

The Messenger

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH

MARCH 1977

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"REBIRTH"



"MAN"

and
the
ARTS

Cover Art by Lorraine Sando
Bellevue, Wash.

EDITORIAL

Finding Reality in Religion and Art

We are pleased and proud (proud in the "good sense") to bring you this special issue of the *Messenger* on Religion and the Arts. We are deeply grateful to the Rev. David P. Johnson and the members of the Bellevue, Washington Fellowship for these beautiful contributions. In the following pages you will read and see and feel something of the inter-relatedness of religion and the arts . . . leading us along paths where we encounter God in and through poetry, sculpture and painting. And everything points to the grandest art of all — the art of living.

We know that Swedenborg played the organ and dabbled in verse, but it could hardly be said that he was a devotee of the fine arts. In his journals there is little mention of the painting, architecture, music and writing of his contemporaries. He visited the grand palaces and museums of Italy, but scarcely touched on the art treasures contained therein. One wonders why? Was it due to his scientific upbringing? His fondness for mathematics and engineering? His single-mindedness — devoting all his energies to theological exposition? We will probably never know. In many passages he writes with great feeling *about* beauty, especially the beauty of people and scenery he saw in the spiritual world. In H.H. 185 we read: "The designs of heaven's buildings are so perfect that you would say they represent the very essence of the art; and small wonder, since the art of architecture comes from heaven. The angels told me that these and countless other such things still more perfect are set before their eyes by the Lord. Yet they please their minds even more than their eyes . . . because they see correspondences in the details and through them see things Divine." However one has the feeling that Swedenborg would rather read a set of blueprints than spend an afternoon at the Louvre. (Though blueprints can represent artistry too; surely the design of a Boeing 747 has something to do with sculpture.)

Why a Messenger on Religion and the Arts? Because they are so vitally connected. The artist knows that what he sees is not all there is. He knows that behind the tree is the concept of growth, behind the river is the concept of flow, behind the sun is the concept of light and warmth. The artist is aware of the *reality* behind and within everything, and he seeks to express this inner "being" through paper or canvas or clay. In *The Status and Mission of Poetry*, Howard Spoerl said, "Musicians and poets have the power to tear the veil from before our eyes, through which we have seen only the material outlines of events. Poetry reminds us that the material outlines are the fragments, and that the inner vision is of eternity."

The same could be said about religion. Artists and composers and poets seek this Holy Grail; above all else, they want to experience and express, in their chosen medium, this inner vision. So do we all. We too know that everything we experience with our bodily senses has a deeper spiritual meaning. A task well done, a meal with loved ones, a walk beneath the stars, a phone call to a troubled friend, being sensitive to the underlying currents of life — these too are art forms.

Few of us can excel as a painter or musician. But with the Lord's help, we can weave an artistic mosaic of life. I hope this issue will help us along the Way.

P.Z.

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Paul B. Zacharias, Editor

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The Starting Line by Eric Zacharias

The General Convention assembles this year, June 29 — July 3, on the campus of the University of San Francisco for its 153rd annual session. The plans for a full, productive convention are developing well. The facility we have chosen is most attractive. It is geographically situated in an area which abounds in an almost unlimited array of "interest" stimulating features. It is the hope and intent of our Program Planning Committee to show those who make the journey to the Golden Gate City an enjoyable blend of our two primary interests — participation in the work and life of the Church and taking advantage of this richly endowed part of the country.

Here are a few highlights of the program as we envision them now from the vantage point of a cold, blustery winter day on the Kansas prairie.

We will have the opportunity to be with those students graduating from the Swedenborg School of Religion. This Graduation service will be held in the beautiful San Francisco church.

Present with us will be Dr. and Mrs. Friedemann Horn of Zurich. Dr. Horn assumes the presidency of SSR during the summer. This is our opportunity to welcome them into our midst and to wish them well in their new endeavors. The Board of Missions has requested, also, that the Rev. En Bo Chung of Korea be brought to the United States for the convention. The presence of our co-workers from Europe and from Asia sets the stage for a Missionary Night when we will hear, first hand, of the work and state of the Church in these areas of the world.

