described as: "Good." "Honest." "Thoughtful of others." "Gracious" (as in defeat). The word "gracious" implies care for the neighbor. Whatever his faults, Ford did bring peace and quiet to the country following the turmoil of Watergate, Vietnam, etc.

Editorial writers are calling Ford "a good man" — even those who thought he wasn't presidential timber (something he never claimed.) Historically, a "good man" is usually equated as "a man of God", or a "religious person". Yet Ford made little of his religion — didn't feel a man's religion was a proper issue.

Turning to President-elect Carter, the record is not nearly so clear. It doesn't mean he's not a "good man" too, just that he *hasn't demonstrated* it quite as believably as Ford. For instance, Carter is almost completely without a sense of humor — can't laugh at himself. He has been driving for power with almost obsessive single-mindedness — and involving the Lord's name to achieve it. In his book, *Why Not The Best*, Carter shows himself to be a poor loser. And his staff says he's quick to anger.

Considering these differences between Carter and Ford, they seem to boil down to a question of "inner strength." By all definitions, Ford has the earmarks of having "inner strength" — but the earmarks are not so visible with Carter. It was inner strength that enabled Ford to laugh at himself when he bumped his head — and which enabled him to fight the exhausting error-ridden, uphill election campaign, only to be met with bitter disappointment in the end.

It was inner strength that enabled him to keep his cool, his humor, his optimism and his graciousness. It served him most nobly when he congratulated Carter and offered full help in the transition — as quickly as he did.

It is fair to ask, "From whence comes 'inner strength'?" For Christians, the answer is obvious. This suggests that Ford has enough prayerful contact with the Almighty to serve him well — to give him that sense of security so necessary in leadership, but so often lacking.

Clearly, Ford got a bad rap on the religious issue. The mere fact that Carter put on a religious air, creating the religious issue — that mere fact put Ford down by implication.

No question that Carter is a motivated, determined, highly intelligent political leader with a vision of greatness for the nation. And goodness knows that's needed. Ford apparently was the right man for his time as President, and chances are Carter will be right for his.

But Carter is facing complexities — complex issues and complex political forces — on a scale far greater than those encountered in Georgia. Carter says he prays a lot — *the* ensuring source of gaining inner strength, and guidance. And another side of the publicity surrounding Carter's Christianity is that it is likely to encourage more people to go to church — with him in the White House.

Perhaps Carter in the White House will give the ongoing resurgence of religious interest in this country a fresh new boom — perhaps lead this nation

to live up to its religious heritage. (Irony, isn't it, that it is a Baptist who should have this profound opportunity — in view of the persecution Baptists suffered here in the 1700's).

But if his administration gets bogged down in controversy, acrimony, and rebellion — the Lord's work will have received a severe blow. And if our society is not "reborn again" during Carter's term — that may be seen universally as showing that having a "Christian" as President doesn't matter. Presumably by "born again", Carter means turning once again toward puritan standards scoffed at so much in recent years.

It seems clear that religion, specifically Christianity, is on trial in this country — the White House being the site. And if it is, it was Jimmy Carter who put it there — for better or worse. The true test of Carter as President will hinge on how he applies his Christian beliefs. How his Christianity *shows* through his actions.

And finally, the basic question: How much of God will go with Carter into the White House? The answer may well determine the future quality of American life and possibly the future of the Christian Church in America.

The prayers of all Christians must be with Carter — so much hangs on what seems to be such a frail reed.

(Mr. John Harms, formerly of *The Kiplinger Letter*, is now consultant to *U.S. News & World Report*, and Washington editor of *Successful Farming* magazine.)

PILGRIM TO SKARA

By Brian Kingslake

Everyone acquainted with the life of Emanuel Swedenborg knows that his father was Dr. Jesper Swedberg (or Svedberg — pronounced Sverd-bey) Bishop of Skara. Skara is within easy reach of Gothenburg by car on the main road to Stockholm; so, as Jill and I were staying near Gothenburg with our New-Church friends Per-Axel and May Atterborn, we asked them if they would drive us over to Skara to see the place for ourselves.

Skara, we were informed, was famous for cheese, wild black cherries and jelly. Also, it seems, famous for its one-time bishop, Jesper Swedberg. Well, there we were at last, standing in the cathedral square in Skara, gazing with admiration at the magnificent towering gothic cathedral, with its green copper roofs and twin steeples, and its cluster of smaller steeples and towers. Before we entered the sacred edifice, our attention was drawn to a strange bronze "fountain" standing in a pool of water in the center of the square. It was a large, goblet-shaped structure, clustered around with dozens of figures cast in bronze, some more than life size, others quite small, all crowded together. They represented incidents in the history of the city and important personages, one of the most conspicuous figures being that of Dr. Jesper Swedberg, in cassock and mitre, teaching the children.

Inside the cathedral we admired the magnificent ornate and painted altar, and the elaborate baroque pulpit from which Dr. Jesper had thundered forth week by week for thirty-two years (between 1703 and 1735). Suddenly deep diapason notes sounded from the organ in the west gallery. Was this, then, the organ which young Emanuel had played while staying with his father? No, it is a fine modern instrument; the old one has been replaced.

Part of Jesper's lasting fame lies in the fact that he composed and published one of the first Swedish hymn-books; and indeed no less than thirty-three of his hymns are included in the present hymn-book of the Swedish National Church. Our guide shouted up to the organist who was having his practice hour, and asked him to play the tunes of a couple of Swedberg's most popular hymns for us. We sat quietly in a pew following the words in the hymn-book; we could not understand them, but we got the feel of it.

From the cathedral we drove to Brunsbo, an estate on the eastern edge of the city where Swedberg and some of the subsequent bishops resided. As we approached Brunsbo, we looked back over Skara and saw three buildings rising conspicuously over the roof-tops: the cathedral, a grain silo and a water

tower. "Those," said our guide, "represent man's three basic needs: food, drink and religion!" We drove under an arch marked "BRUNSBÖ KUNGSGÅRD" (state farm) and were welcomed by the bleating of a flock of sheep, while around us were the outhouses of a working farm. Some of these buildings, we were told, dated from Swedberg's time. One had a huge 18th century lock and key. Had Emanuel ever turned that key? Probably yes. Four tall trees marking the corners of the estate had been planted, we were assured, by Swedberg himself.

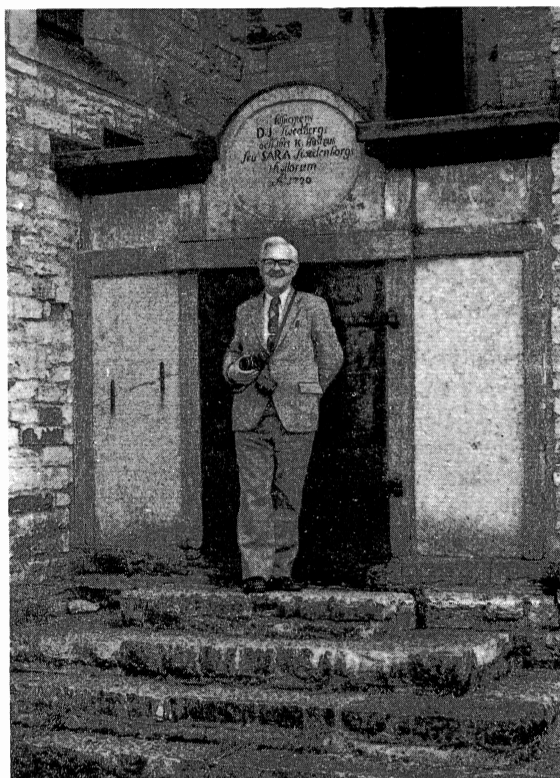
The long narrow red-roofed building which occupies the site of Swedberg's residence is now a state home for handicapped adults, about thirty living there at present. We talked with some of them; they were working at looms and a lathe, making toys, and other small articles for sale to visitors.

Swedberg's house here was twice destroyed by fire. The first time was in 1712, when the house and barns and outhouses were reduced by flames to ashes within two hours. Nothing was salvaged, except a copy of Swedberg's book, *Exercises in the Catechism* (which assured the good bishop of God's approval of his work!), and an engraved copper portrait of the man himself. Concerning this his son Emanuel wrote a Latin verse, which when translated reads:

"This portrait lay in the midst of the burning ashes unhurt,
When at night the paternal mansion was consumed:
So also thy name and loving remembrance, O father,
Shall survive the funeral pyre and the raging flames."