The Board of Education has been requested to plan a variety of mini - courses in which all of us are invited to participate. These courses will focus around our convention theme, "Living Our Loves." In the writings we read, "Such as love is, such is the wisdom, consequently such is the man . . . Love is manifold, so manifold that its varieties are limitless; as can be seen from the human race on the earths and in the heavens. There is no man or angel so like another that there is no difference. Love is what distinguishes; for every man is his own love." DLW No. 368

What a fertile field for exploration! What grand opportunity is given us for growth within this variety of loves! What insights can we gain into

the state and nature of that love which is uniquely ours? How can we best bring the diversity of our loves together in harmonious union and through this experience help to build a more orderly society and a stronger, more effective Church?

The time which has been set aside for the mini - courses this year will be somewhat more limited due to the fullness of the schedule. However, they offer us a rewarding opportunity to participate in the probing of our teachings and theology.

There is much more. Chinatown is typically San Francisco. We look forward to enjoying its atmosphere as we meet in one of its eating places. In attempting to meet the variety of interests, the Program Committee is providing time for visiting at least a few of the attractions of the city and its surroundings.

There has been some expression of concern that not sufficient time has been allotted in past conventions for the consideration of new business matters. It is our suggestion that such items be submitted in writing in advance of the business session, to Mrs. Ethel Rice, Convention Secretary, or to myself. Every effort will be made to bring such matters to the convention.

The Pacific Coast Association extends to all of us an invitation to come to San Francisco for this annual session of Convention. By each of us adding to the fullness of the "variety of our loves", this will surely be one of the best of all conventions.

OUR CONVENTION APPEAL

Received to date —

\$10,531.00.

Our Goal Is

\$25,000.

Will you help?

The ongoing life of
Convention **DEPENDS**
UPON YOUR SUPPORT.

ART and RELIGION

by Lorraine Sando

The relationship of Art and Religion:

As I see it, art and religion are inseparable and interchangeable. I love Funk & Wagnall's definition of religion, "spiritual awakening and conformity of heart and life with religious belief." This is the way I see my work as an artist. For me, in the act of creating, whether it be painting, sculpting, praying, loving, etc., I come the closest to my Creator. These precious moments of communion with my God require my total involvement and total commitment and nothing less than total.

When I paint a portrait or sculpt a figure, I take time to be quiet and observe and allow that mystical something to develop between myself and the subject. This is when I feel closest to the Creator. It's an awesome thing to know that I am connected to a power greater than myself and that I am the open channel at this time for the Creator to become manifest. It's an exciting experience to feel my hands trembling with energy as I sculpt in clay — I trust this energy to guide me in the creation.

In working with people in art therapy situations, the special times are again when I sense the presence of something greater than all of us and know it's rightness and its healing power. The loving hands and eyes are again the transmitters. The power, I believe, is the power of love, that allows the opening of the channels and the creation of the transcendental moment.

As a creative artist, I trust the process. The waiting, the receptivity, the awareness, the right timing for the action, and the trust in the imagination and its infinite quality. It is not easy — the waiting is such an important part of it. And the only assurance I have is that my God is always there, and God is always in charge of the Time. There are infinite times as a human being when I get in the way of God's time, but that's all part of it too. The older I get, the more able I am to let go and let God.

Therapeutic use of the arts:

In my work as an art therapist in a Day Treatment Center, I use art in many ways to aid communication with self and others. Getting people to express in nonverbal ways makes it



"The Muse"

possible to get beneath surface areas where the problems lie. The process involves bringing unconscious material to the conscious awareness where confrontation with the self can take place. Many times the expression is all that is necessary, because the human being has a tremendous drive toward integration and wholeness.

"Art does not reproduce what we see. It makes us see." Paul Klee

What about artistic ability?

Artistic ability has little to do with it. The lack of ability, I feel, is in the mind. It's all relative. If a person is interested and willing to learn, he can learn to express in nonverbal ways. The ability to communicate with symbols is, I believe, a preverbal skill in every child. Children have never been encouraged enough to use this way of communicating. They are afraid of making mistakes, or not doing it right, rather than enjoying their own ability to express whatever the form of their artistic handwriting.

It's true that not everyone can be a professional artist, just as not every one can be a doctor, lawyer, carpenter or mathematician, because we all have areas where we put our time and energy. It requires the dedication, the trusting, and awareness of the self, and the desire. But everyone can learn to express him - self in nonverbal ways; we do it all the time. It's when we create new things, ideas, ways of doing things, and loving it that we have fantastic cooks, inventive fishermen, creative gardeners, etc. In short, we are all artists. Only the media, (paint, food, plants, people, etc.), we use are different.

How I came to create:

My ability to draw and paint came out of the search to know myself through the counselling and group therapy program and ministry of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Bellevue, Wash. By coming to know myself better, I became free to express myself artistically — first through poetry, then painting, and then sculpture, and then using art as a therapeutic medium to help others. Encouragement as the genesis of my new expression was vital to its continuing development. Then lessons and lessons — the only way to grow in any art is to do it.

This has developed into a new career for me in middle age. I've had numerous showings of my work. In the past three years, I have become very interested in the art therapy field. I volunteered for a year in the Day Treatment Program of a Mental Health Center, and then received a grant from the King County Arts Commission to continue this work. It's been gratifying working with a variety of people in the last year — chronic psychotic patients, adolescents, geriatric patients, and young adults. This work is an extension of my creativity and provides me an opportunity to communicate to receptive individuals the excitement of tuning into the creative process and thus one's God. I do believe that *total* involvement in any creative act causes the abandonment of self and opens a channel to the Creator.

I love this work because it gives me a chance to let my light shine and to say to others in spoken and unspoken words — All things are possible to those who believe.



Lorraine Sando

THE UNFOLDING OF THE CREATIVE SELF

Lillie May

I believe Creativeness is a natural result of the deepening of my religious life. A workshop at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Bellevue in October, 1964, was my introduction to a small group of persons sharing feelings. I had never heard such openness. A part of me hoped that at last I had found what I had been searching for, but the greater part of me was wary, guarded, afraid. I joined a group that met regularly, and that 2 - hour period became the highlight of each week. Slowly and often painfully I became aware of my own being separate and apart from every other person. A self - portrait at the beginning is

THE HAUNTS

The old woman stood in the doorway listening.
 She turned and wandered through the house like a wraith.
 Suddenly she stopped and moaned.
 The clock echoed the shuffle of her steps.
 Like a see - saw its sound thudded through the empty room.
 Pausing by the table, she picked at the faded checkered cloth.
 Yesterday's dishes, dirty.
 She nibbled a piece of stale cracker,
 Drained cold coffee from a cracked cup.
 Junk mail, papers and magazines cluttered and spilled over.
 The paperweight held only a dead flower.
 Poking for live coals, she shook her head.
 Gray ashes.
 The pictures on the wall, like all - seeing eyes, stared at her.
 The protesting rocker gave no comfort.
 The hour struck in hollow tones.
 She sighed.
 Kicking at the worn rug, she moved on.
 The shadows followed her down the hall.
 The door creaked.
 She shivered as an ancient draft filled the room with must and mold.
 Clothes dropped here and there,
 The unmade bed, under its edge a ragged houseslipper,
 A half - rolled linty sock.
 Dust and cobwebs, knick - knacks on the dresser,
 Curtains hanging lifeless, paper shades torn and dirty.
 Rags stuffed in the broken glass.
 Wind rattled the loose panes.
 She hesitated a moment.
 Then she reached up, pushed out the rags.
 In rushed the icy air, clean, cutting like a knife,
 And she breathed deep.

So it was I started into the world of feeling myself — a person to whom I was a total stranger. The group was a nurturing, accepting climate in which I learned to express and be the feeling of the moment.

My divided self is clearly shown in my writings during this period. Uncomfortable with old concepts and afraid of the new, the unknown, I was in a state of conflict. As I changed, I began to see my old life as controlled by the "should" and "should not" rules of my childhood. There came a clear realization that my present God was no longer commandments, but a comforting presence covering me in the nest of growth as a mother hen covers her chickens. At first I said, "God, you just wait and see. You will go away like all the others in my life," but soon learned to rest on the sustaining, ever - present being within my very self, also that I could move into the realization of God's Presence whenever I was willing to be quiet and respond to "Be still and know that I am God."

During the year of my broken leg (1969/70), I turned from my usual secretary/homemaker routine and began to press flowers and greens and created "Lovelies" — my natural response to the beauty that was unfolding within. My finger tips became sensitive, and touching my raw materials became an act of worship. I cried when I completed my first picture — cried with the knowledge that I was one with my Creator, and that my creation was indeed a lovely thing.