The rebuilt house was again destroyed 18 years later, in 1730. The present two-storey building is modern. You enter by steps up to the upper floor. The lay-out of the ground floor and the three vaulted cellars are as they were in Swedberg's day. We saw the huge cooking fireplace which Jesper is supposed to have designed. It was against an inner brick wall, behind which was an alcove containing a platform on which his seven servant girls slept "head to tail" — the alternate girls having their feet against the warm wall and their heads out in the cold, while the others had "hot heads, cold feet."

Swedberg's eldest son, Emanuel, graduated from the Uppsala Academy in June 1709, and had hoped to leave at once for England and the Continent of Europe to complete his education; but war and an outbreak of the plague confined him to Sweden for a whole year, which he spent at Brunsbo. He wrote and published several elegant Latin poems, learned the art of bookbinding, and practised his music on the cathedral organ. He and his cousin, Johan Moræus (son of Jesper's sister) searched the neighborhood for fossils, and unearthed the skeleton of a whale (124 miles from the sea!) which they supposed to be a "medieval giant." (Moræus was later to become the father-in-law of the great botanist, Carl Linnaeus.)



Brian Kingslake visits the J. Swedberg Mausoleum in Varnhem, Sweden.

Emanuel was able to sail to England at last, and spent four years overseas, returning from his travels in June 1715. He then resided at Brunsbo with his father and step-mother, Sara Bergia, for three years, until the king appointed him Assistant to Christopher Polhem, inventor and civil engineer. During these three years Emanuel compiled and published the six issues of his fine scientific journal *Daedalus Hyperboreas* ("Northern Inventor"). It may have been during this time that he installed a speaking tube from the living room down to the kitchen, so that he could call down to the servant girl, "Coffee!"

On May 23rd, 1719, the Swedberg family was "ennobled" by the new Queen Ulrika Eleonora, their name being changed from "Swedberg" to the more aristocratic form "Swedenborg." ("Berg" means only a hill, but "Borg" means a castle, suggesting a noble inheritance.) The honor was diminished, however, by the fact that the queen ennobled 150 people simultaneously, in order to strengthen her support by packing the House of Nobles, as her legal right to the throne was somewhat shaky. It seems that Jesper himself was not ennobled, only his wife and family. Why? The explanation seems to be that Jesper was already regarded as a member of the nobility, by virtue of his office as a bishop, though of course he took his seat in the House of Clergy, not the House of Nobles. (The Diet consisted of four Houses: Nobles, Clergy, Burgers and Peasants.) All bishops were in this position, but their families were commoners

unless specifically ennobled by the monarch. Thus Swedberg's wife and family were now named "Swedenborg," whereas the bishop himself retained the name of Swedberg. To have changed his name would have implied that he had not previously been noble. Unthinkable!

During the year following the ennoblement, Sara Bergia died. This was on March 3rd, 1720 (not 1719 as is stated in some biographies.) She was buried at Varnhem Monastery, regarded as a particularly sacred building, some miles distant from Skara, in a dark mausoleum behind a black iron door in an outside corner vault. Above the mausoleum is the following inscription on an oval stone: "The resting-place of Bishop D. J. Swedberg and his dear wife Sara Swedenborg, anno 1720." Bishop Dr. J. Swedberg was, of course, not then dead — he survived for another fifteen years, which he spent with his third wife Christina Arrhusia. But he had already written detailed instructions as to how his

own funeral should be conducted: who should carry the corpse, the text of the sermon, and so on. He had even composed his own funeral oration! So, when he did ultimately die, in 1735, aged 82, his instructions were carried out to the letter. Christina allowed his body to be put into the mausoleum with Sara, and the inscription was simply left as it was, although it implies quite falsely that both the bishop and his dear second wife Sara died in 1720.

Varhem Monastery is now used as the parish church. Its vicar, Rev. Claes Robach, showed us round the ruins and foundations of the monastic buildings and near-by archaeological dig. I peeped through a hole in the Swedberg mausoleum, but it was quite dark inside. A few yards away, on the grass, was a modern grave, with a bold inscription on the stone "KAMMARHERRE JESPER SWEDENBORG, 1906 - 1868." A descendant of Jesper Swedenborg, this man had been Chamberlain to the King.

THE NAME OF SWEDENBORG



Em. Swedenborg.

The farm "Sveden" or "Svedhen" near Falun in the county of Dalecarlia is mentioned in historical documents already in the year of 1543. It was the seat of Jesper Svedberg, the father of Emanuel Swedenborg. The word "Sveden" means burnt woodland and the Swedish word "berg" means mountain. Therefore "Svedberg" means a burnt woodland in mountainous regions. With the copper-mine of Swedenborg's grandfather in mind, the name "Svedberg" may also be explained as a burning mountain (charcoal - kiln).

Swedish families who were ennobled often changed "berg" to "borg", meaning castle (compare the Scotch "burgh" and the German "burg"). The new noble names often had three syllables and "Svedberg" was, thus, changed into "Swedenborg" in the year of 1719. From wood and wilderness prosperous soil ensues through man's work; with the treasures of a mountain a fortress or a castle is built.

HIS COAT OF ARMS

Emanuel Swedenborg's coat of arms is composed of the episcopal seal of his father Jesper Svedberg and of the emblems of the arms of his uncle. Peter Svedberg, ennobled Schoenstroem. The stars indicate the descent from the family "Stjerna" (i.e. "star"); the mitre and the keys indicate that his father Jesper Svedberg was a bishop (at Skara); the burning mountain, used also by Peter Svedberg, indicates that his grandfather, Daniel Isacsson, was a mine-owner; the arrow relates to the arms of the county of Dalecarlia where the farm "Sveden" was situated and the lion is taken from Schoenstroem's coat of arms mentioned above.

CONVENTION CALENDAR

General Council, Urbana	Jan. 20 — 22
Dept. of Publications, Phila.	Feb. 17 — 19
Florida Conference, DeLand	Feb. 19 — 23
C.O.M. Exec. Committee, Newton	March 2 — 3
Planning and Development, Newton	March 20 — 22
Board of Education, Newton	March 25 — 27
General Convention	
San Francisco	June 29 — July 3
Post - Convention Conference, Mill Va.	July 3 — 8

HOW TO READ SWEDENBORG

Steve Koke

So much advice has been given over the years on how to read Swedenborg that it is probably time to clear the air a little bit with some suggestions that are just a little bit unorthodox:

1. Don't read according to any prearranged plan. A plan limits the freedom your imagination must have to enjoy itself most. The most fascinating explorations and the most gratifying discoveries are made when one makes them himself. A prearranged plan will eventually strangle your interest if your interest is weak, and will be entirely unnecessary if it is strong.

2. Read with a question. If you don't read with some curiosity you won't absorb anything. Swedenborg is easiest for those who have many questions. A question in this sense is not only one that you can verbalize. It can also be a kind of hunger or curiosity for the kind of truth Swedenborg claims to offer. In fact, the deepest and most vital questions are only felt; it may not be easy or even possible to verbalize them at all.

3. Don't listen to anyone who tells you that Swedenborg is difficult. Whether or not Swedenborg is difficult isn't at all important. For those who really want to understand (or those who read with a question), Swedenborg at his most difficult is at least stimulating. Swedenborg becomes discouragingly difficult only for those who are not strongly interested.

Emphasizing Swedenborg as a difficult author may make him seem like a discouraging, forbidding author, also. And to mention him as a difficult author has the same effect as emphasizing it. He is not a difficult author in this sense. It is better to say simply that those who genuinely want to know will know. Or to put it another way: If you enjoy what you do understand and want to understand more, you won't mind the effort it may take.

4. Let your imagination roam freely. There are two ways of reading theological material: (a) With a tight, hard literalism that will not allow any speculation beyond what is immediately perceived in the words one reads, and (b) with an imagination that adds to the literal meaning of a passage all sorts of possible further interpretations and implications.... Play with what you read. I don't mean play irresponsibly, but here again we come across the idea of reading with a question. If the question is sincerely asked, one's imagination won't twist a meaning into a meaning that is opposite or antagonistic to it. It won't find any pleasure in doing so.

A lot of different interpretations of an idea make its real meaning clearer. Strict literalism, whether it has been applied to the Bible or to Swedenborg, has I think, always come about as a subconsciously motivated substitute for clearer understanding. Intolerance in the use of one's own imagination, and afterwards intolerance towards the ideas and interpretations of others, seems to provide a security

Carolyn Blackmer

The most deeply satisfying reading I have found in the volumes of *Arcana Coelestia*. Read with the Word of the Lord open before you, Swedenborg's words take on depths of meaning that make them more than biblical exegesis. The reading under these circumstances sharpens perceptions and creates new concepts of meaning with amazing clarity and richness. The ancient myths and stories come alive as symbols of one's own spiritual births and deaths, begettings, conflicts, triumphs and defeats. This is doctrine come alive, the imagery enriching one's store of material for new visions of what is good and essential to the good life. Swedenborg's writing is then unlike any expository doctrinal material because it so patently springs from the Lord in His Word. It has a more penetrating light in the richness of its language, and so it is clearly doctrine drawn solely from the Word, having in it something more moving than the volumes of formalized doctrinal expositions such as *Heaven and Hell*, the *Four Doctrines*, *Conjugal Love*, and the *True Christian Religion*.

The latter volumes have their own good uses for study purposes, but they need to be read remembering their ultimate source in the Word even while we appreciate the ordered arrangement of developing ideas they present for our reading. Let anyone forget this source and such expository treatments make Swedenborg appear somewhat arbitrary in some of his statements, and accordingly open to debate, no matter how much he quotes Scripture to make his point.

When Swedenborg affirms that the Lord alone taught him through the Word, the force of this means of revelation breaks upon us with great cogency in the reading of the *Arcana* and the *Apocalypse Explained*. If readers depended solely on the expository volumes it could lead to a mistaken notion of doctrine as if it were totally conceived by Swedenborg through his own richly-endowed mind. Or the doctrines could be treated as a revealed but closed system of thought, lacking in those levels of meaning that allow for the personal discovery of fuller significance.

THE WORD AS ULTIMATE SOURCE

The centrality of the Word as Source of the doctrines is the all-important element for readers to keep in mind as they read Swedenborg's theological works. It is this wondrous circumstance that opens the powers of the mind in meditation for the fullest discovery of meaning. It is no ordinary intellectual exercise of the mind to draw doctrine from the sense or meaning of the letter of the Word as one reads Swedenborg with the Word opened. Instead it draws on the highest potentials of the human mind and speaks to our deepest needs.

Repeatedly Swedenborg advises that every man should go for himself to the Word of the Lord for his directions to learn how to live. This means that ultimately there need be no intercessory agent to

Steve Koke con't

for one's faith when it cannot be made secure by actually seeing its truth in experience. On the other hand, a lively imagination helps define the truth by constantly testing and weighing it by means of alternative meanings. The truth can become best known only when it is seen reacting on its alternatives.

... The purpose of freeing one's imagination is to acquire the strongest and most rewarding faith one can. Whatever the truth is, it is loved more by trying to see it more clearly. The questions one asks from a love of truth are not expressions of doubt, but are devices to get rid of the doubt that always comes when the truth is not understood.

5. Read other authors. We might list this as a more elaborate way to free the imagination. But if this seems like recommending too much, don't take it too seriously - like (2) this can also be reworded: Swedenborg will be understood better as your reading habits take in other authors besides Swedenborg; particularly scientists, philosophers, the better novelists. This will happen gradually as your interests expand.

6. Don't pay too much attention to anyone's rules for reading Swedenborg. That is, don't consciously follow any rules, even the one's I've given. The best way to read is to read freely, guided by your interest. One should read well, and this means that one should read as if he were following rules, but the best way to do this is to read (or formulate your own) rules and then to forget about them. They should turn you in the right direction but no more than that.

THE CARDINAL FAITH

In one Christmas card that we received there was a short message of colossal faith. I share a friend's "statement of faith" with you in the hope that you may become sensitized to the simple, but profound ways, God nurtures us out of our "Ain't it awful" syndrome.

Our friend, a widow for more than a decade, lives alone in a small house. The backyard of her home opens up into one of Maine's many forests. From out of that forest come squirrels, snowshoe rabbits, porcupines, deer, an occasional moose and many species of birds.

A portion of our friend's retirement income is regularly spent for wild bird seed. She loves the variety of birds which frequent her feeders — their colors, their songs, their unique characteristics and habits. She envies us our Ohio cardinal. For years she has lived with the hope that one might venture north to Maine. Until recently, she had never seen a cardinal at one of her feeding stations. Then, one day, when her faith was like an oft-laundered pair of dungarees hanging on the line — limp and faded — our friend saw a cardinal! She said, "I know that God sent that cardinal to me. He restored my faith."

Our friend sent more than a Christmas card. She reminded us that faith is not having the answer to many of the mysteries of life, but faith continues

Carolyn Blackmer con't

teach us the truths we need to live by — not even Swedenborg. And yet the import of all he says, if read aright, could provide us with the impulse to go to the Word. Thus our hearts and minds keep centered on the Word.

The experience of revelation comes to each man from the Lord alone, and Swedenborg conceived of himself as primarily a servant in this respect — someone who was prepared through his own extraordinary revelations to serve the Lord for our sakes. If we learn to read him faithfully and well, the Word becomes the very presence of the Lord for us, and that experience makes a revelation of our reading the Word. Since the coming of the Lord as the Word made flesh and most especially since his coming again in the opened Word, revelation has become a personal and directly experienced phenomenon available to every man when he is prepared to receive it. The highest use of our reading of Swedenborg can reassure us of our high potential and prepare us for a veritable epiphany, a Second Coming experienced personally according to the degree to which we have prepared ourselves to recognize it consciously and make it part of our living experience. Under no circumstance could it be the same awful, completely engrossing and demanding experience as Swedenborg submitted himself to, but we could at least enter into the same kind of openness to the inflowing of spiritual light, experiencing the presence of the Lord.

The reading of Swedenborg, it could be said, calls upon a wide range of human capacities. It discloses his complex and truly phenomenal mind and spirit if its pages are searched wisely and well. We are reminded of his spirit by these words from Jeremiah: 1

"This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: I will put my law in their inward parts . . . and write it in their hearts . . . they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother saying 'Know the Lord': for they shall know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, said the Lord."

(From the booklet "Reading Swedenborg" by Carolyn A. Blackmer, published by The Swedenborg Foundation in 1974.

onward toward an unknown outcome. But our friend also reminded us that the end of depression and the "Ain't it awful" syndrome may come through a song of a bird or a flash of color from a leaf - barren tree. Finally, our friend caused us to remember that "... My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways, my ways, says the Lord". (Isaiah 55:8)

A cardinal in Maine renewed faith in a friend. What will God use to renew your faith? I don't know what you were thinking as you began to read, or what you are not thinking. But I hope that soon you may hear a sound or smell an aroma or see something or touch somebody that you have taken for granted or overlooked, as God uniquely nurtures and renews your faith.

Shalom,
Norm Haag
Maineville, Ohio

PIONEER OF FLIGHT

Translated from the German by Waldo C. Peebles

(Editorial Preface: The calendar of the Swedish Flight Society for 1960 bears the title "Man's Wings" and is dedicated to the great pioneers of flight. The page for the month of April features Emanuel Swedenborg. Colored illustrations and drawings supplement the interesting statements which we reproduce below.)

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG IS KNOWN to us as a Swedish philosopher and founder of a religious movement. But he was also an engineer, scientist and author of a voluminous treatise on the metallurgy of iron. His interests embraced wide areas.

At least twice he worked on the problems of flight. We came upon his idea for the first time in one of his letters written from England in the year 1710. He describes fourteen inventions in which he was interested. Among them are listed a submarine, a machine gun and a steam engine — half a century before Watt!

Another of the fourteen projects was "a machine for flight through the air". Six years later he constructed an airplane. It is described in an original manuscript to be found in the library at Linköping in Sweden, and also an article published by him in a scientific journal "*Deadalus Hyperboreus*". There he outlined the same principles that many years later contributed to the solution of the problem of human flight.