For ten years I met weekly and most of that time was also in private counseling with Dave Johnson. As a member of the Fellowship of the church, I met and shared the experience of worship and praise. The Fellowship became a place to display my "Lovelies", and to read my poetry and prose to an appreciative circle of friends. I have titled this time of my life —

HIGH ADVENTURE

The end of the journey nears.
 Soon the sails will be raised for the last time.
 She hesitates, gathers together the beautiful
 And turns the jewel in her hands.
 A tear falls as she says goodbye.
 How had it all started?
 A travel brochure had intrigued her,
 Urged her to join with an alien, inexperienced crew
 To explore the unknown.
 At first she was wary, guarded.
 The language was strange, her duties difficult.
 She longed for the port from which she had sailed,
 Considered jumping ship.
 Something long silent within her stirred
 And fear gave way to reassurance and comfortableness,
 And on to excitement,
 And sharing secrets long held and hidden deep.
 Each week the ship landed on a new shore.
 Excitement increased as the captain invited all
 To disembark and experience the wonders waiting.
 Intoxicating, haunting, unforgettable.
 The hidden life within moved.
 The tight bud began to swell in the nurturing warmth,
 The soft gentle breeze, the fragrant caressing rain.
 Taking unto herself all she could hold,
 She luxuriated in scent and sound.
 Exquisite odors filled her breathing,
 Sweet music fell on her ears.
 One lone petal tested to see if it was safe to unfold.
 As beauty expressed and was reflected in the clear water,
 She became excited with her own reflection,
 The possibilities of more and greater beauty.
 Bolder and bolder, she dared to show what she was
 In her deepest heart.
 Her center held a flawless gem, a sparkling drop of dew.
 She marvelled at the beauty of being.
 Her fears, her desire to return to port lessened.
 She found home within herself wherever she was.
 The crew became her dear friends, warm and accepting,
 And the captain's wisdom and call to adventure irresistible.
 Forgetting all else, accepting each moment,
 She blossomed and became.
 For this she now rejoices. She also weeps farewell.
 This sailing is at an end.
 As she looks forward to other cruises and other lands,
 Deep within she knows this was a special time,
 A special crew, a special captain.



Lillie May



his Place

by Elizabeth Frye

Within this glass house
 Lies the potential of all of life;
 Enclosed space of a whole world.
 The smallest sigh has meaning here,
 Grievous infliction is not too large,
 Tears have fallen singly and in rivers
 Laughter bulges against the window panes
 And growth, growing always growing.
 Deep in the night peace comes,
 A quiet assurance of the inner core.
 Meditation opens all its doors.
 The frame (for such it seems to be)
 Poised in gigantic fragility,
 Shifts and cracks on architectural cue,
 Creaking as it bends to the flow of air.
 Alive, beautiful, breathtaking in its concept;
 Frustrating and desperate in its constant need.
 A giant soap - bubble poised at the end of the pipe,
 Impossible to move, a joy to observe,
 Fretful in its protest of rhythmic movement,
 A very different experience, a mystic suspension
 Over time and space.
 Trap to a million frustrated insects
 Who flap their way in to live a while
 And finally fall dead upon the floor.
 Home to a never ending stream
 Of people looking for a source
 Replenishment for their depletion
 Reaching out for help, for courage
 Holding fast to renew strength
 And staying sometimes to give it.
 Some call this "God's House".
 The children of the neighborhood own it, actually,
 By right of eminent domain,
 In their endless walks, runs, skips, hops
 Around the outer walkway
 Carving their names and philosophies on the walls
 Tearing out fence posts
 In the urgent search for identity.
 Lovers have loved in this giant hyperbolic paraboloid of a bubble
 In times when it was safe
 To leave it open night and day.
 The anguished and the shut - outs
 Have wept their frustrations to God
 Have poured out their agonies
 Into the anonymity of the Guest Book
 Even once in frustration tearing the Bible
 Challenging God to bring down death.
 (God, if you exist — give me a sign)
 And some have come who found God:
 God in this beloved home;
 God within the inner core of being;
 God in the heart of all mankind;
 God in the mystery of all that is.

And they write it and paint it,
 Experience it in song and poem.
 Feasting and celebrating
 To punctuate the passage of time.
 Growth ripens into bursting joy.
 Despair moves out to become
 Only a transient visitor.
 Frail structure,
 Undergirding planted deep in the earth
 You rise, leaping above the trees
 In eagle-eyed surveillance,
 The earth quakes have not shattered you
 The rain gulps down your concrete gullet
 And the buffeting wind
 Accepts you as a dancing partner
 Only now and again
 Stepping on your toes.
 You welcome always
 Those who wish to seek a quiet place,
 Those who shout for joy,
 Who wish to share creativity
 And those who come to observe;
 The learners and teachers,

The interested and the curious,
 Those who love you and
 Those who don't know who you are.
 Protecting these layings on of hands and hearts
 To keep us safe, but not too safe,
 Content but not complacent,
 We bring now a dream into reality.
 Who enters the doors of this house
 Brings within himself the Infinite.