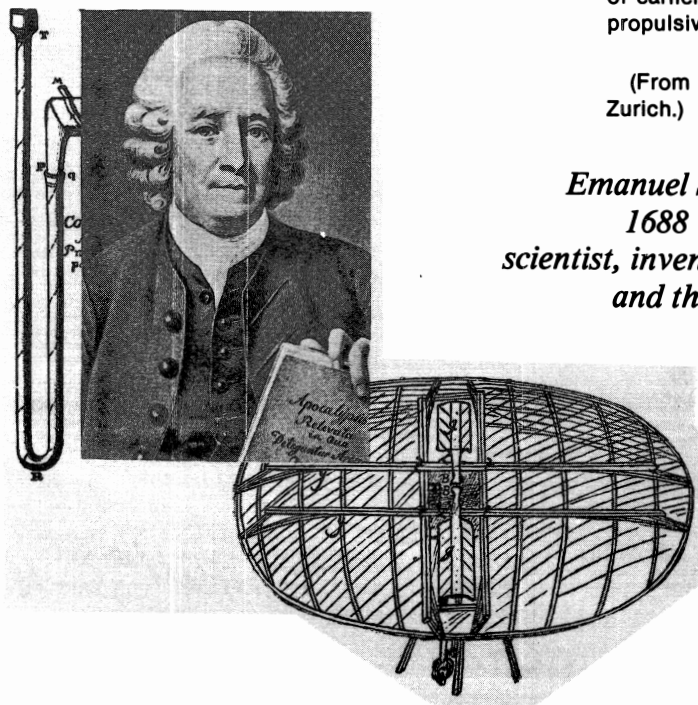
The early pioneers based their constructions chiefly on the movement of the wings of birds, as did the German Otto Lillenthal in 1890. Swedenborg based the principles of ascent for his machine on the effect of the wind on kites. He constructed firm wings, or rather a single suspended wing. The machine had a stabilizer, a steering mechanism, and a turret for the pilot, landing wheels and a propeller-like apparatus for furnishing the power of propulsion. The power of propulsion was his greatest problem, for he could rely only upon human muscles. His idea was that the airplane should be started by pulling with ropes.

We know that two models of his airplane were built. One, a miniature model to be sure, but complete in every detail, can be examined in the Technical Museum in Stockholm. The other model was full size, built in 1897 by Jesse A. Burt of Glenview, Illinois. According to eye-witnesses, whose written statements are in the library of Columbia University in New York City, about fifteen men and boys ran with the machine pulling it to a start as is done with a kite. It went up about 50 feet and flew 100 feet before it plunged to earth — but it flew!

Swedenborg might have hastened man's conquest of the air by many years, for he was on the track of the correct solution of the problem. But, like the pioneers of earlier times, he did not find the necessary light propulsive power.

(From 'Offene Tore', by the Swedenborg Verlag, Zurich.)

*Emanuel Swedenborg,
1688 — 1772,
scientist, inventor, philosopher,
and theologian.*



The Rev. Horace Briggs, Fryeburg, Maine, passed away on Dec. 7, 1976, after a brief illness. A more detailed memorial will appear in the February *Messenger*.



A COMMON CAUSE

The questionnaire we reported on in November elicited two main requests from local Alliance groups — the first was, "we need a common cause for which we can unite".

In an effort to meet that need we would like to make two suggestions. The Alliance members everywhere have responded with amazing alacrity and loving concern to former appeals for the MOOKIS — first to bring Eulalia Mooki to the United States with her husband in May, 1974; then to meet the hospital costs for Obed Mooki incurred for emergency care in late June, 1974; and more recently, to our first plea for funds to enable the Mookis to begin construction of their urgently needed, long hoped - for complex of new buildings.

On September 30 we mailed from New York a check for \$4,000.00 which represented both the over - subscription to the hospital appeal and the contributions received between February and September, 1976. The check was sent to the bank in Johannesburg which is handling the Fund, as Obed had instructed. We have received the acknowledgement and the cancelled check.

We mention these details because we think there might be undue anxiety about the safety of conducting transactions at present. A letter from Obed written October 20 says in part . . . "I was called into the bank last week and advised that your check had arrived safely. This was duly credited to the Mooki College Fund. Thanks a million, my dear friend, THANKS A MILLION! Please tell all our kind donors that we are delighted and very, very grateful."

A letter from Elulalia dated October 9 reported: ". . . There are more than seven buildings going up at the moment; three have their walls ready for roofing, two are half - way, the rest only at foundation level."

Construction has been temporarily halted but the need for our help goes on. If we can keep contributions — of any size — accumulating here in the New York bank this will be a sign to the Mookis of our continuing faith in their endeavor and our continuing desire to aid them. Their disappointment and feelings of frustration must be hard to bear — their dream in sight, yet an unexpected obstacle blocks the way!

Here is the COMMON CAUSE our Alliance members are seeking. We *can* unite in this.

Our second suggestion for a focus of effort is described in the following article about the Fryeburg Sunday School. Fryeburg, scene of summer days and friendships, of study and lively talk, of the woods and river, how quickly in memory we are transported there. The place it holds in our thoughts is unique; our wish to help is clear. As you read Martha Richardson's account you will feel that here also is a cause in which we can all unite.

WE'VE BEEN BULGING

Now we're expanding! We in FRYEBURG have put our heads together, checked our bank accounts, prayed hard and have decided to build on five new rooms. This has not been an easy endeavor for us. It has taken us years to make this decision. We have no hidden stocks and bonds, we are not sitting on a pot of gold, but we do have a lot of FAITH and *many, many hard workers*.

Perhaps I can give you a little history about our Sunday School that leads to the present circumstances. In 1951 when the Rev. and Mrs. Briggs came to Fryeburg, there were around 80 children in attendance. These children came from Fryeburg, East Fryeburg and North Fryeburg, as well as the neighboring community of East Conway, New Hampshire. Many of these children were transported by Mr. Briggs, and he still makes numerous pickups every Sunday. The older children were taught in the sanctuary and the younger ones were taught by Celia Ballard in one room on the second floor. This condition remained until mid - fifties when the Church voted to complete the basement, which meant the kitchen and the large dining hall. Now the children, numbering over 100, were taught downstairs also with curtains dividing the classes.

It is hard to imagine what bedlam this could be. But this situation lasted until the spring of 1965 when six new Sunday School rooms were added at the rear of the Church. Always one step behind the increasing numbers, even this addition was not really enough, and so it was part of the plan that a second floor would be put on in another two years. So for eleven years we've dreamed of more room, a sub - floor already having been built and only a temporary roof. On November 4, 1976 the second floor was finally started.

How come so many children? Fryeburg parents have always found the need to send their children to Sunday School. Almost 100 years ago, when the Rev. Baman N. Stone held the very first Service for the New Church in Fryeburg, a Sunday School of 75 children was organized after the Service. Through the years they have continued to come. The Rev. Louis A. Dole went to the children. He had Sunday Schools in East Germany and East Fryeburg as well as in Fryeburg. All the past ministers held Services in the Universalist Church in North Fryeburg. But with the help of the Gray Fund, a bus now brings children every Sunday morning to Fryeburg.

THE LEADERS OF THE FRYEBURG NEW CHURCH HAVE A GREAT TASK TO PERFORM FOR THEIR COMMUNITY AND A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO SPREAD OUR RELIGION. MANY OF OUR CHILDREN DO NOT COME FROM SWEDENBORGIAN BACKGROUNDS AND THE ONLY CONTACT THEY HAVE WITH THE NEW CHURCH THEOLOGY IS IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL. THE INTEREST THAT WE HAVE SHOWN IN THESE MANY YOUNG PEOPLE HAS BROUGHT PARENTS TO OUR CHURCH AND TO OUR MEMBERSHIP. AT THE PRESENT TIME WE HAVE 140 CHILDREN RANGING IN AGE FROM 3 TO 14 YEARS. WE HAVE 19 DEDICATED TEACHERS, TEACHERS' HELPERS AND SUBSTITUTES. IT IS BECAUSE OF THESE LARGE NUMBERS THAT WE NEED MORE ROOMS.

Before it was even voted to have the new rooms, we applied to General Convention for a loan amounting to \$12,500.00 which we have received. We have received a few contributions amounting to about 1/20th of what we need to pay back. We're not expecting miracles; we know this money will not come easily. But ask the people of the Fryeburg Church how we'll do it. Half of them will say, "Have faith it will work out"; the other half will answer, "We're going to have to work". Yes, we will have to work and we do have faith. With the excellent spiritual guidance we have in Fryeburg, we have the faith and we have learned to put this faith to useful work and no obstacle has seemed too large.

Martha Richardson

Martha is the over - all teacher of the enthusiastic group of littlest children, 3 - 5 year olds. And her husband, David, in spite of being very busy with his farm and mill, is the untiring and creative Chairman of Trustees. MWB

It is one of the strengths of the Church that there are so many teachers learning through teaching the Bible with the help from the Dole Notes and the Sower Notes. The core of our membership really knows what the New Church is. MWB

OUR ENGLISH COUSINS

Our first request for an article on the changes taking place in New Church Societies in England was sent to Jill Kingslake. Jill suggested, however that the wife of the newly elected President of British Conference, Mrs. John Booth, would be in a position to write more fully on this subject, and Mrs. Booth agreed at once to take the assignment.

We are impressed in this account, as we often are by the creative, completely realistic and always faithful response of British Newchurchmen to the challenges that confront our organization. There is never any question of diluting or compromising with the distinctive teachings of the church when adjustments are being made.

Buildings may be sold, Societies moved, more workable approaches found but the essential element — that which makes us "new": the real reason for our being, this is always clearly and forcefully maintained. The realization of where our true treasure lies seems strong and sure whatever outward changes may come. (Editor)

CHURCH CHANGE

by Rachel Booth

It has often been said that in the New Church we have been guilty of putting new wine into old bottles. This can certainly be said to be true in regard to our buildings.

In the New Church in Great Britain, every style of church architecture can be found — the typical Anglican parish church style, the stark non-conformist, the Byzantine and the modernistic — but in the last century, seldom did a congregation consider the possibility that the New Church would share the fate of the old, in the declining use of church premises as centers for mass congregational worship and for social activity. Thus we find ourselves with a number of churches in the wrong locality, too costly to maintain, and unsuitable for our needs. Many of our congregations have tried to remedy this.

In the Newcastle - Sunderland project a location was found in a suburban housing complex. They now have an excellent, compact building with a dual-purpose hall, and cater very successfully for the needs of the youth of the area, as well as having a very nice building for church services. They also have a thriving Ladies Fellowship at Clayton - le - Moors in Lancashire, and at Huddersfield in Yorkshire, the old Sunday School buildings have been demolished and the church buildings divided to make a chapel and assembly rooms.

At Blackburn a hired chapel in the local Y.M.C.A. is being used. In Nottingham they are building a custom-designed unit, which will provide a dual purpose chapel/hall and smaller group rooms. This unit could be converted into a dwelling - house if the Society needed to move again.

There has been new building over the past few years at Birnley and Brightlingsea, Southend - on - sea and Kearsley, but this was simply a matter of replacing old Sunday School buildings with more modern structures.

The change with which I have been most intimately concerned is that of the Society here at Birmingham. The beautiful old Gothic style church at Wretham Road, Handsworth, was simply too large for the needs of the congregation. The district has become industrial and most of the members have moved away from the locality. Naturally, many of the old members were very reluctant to leave the church with its lovely stained - glass windows and fine organ.

However, in 1972 a decision was made to find a site for a new building. It was difficult to find a suitable area as we had to also consider the needs of the members of the Moseley church, which was on the opposite side of the city but is now amalgamated with the Wretham Road Society. Also associated with the church is a housing trust which owns three almshouses on the Wretham Road site.

The area chosen was Handsworth Wood, a suburb in the north - west of Birmingham. No vacant sites were to be found but a large house built in 1930 on just less than an acre of land and within a modern housing complex was bought.

THE BASIC PHILOSOPHY BEHIND THE PROJECT WAS FIRST AND FOREMOST TO CONSIDER THE USE OF THE BUILDINGS FROM A NEW CHURCH POINT OF VIEW. THESE WERE SUMMARIZED AS: CORPORATE WORSHIP, INSTRUCTION IN THE SCRIPTURES AND THE WRITINGS, PASTORAL CARE AND FELLOWSHIP, AS A GROWTH CENTRE AND TO PROVIDE AS MANY TRUST HOUSES AS THE SITE WOULD ACCOMMODATE.

The architect's concept was that of church and home. He designed the building so that one enters a spacious entrance hall, with a lounge to the left divided from the hall by a glass screen. Then to the right is the minister's vestry and council room and a fine oak staircase up to smaller group rooms with their own kitchen and toilet facilities. Downstairs, the entrance hall leads to the dual - purpose church/hall. Off the passage are the kitchen and lavatories, including a disabled persons facility; and a room for mothers and toddlers, who can see the service being conducted in the church through a sound-proofed window, hear it over a Public Address system, and not be embarrassed by the children's making a disturbance. There are store - rooms and a

recreation room for billiards and table tennis, and a workshop for handicraft activities. The complex also includes a residence for the caretaker.

What we have is premises with a great deal of flexibility. We can have formal worship in the church, but when the sanctuary area is curtained off we can have social activity. The room does not look empty if there are only 30 in the congregation, but it will hold 120. After the service the members can gather in the lounge to relax and chat. We have gardens for outdoor meetings, and parking space for cars.

Needless to say the women have played a great part in bringing the project to fruition, but the accent has been on full participation by all. One innovation has been to have the stewards (those whose job it is to greet the members of the congregation, hand out hymn books, and see to the seating, etc.) formed by husband and wife teams, instead of all men as formerly.

When we moved into this new locality we took on a low profile, not even erecting a notice board at first.

We set out at once to find out how we could serve the community. The result was no resistance from the people of the neighborhood, a remarkable amount of co - operation, and as a tangible result the formation of a Mums and Toddlers Tuesday Morning Club. Another innovation has been a Friendship Club for older people, meeting once a month in the afternoon. This is run by members of the Women's League, who also have their own meeting once a month.

We have made a point that we are a church body and that, other than the occasional renting of rooms, all social activity will involve dedicated church people, so that the true uses of the church will be uppermost in our thought, even in social activity.

We feel that we have struck the right note in emphasizing the idea of church and home. Indeed, members seem reluctant to leave the premises after church services and functions. New Church pamphlets are displayed in the porch; and the library is not tucked away in a room of its own but housed in bookcases on the landing upstairs, so that our librarian can with natural ease, take the interested new - comer to see what books we have available.

It has often been said that women are home-makers and if not said, implied, that men are church-makers. But it is the family unit that makes the church. It may be that in looking for a distinctive type of New Church architecture we have missed this vital point.

THE INTERESTING FACT IS THAT THE PEOPLE IN HANDSWORTH WOOD ARE DISCOVERING THAT WE ARE DISTINCTIVE, NOT FROM OUR FORM OF ARCHITECTURE, BUT FROM THE USES WE ARE PERFORMING, AND OUR TEACHING.

When the planned block of our trust houses is complete that will clinch the concept of church and home.

No doubt people will always be affected by the atmosphere of the cathedral, and this is understandable, but perhaps the accent with coming generations will be on a more personal, or more strongly person-to-person form of religious activity.

We asked Betty Lundberg, formerly a member of the New York Society, for a comment on the work she is doing and its relationship to the teachings of the New Church. Following is her response:

SURVIVING BURN - OUT

Recently there was an article in the Los Angeles Times with the headline: "Occupational Hazard of Caring: Burnout".

Since I have worked for 13 years as a psychiatric social worker for the State of California, this caught and held my attention in the midst of getting breakfast on the table.

The article reported on a study by a psychologist at the University of California, Berkeley, among social workers, physicians, poverty lawyers and others in the helping professions. It was found that, after a time, these professionals tended to retreat from the stresses of being faced with more problems and more suffering than one can possibly deal with. They "distanced" themselves by describing the poor, the troubled, the sick, as "animals" or "my caseload" or as "a coronary". Often these workers "blow up" or leave their jobs; their marriages break up; the suicide rate among them is high.

My assignment is to provide counselling and arrange care for persons discharged from state mental hospitals to their own homes or to foster care homes in the community. At any one time I have responsibility for 80 or more men and women from age 18 and up, and I usually gain one, two or more new clients each week. Some have paranoid delusions and fears or hear voices; others have problems with depression or unstable emotions;

some are just inadequate and fearful. Most are continuing on medication under psychiatric supervision.