Elizabeth Frye

Expressing Life Through Clay

by Billie Bussmeir

Pottery, if it is not just a learned technique, is an expression coming from the center of one's very being. It is being.

In 1968 it was my good fortune to be able to make a trip to Europe. While there one of the things that stirred my interest a great deal was the pottery I saw at the Etruscan Museum in Rome and in the other museums displaying ancient artifacts. They seemed to strike a responsive chord within me; then I began experiencing the beauty of the work of the contemporary potters in the different countries I visited. When I returned home the love for the shapes, textures and earthy qualities of clay products remained with me. Soon I found myself with a strong urge to see what I might be able to do in creating some pieces myself. I am fortunate to live in an area where opportunities to participate in the creative arts abound and so I began classes in the techniques of pottery wheel throwing and hand building. It has become a very important aspect of my life. I now have a studio of my own with both a kick wheel and an electric wheel and two kilns — an electric one and a raku type. Raku firing of pottery is an ancient Japanese method and very exciting.

"Art is not necessarily meant to soothe... often it is intended to challenge a stale and complacent image of our world and replace it with a new vision." Thomas Messer

My approach to pottery has always been an expression of my own inner self. I have been fortunate in having instructors whose approach was essentially the same and so I have been encouraged to express what comes from within. I love the pottery I make and it is always gratifying to find that others share my love for it. I think the reason response is so often positive to my work is because it is an honest expression of myself and others feel this. I'm not the most skilled of potters, nor is it important to me to be. I do what I do out of a love and honesty from within me. I have no more talent than any other person who has learned to be in touch with her own inner being. Clay, to me, is one of the greatest of artistic media for self expression. Clay is earthy and basic and one must learn to work with the total body. On the wheel there is a total body involvement along with a sensing of what is "right" for this piece of clay in one's hand. There is a need for rhythm, a sensitivity and a sense of oneness with the clay. The clay must be centered and the potter must be "centered" — in tune with herself — if she and the clay are to work together to create beauty. Hand building is a different experience and one in which the potter needs to let her hands, heart and clay have the opportunity to express themselves together. When this happens the result is beautiful and honest. After the shaping, by whatever means, the clay must be dried, fired, glazed and then re-fired. Not all the pieces make it through this process and so each step becomes an important experience in and of itself.

It is in the creating that the greatest satisfaction comes to me. One's sensitivity is again called on to decide which glaze, or combination of glazes, is right for each piece. Opening a kiln load of glazed pottery has been described by one of my potter friends as "like Christmas when you were a kid". Well, that's close — it is a time of breathtaking importance to me. Some pieces don't make it and are broken, some are disappointing but then some are so lovely. In time even the ones that seemed not too special at first take on greater meaning as one lives with them a while, or a friend drops by and sees what I was unable to see.

In those times when I am most in touch with my center, my inner being, I am closest to God. It has nothing to do with creed or ritual. It is worship of God in its purest form to me. This awareness of the nature of God has grown for me over the years of my fellowship, counseling and participation in the groups at our church here in Bellevue under the guiding hand of Dave Johnson. I came into acquaintance with the Church of The Good Shepherd twelve years ago when the outreach program with Yokefellow groups started. Although I came out of another denomination I gradually realized that this was my church. I have not read too much of the writings of Emmanuel Swedenborg but that which I have, and the things I have learned about his philosophy from Dave Johnson, have had a profound effect on my life. What is important here at our church is the fact that we are trying to live the words written by Swedenborg. That this experience has led me to the art of pottery is one of the greatest joys of my life.



Billie Bussmeir

"The artist unconsciously projects the anxieties of his age, but he would have no creative energy if he were completely filled with despair. Every artist acts on the assumption expressed by William Blake: 'Energy is Eternal Delight.'" Herbert Read

VIEW OF THE INAUGURATION

Following our Convention Sunday on the 4th of July, 1976, I was moved to write for the *Messenger* on ritual. Today is the 20th of January, 1977, and I have just watched the inauguration of our new President of the United States. Had I been in charge of the ceremonies, I would have done it differently.