So far, *every one* of these people is a very real and precious human individual to me. I have not "burned out" in the sense described in the article. My major problem is in trying to bear the pain of the hardness of heart of society toward those who are different, who by reason of birth or life experience cannot cope within our competitive society, which values material success and conformity to superficial standards of appearance and behavior.

How have I survived so far? Several reasons come to mind:

1) Every day before I leave for work I read two pages in Arcana Coelestia. I am into Volume XI. When I have read through the Arcana, I expect I will go on to some of the other 30 green volumes. The Writings have a balance, a rationality and strength which have helped me to keep my head and heart together so far.

2) I have many dedicated co-workers and a beautiful dozen or so caretakers (mostly black) with whom to share the burden. We have an informal "conspiracy of love" in which we work together to go around or surmount the obstacles: the rigidities of governmental regulations, the insensitivity and rejection of family, friends or employers. We work together to help our people feel and function as well as possible.

3) Then I come home to a peaceful and orderly house and a dear husband who accepts and loves me and, when necessary, reminds me that I am not Jesus Christ.

Whatever our role or situation, if we care, I feel we need to protect ourselves from "burnout". To do this it is essential that we set aside time in our daily and weekly schedule to open ourselves to the Source of all life and love and wisdom through study, meditation and prayer.

The other day I found a motto, author unknown to me, which I thumbtacked on the wall next to my desk at the office:

"There is nothing Love cannot face. There is no limit to its faith, its hope and its endurance."

Betty Lundberg

THOUGHTS FOR THE NEW YEAR

1. Diligently to read and meditate upon the Word of God.
2. To be content under the dispensations of God's Providence.
3. To observe a propriety of behavior; and to preserve the conscience pure.
4. To obey what is commanded, to attend faithfully to one's office and other duties, and in addition to make oneself useful to Society in general.

Swedenborg's *Rules of Life*.

MESSAGES FROM THE DEAD?

The Unexplained

by Allen Spraggett

One of the most astounding men of all time was the 18th century scientist and seer, Emanuel Swedenborg.

A versatile genius called "the northern Plato" by the celebrated philosopher Kant, and by Thomas Carlyle "one of the three or four greatest intellects that have appeared upon the planet," Swedenborg devoted himself to science until he was past middle-age.

He anticipated many modern inventions, such as the submarine, the airplane and the parachute. He was also noted as a classical scholar who wrote fluent Latin.

Then, in his early 50's Emanuel Swedenborg had a series of tremendous mystical experiences which changed his life.

He claimed to actually be caught up into heaven and to converse with the spirits of the dead.

Madness? An exaggerated result of the male menopause, perhaps?

One might think so, except that Swedenborg's messages from the spirits were often so devastatingly personal and accurate that they left people in a state of shock.

Consider, for example, this case reported by Count Hopken, a Swedish noble:

One day Swedenborg was at a reception at the royal court when the Queen of Sweden, Louisa Ulrica, formerly a Prussian princess, casually asked him if the strange stories about his talking with the dead were true.

Swedenborg bowed slightly and said, in his cool way, that this was a matter about which her majesty must form her own judgment. At that the Queen said, "Well, if you can, would you seek out my brother, the Prince Royal of Prussia, and ask after him?" (The brother had died suddenly a few years before.)

Without batting an eye, Swedenborg bowed again, assured the queen that he would see what he could do, and left the royal presence.

At the next reception Swedenborg appeared at court. He told the queen that since their last meeting he had had a long conversation with her deceased brother.

"Really," she replied, not mockingly. "What did he say?"

Whereupon Swedenborg gave the queen her dead brother's apologies for not having answered her last letter. The brother wished to do so now, through Swedenborg.

What then transpired between the queen and Swedenborg so unnerved the monarch that she exclaimed before the whole court: "My God! No one, except the Lord Himself, knows this secret!"

As an aftermath to this experience Emanuel Swedenborg was called upon for help by the widow of the Dutch ambassador to Stockholm, Madame Marteville.

She told Swedenborg that a goldsmith named Croon had presented her with a very substantial bill for a silver tea service which her late husband had purchased. She was certain that her husband must have paid the bill but she could not find the receipt.

If, as people claimed, Swedenborg had the gift of communicating with departed spirits, said the ambassador's widow, would he be good enough to inquire of her husband about the missing receipt?

Swedenborg promised that he would.

Three days later he called at the widow's house. After a moment for the social courtesies, Madame Marteville blurted out: "Tell me, were you able to reach my husband?"

"Indeed," replied Swedenborg, as though it were the most natural thing in the world. "As you surmised the debt was paid seven months before your husband's death. He told me that you will find the receipt in a secret compartment in his desk."

In the presence of witnesses, the ambassador's widow, following Swedenborg's directions, looked for a hidden compartment situated just beneath the left-hand drawer in her husband's desk. She found it, precisely where Swedenborg had said it would be. And inside was the missing receipt.

(Toronto Sun, Sept. 26, 1976)

FROM CHURCH RECORDS

BAPTISMS

HOWES — Darren Leonard, infant son of Mr. & Mrs. Bert Howes of Battleford, Sask., was baptized on November 12, 1976, the Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiating.

KUTTNICK — Cassidy Lynn Kuttnick was baptized at the Edmonton Church on October 31, 1976.

BIRTHS

BRYAN — Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Craig Bryan of Winnipeg, Manitoba, on the birth of twins, Craig Zacharias and Nakia Kiera, on November 8, 1976.

MOWAT — Congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. Dewey Mowat on the birth of their daughter, Jolene Alissa, on October 23, 1976.

(continued on page 17)

THE SWEDENBORG FOUNDATION

Who We Are and What We Do

by Darrell Ruhl

Dear Friends:

*I have recently read Wilson Van Dusen's **THE PRESENCE OF OTHER WORLDS** and in it he mentions the Swedenborg Foundation. Could you please send me your catalog and also tell me what your Foundation does. What are its purposes? Thank you in advance...*

We receive letters of this nature nearly every day and if I had the time to respond fully, I would answer along these lines:

Dear Friend:

Thank you for your letter inquiring about the nature of the Swedenborg Foundation and its operations. Your request for information is appreciated and I will try to appraise you of our activities as clearly as I can.

The Swedenborg Foundation was established in 1849 as a non-profit autonomous publishing and distributing body, independent of any religious organization. I emphasize this last point because many think we are somehow an arm of the Swedenborgian church. Our relationship is that of supplier and client — with all denominations. You see, our activities are centered on maintaining a flow of Swedenborg's theological works into the mainstream of religious thought. We believe that religious education (Christian and non-Christian) is not really complete without something more than a superficial knowledge of the religious teachings of the "Aristotle of the North."

How do we do this? In addition to keeping all 30 volumes of Swedenborg's theological works in constant reprint — no small task for our staff consisting of T. H. Spiers, Executive Secretary; Mrs. Virginia Branstom, Manager; Miss Mary Vindish, Bookkeeper; and part time staff of Miss Pat Canfield, Secretary; George Levy, shipping clerk; and yours truly as a general assistant — we also reprint selected collateral titles. Besides these reprints, we also publish a biannual Newsletter, brochures, a catalog, an annual Date Book, an annual report, and engage in advertising and special promotion projects. This voluminous activity keeps us and our Board of Directors (non-salaried positions) extremely busy.

In addition to our own publishing activity, we stock other publishers' Swedenborgiana. In all we carry almost 300 different items. We also maintain a bookstore, library - reading room, and a very active mail order business. Our Board funds public lectures and encourages scholars to pursue studies regarding Swedenborg. This is made possible by generous donors who wish to share with others the insights gained from the works of Swedenborg. For example, Dr. Van Dusen was enabled to take a sabbatical to

write the book you enjoyed so much through a Foundation grant. Dr. George Dole's popular new translation of **HEAVEN AND HELL** was also made possible through a Foundation grant.



Darrell Ruhl
Newsletter Editor & General Assistant

Thanks to our donors, we are able to supply selected titles free to clergy of all faiths and complete 30 volume sets to students of accredited theological seminaries committed to enter the ministry. Under our Field Distribution Program, literally thousands of books are distributed to new readers all over the world. In Ghana alone, we have shipped nearly 80,000 books to interested readers within the last 10 years.

How do we reach the public? Other than our listing in trade journals and participating in various book exhibitions, we have an editorial service which places "fillers" in small local newspapers throughout the country, and we occasionally send out releases to newspaper editors, when time permits. Sometimes the momentum is generated by colleges and universities which include Swedenborg in their curriculum. As an example, the School of Visual Arts, New York University, and the New School for Social Research — all in New York — do this in connection with their courses in romantic literature, philosophy, and religion. Professors, students, and college bookstores from many states frequently order Swedenborg's works.

Virginia Branston,
Manager



Another method of acquainting the public with Swedenborg is through special promotion projects. One of the more successful of these was the recording of Helen Keller's *MY RELIGION* for the blind. We were fortunate to have Miss Lillian Gish read this book for us and as a result the Library of Congress and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind have used our recording for distribution to Libraries for the Blind. At the moment we are sponsoring a documentary film entitled "Swedenborg: The Man Who Had To Know," and again we are lucky to have the cooperation of Miss Gish as well as Mr. Eddie Albert. Both felt that "the amazing Swedenborg" should receive broader attention. This year we broadened our media outlets to include television and radio. Last summer Mrs. Branston and Mr. Spiers appeared on the WCBS T.V. show, "The Way To Go," and discussed both Swedenborg and the work of the Foundation. And for a local New York radio station, I recorded a series of four short spots wherein Swedenborg was mentioned.



Tomas H. Spiers,
Executive Secretary

Our work is not without a bit of drama, however. Located on a busy street in Manhattan, we have ample opportunity to observe a variety of incidents. Our changing window display attracts a number of passers - by who come in to browse and inquire about the nature of the Foundation. Some of the customers are very colorful. One man purchases books regularly to hand out in his local bar. A Post Office employee has persuaded several of his co-workers to obtain copies of *HEAVEN AND HELL*. A nurse picks up literature to give to patients, and prison chaplains are given books to place in institutional libraries. We have witnessed a bank robbery next door, a fire down the street, a fashion model being photographed with our window as a background, a student protest march across the street, and even a man dressed up in a bear suit standing in front of the building. *Never a dull moment!*

Our mail is interesting too. We have correspondence from such diverse figures as Dr. Timothy Leary, Pete Seeger, the White House, Colin Wilson (he wrote the introduction for Dr. Dole's *HEAVEN AND HELL*), the king of Sweden, various magazines, and from men and women in virtually all walks of life. Our files contain correspondence from such luminaries as Helen Keller, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, and Albert Schweitzer.

So you can see that we do have quite a wide range of activities requiring a great deal of diligence. I hope I have answered adequately your inquiry as to who we are and what we do. Enclosed are a few photos of our "family." Keep in touch and if you are ever in the vicinity, come in and visit.

CHURCH RECORDS *(continued from page 15)*

DEATHS

DOCKTER — Alvin Alfred Dockter, 64, of Glendale, California, died on Nov. 22, 1976. The Rev. Andre Diaconoff, Portland, Oregon, officiated at the resurrection service in Glendale on Nov. 26.

LOEPPKY — Isaac Loepky, 79, of Chaplin, Sask., died on November 14, 1976. The resurrection service was held from the United Church of Chaplin on Nov. 18, the Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiating.

LOEPPKY — Mrs. Margaret Loepky of the Vancouver New Church Society died on Nov. 11, 1976. A memorial service was held on Nov. 13, the Rev. Harold Taylor officiating.

NELSON — Mrs. Axel (Elizabeth) Nelson died on October 27, 1976. The resurrection service was held from the Memorial Society, North Vancouver, on Nov. 3.

PROSSER — The funeral service for Mrs. Virginia (George C.) Prosser was held in Walnut Creek, California, the Rev. Horand Gutfeldt officiating.

SEYB — Mrs. George (Marguerite) Seby, age 60, of Pretty Prairie, Kansas, died on Nov. 11, 1976. The memorial service was held on Nov. 15, the Rev. Eric Zacharias officiating.

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, 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 Daytona Beach Airport

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

OUR CHURCH IN ST. PAUL

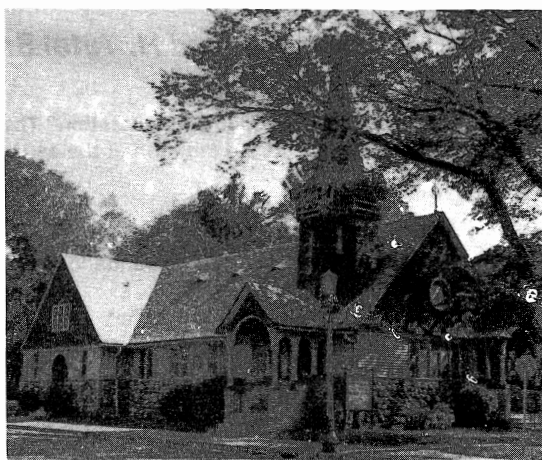
The formation of a New Church society in St. Paul followed soon after the admission of Minnesota as a state, in 1858. Seven persons met in the office of William R. Marshall, on "Wabashaw" Street, on January 6, 1860, and adopted a constitution for the St. Paul Society of the New Jerusalem, and resolved "to meet every Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock to hear a lecture explanatory of the doctrines of the New Church and for conversation." The group was short lived, as meetings were discontinued upon the outbreak of the war, when Lieutenant Colonel Marshall led the Minnesota Seventh Infantry in the Indian and Civil Wars. Later he was elected Governor of Minnesota and served for two terms, from 1866 to 1870.

New Church services were held in 1864 in the home of William J. Cutler, conducted by the Rev. John Goddard, who was staying on a farm near Fort Snelling for reasons of health. A group also formed in Minneapolis, and Edward H. Cutler reported driving over to services there and being temporarily lost in a driving snow storm on his way home. The Rev. Edward Craig Mitchell came to Minneapolis in 1872, and some St. Paul people joined that society. In the fall Mr. Mitchell started giving evening lectures in St. Paul, and in June 1873, the St. Paul society was again formally organized, with Governor Marshall as Chairman, J. M. Gilman, secretary, and Edward H. Cutler, treasurer.

The group met for services in rooms of the Y.M.C.A. (thereby causing two disapproving members to resign from the Y.M.C.A. Board). Three years later the society bought the old Methodist Church, facing Rice Park, where services were held for ten years. The location proving inconvenient, they disposed of the property advantageously, in 1886, and subsequently purchased the site of our present building, at the corner of Virginia and Selby Avenues.

Plans for the church were drawn by Cass Gilbert, who went on to later fame as the architect for the Minnesota State Capitol, the Woolworth Building in New York city, and the Supreme Court Building in Washington, D.C. Our church was built and dedicated in 1887, and was glowingly described in the local press as "the most striking and picturesque little chapel to be found in the Northwest, or in fact, anywhere on the American continent." Large natural stones supported a gabled structure of wood, with an octagonal belfry and spire at the west end. There was symbolism as well as simplicity in the use of unhewn stones, which Emanuel Swedenborg taught represent genuine truths as the Lord gives them to us in his World.

The interior of the church remains much the same today as when it was built, with soft terra-cotta painted walls and wainscoting of pine. The ribs of the arched ceiling were originally of natural pine, which have been stained a darker shade at some later date. The beautifully grained pews are of ash, and over the



round chancel arch, in gold Gothic lettering, are the words: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." The stained glass windows were ordered from Boston and are typical of the period with their soft coloring and rows of round "bull's eye" shaded glass. The round window in the rear is of St. John the Evangelist and the lovely memorial windows below it were added in 1923. The church building is included in the Minnesota Historical Society Inventory of Historic Properties.

Except for some treasurer's reports, there is a lack of records from 1873 to 1913, but we know Mr. Mitchell published his two books on the Parables, and his *Scripture Symbolism*, and that he conducted services until his death in 1911. With the coming of the Rev. Everett King Bray in 1913, a new constitution was adopted and the following officers elected: Edward H. Cutler, president; Frank S. Hinkley, secretary, and Wm. Huntington Forbes, treasurer, all of whom were long active in the church, Mr. Forbes also serving as volunteer organist for twenty-nine years.

Under Mr. Bray's leadership and with the active canvassing of the neighborhood by Mrs. Elizabeth Jacobson, Miss Edith Marsh and Miss Antionette Rost, the Sunday School began to flourish, and the need for a parish building became evident.

This addition was built in 1922, and dedicated on November 3rd, by the Rev. William L. Worcester, President of Convention. It was given by Mr. Cutler in memory of his wife, Lucy, and daughter, Ruth. Also dedicated at this time was the pipe organ, the gift of Mr. Forbes in memory of his mother, Elizabeth.

After Mr. Bray's departure for Cambridge, in 1930, the Rev. Clyde W. Broomell served as our pastor for twelve years (1931 — 1943) and his wife started and trained our choir. Under the Rev. Immanuel Tafel (1944 — 1950) the active young Fellowship Club was formed, and some recreational work was done with children in cooperation with a neighborhood group. 1951 was an important year, when the Rev. Wilfred G.

(continued on page 21)

THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION!

Richard H. Tafel Sr.

Will you please explain the following quotation? The angels "shouted for joy" at the creation of the earth. Job 38:7.

Let me first cite the complete quotation:

"Where were you when I laid the foundations
of the earth (Job 38:4)

When the morning stars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

Job is subtly reminded of his position within the hierarchy of beings, since he did not even exist when the heavenly host sang with the constellations of the dawn the Jubilate of praise and adoration.

These same "heavenly host" and "stars" are commanded in Psalm 148 to praise the Lord:

"Praise the Lord from the heavens,
Praise him in the heights!
Praise him, all his angels,
Praise him, all his host!
Praise him, all you shining stars!"

To see who these "angels and host" are, called "the sons of God" in Job, and whom you have quite properly called "angels" in your question, turn back to Job 1:6. There they are conceived as divine beings who shared in the nature of the deity (cf. Pss. 29:1; 82:1, 6; 89:6; Daniel 3:25), presenting themselves before God in a manner reminiscent of the royal courts in the ancient East.

Nowhere in the Bible are they said to have been created, rather they are alluded to as existing prior to the creation of the earth. In Genesis 6 the "sons of God" are said to have taken earthly wives, producing a terrible race of giants. In the process of time these "sons of God" — angels, host of heaven — became the traditional archangels, seven in number.

In the Book of Job, one of these "sons of God" is the Satan. Note the article, for here he has none of the malevolent and evil qualities which in time came to be attributed to him. Here he is simply the "tester," the "tryer" of mankind and, as such, acts at the behest of God. It was only after a long history that he becomes Satan, the Devil, Lord of an underworld hell — the "fallen angel" of Revelation 9, "fallen as lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18).

None of this, of course, has place in our Swedenborgian thought. We do not believe in preexisting angels, archangels or other creatures. For us, all angels were once people on this or some other earth. I take it that this is the nub of your question: how angels could sing before the human race was created. No, there were no witnesses to the divine act of creating, though it is high poetry to picture the morning stars "singing together" and the heavens "telling out the glory of God."

"What is the origin of the term "the Second Coming"? Does it appear anywhere in the Bible?"

No, the term does not occur in the Bible. The usual expression is "the coming of the Lord," "When he comes in glory," and the like. The first Christians looked for an immediate return of the Lord, certainly within their lifetime. When that generation passed away and the expectation was not fulfilled, some tended to see in Pentecost the Promised Return, while others looked for it in some indefinite future. I do not know when the term "Second Coming" was first used, but we can readily see the need to distinguish between the coming of the Lord in the flesh and his coming in spirit and in glory.

"In numerical order, would not a second coming have been Christ's reappearance after the crucifixion?"

The Post Resurrection appearances of the Lord have always been regarded as an integral part of the Incarnation. Like the experience of the Transfiguration, they give insight into our Lord's "Glorification."

In determining a "coming" of the Lord, it is well to keep in mind the four things our Church teachings tell us constitute such an advent:

- 1) A further showing - forth of his Person; a new revealing of himself; a new approach to men's hearts and minds.
- 2) The breaking forth of new truth and power from his Holy Word.
- 3) A re - ordering of the World of Spirit: the creating of a new spiritual environment, and a new set given the human heart and mind.
- 4) A new burst of life, the Spirit of God moving anew to "make all things new."

Send your religious queries directly to:

Rev. Richard H. Tafel
200 Chestnut Avenue
Narberth, Penna. 10972

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

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SWEDENBORG

Two hundred years ago Emanuel Swedenborg
made predictions about Christianity
He talked of and made predictions regarding
the future of it
Then commenced to write with divine wisdom
for all mankind to see
He wrote about an event that happened in 1770
The nineteenth of June
Was he a prophet or blessed with a great ability
To predict, detail, and foresee with precise
accuracy?
Swedenborg rejected the title of prophet
Yet he was a man divinely inspired to give
prophecy
On future events about all humanity
He agreed that he was a humble servant of the
Lord Jesus Christ
He agreed that he proclaimed divine truths and
doctrines
He spoke of the Lord's second coming in minds
He said he would not come as before
He said he would come in truth
Not in person as before
He generalized when he talked of future events
His work called the Last Judgement gets into
future development
The world and the church are the subjects
discussed
He says even angels do not know the future
They deal with observation in history and time
beyond us
They are beings who live in a world of causes
Giving them clearly the better view
Than I or you
Because we live in a world of effects alone
Swedenborg's reasoning is clearly shown
The replacement of the old church by a new
Christian Church now comes in
The Lord was to establish this church on earth
But first in heaven
This is foretold in the Apocolypse under the
beautiful picture of the New Jerusalem
Coming down from heaven
Prepared as a bride for her husband
If indeed Swedenborg was correct about the
building of a new church
This new church has made slow progress
His glorious vision attests to its' success
Then he mentioned special societies founded
after his death
Which would become the New Church after he
left
He stayed with the Lutheran State Church
of Sweden
Yet he rejected almost totally its doctrine
But Swedenborg gave the task of the New
Church to the clergymen
This was the key to give strength of his vision

But his New Church is the state of man
The state was what he wanted all to see
In a position where the Lord God Jesus Christ
could exercise government over souls with
divine continuity.

In life, death, or whatever
Revelations 11:15 verse states
He shall reign for ever and ever.

Memage Von Balfred Jefferson
Washington, D.C. "Forum"

OUR CHURCH IN ST. PAUL *(continued from page 19)*

Rice and family came to St. Paul, and when Sylvia Martinsen, then a senior in high school, became our organist — and thankfully, still is. While at the university she brought a friend, Dale Lange, to help in the choir, and he later became our soloist, her husband, and our choir director. Mrs. Rice was a leader in the Women's Alliance, and active in the choir, Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and the League.

The Rev. Rollo Billings was with us for only two and a half years (1963 — 1965) but stirred us up considerably. After many heart - searching discussions, plans were made to brighten up the first impressions made by the church on newcomers: the old rather forbidding dark green doors were removed from the vestibules and light wood and glass doors installed, and bright yellow linoleum was laid in the entrance hall of the Parish House. Saturday's Children, a separate but church related project, was started under his inspiration, and largely carried on by Beryl Blair, Dorothea Groezinger, and Josephine Cowern.

In 1965, we welcomed the Rev. Andre Diaconoff and his wife, Evelyn, who, beloved by all, led us in harmony for the last ten years. Andre was also very active in neighborhood projects, especially the local Teen Center, and the 606 Counselling Center. The climax of these years was in 1974, when, on the occasion of the Illinois Association annual meeting in St. Paul, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the ordination of Andre Diaconoff. Additional guests arrived from Massachusetts, California and Oregon, many to participate in a "This Is Your Life" program. With great sadness we accepted the move of the Diaconoffs to Oregon last summer.

When the church was built, it was situated in a desirable residential neighborhood, but it is now in an area of urban renewal. One benefit of this has been that ugly houses, crowding the church, have been razed, and we were able to purchase an adjacent lot for a memorial garden. Our future may seem uncertain, but many attempts are being made to rebuild and restore this historic section of St. Paul, and if we are successful in attracting some of the new residents, we have high hopes we can carry on the fine work of our predecessors for many years to come.

L.C.S.

(The Rev. Richard Baxter, ordained in Philadelphia on July 4, 1976, is now serving the St. Paul Society.)

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