It was still morning here in California, when I watched the inauguration, though the ceremony took place at noontime in Washington. I remembered the bright snowy scene in 1961 and John Kennedy under a brilliant sky, "Let the word go forth . . ." I thought too of the midnight climax of the Democratic Convention last August, when nominee Jimmy Carter embraced Coretta King and the hall swelled with many voices singing, "We shall overcome."

The idealism of the '60's was shot down in Dallas and Vietnam and finally at Kent State. Protest gave way to cynicism and withdrawal. The 1977 inauguration was perhaps more realistic in its acceptance of things as they are. The dignified presence of outgoing President Ford waving tearfully to the nation and the grave face of never-elected President Hubert Humphrey bore testimony to the struggles and unrealized dreams of the '60's and '70's. President Carter spoke with simplicity of the mistakes of the past and those perhaps to come.

Still the old rituals went on. Religion was given its customary place in the swearing-in ceremony. Protestant, Catholic, and Jew participated in that order. Though the new President talked of peace and nuclear disarmament, the music was martial. Calling forth no vision for the future, the anthems celebrated our nation at war.

Ritual and ceremony we need to ground us in our roots of the past and to call us forward and upward to the future. The beginning of a new government in a new year deserves a ritual which, to quote President Carter's teacher, "We must adjust to changing times and still hold to unchanging principles." Let us have clergymen who do not pronounce sermons in the guise of prayers, but rather ask simply for the grace and peace of God. Let us sing not of battle and bursting bombs, but of love and brotherhood and sisterhood of the human race. The grace and mercy and peace of God be with us all.

Perry S. Martin



Marion Priestnal, Editor

HOW MANY ADULTS CAN READ?

Fifty-four percent of the population, 17 years of age or older, cannot read simple materials which make up the essentials of daily life! This is the conclusion of a recent study made by a University professor and his staff of researchers.

Newspapers, tax-forms, leases, cooking directions and other ordinary, every day "currency" in the exchange of required information are beyond the reading ability of more than half the adult population. This may be hard for you our reader to understand but it remains a fact.

In order to reach these findings Professor Kilty and his staff first established, by means of standardized criteria, the readability level of all these materials. For example it was determined that the modern English version of the 23rd Psalm requires fifth-grade reading ability; life insurance policies need 12th grade reading skill; cooking directions 7th and 8th grade abilities; leases for apartments demand, for comprehensions, college level skills.

This study helps to explain many puzzling aspects of modern life, at the same time it confronts us with other baffling questions. We can in this light better understand the terrible power of television. All those who make up the 54% for whom reading is either impossible or an agonizing struggle must depend on every other means to receive information, to understand ideas; and to share vicarious experience. This means therefore that they are limited to the generally low level of television fare; to radio banalities and every appeal to immature thinking. Trivia, commercialism, coarseness — this is their only available diet. But it *is* available; while locked away forever are the finest thoughts and the beautiful language of good writing; and the entire world of complex ideas.

Now we can see that only 46% of the population could even consider reading Swedenborg. And within that 46%, approximately one third will be superior readers, one third average readers and one third "poor" readers, according to the normal distribution of any measurable skill. The implications here are many; an obvious one being that at least 30% of the adult population *could* read and understand Swedenborg if they so desired.

The question is: should we try to write about Swedenborg and his teachings so that our efforts would be accessible to those who have difficulty even with newspapers and insurance forms? Is this possible? Can any complex work ever be reduced to an "easy reading" formula? If it were to be done, it would require time and a special skill.

And yet, how can we reach all those who read poorly or indifferently. Would the medium of radio be feasible? The scripts would have to be well written and that too takes a great deal of time, energy and skill.

All good writing takes time. Printing presses are awash now with bad writing. If we are being honest we know that even in our church there is a great deal of poor writing. *What CAN we do?* Have we ever really confronted this problem. It exists. Simple, clear, well-reasoned writing, showing imagination, freshness of phrasing, perception — it would lift the spirits — perhaps it would even win some of the reluctant readers in that 30% minority; perhaps effective radio programs could reach some of the 54% who do not read. We can envision a summer writing conference — like the "dream" Carolyn Blackmer projects — as a means of confronting this need. A need we have not ever attacked in earnest.

SETTING FOR A DREAM

BY Carolyn A. Blackmer

Since this brief essay was written, perhaps 25 years ago, we have within convention made greater use of those resources both physical and spiritual which Carolyn Blackmer envisioned. But we have not yet found a way or perhaps the motivation to carry the whole concept as far as she does. Most of our summer programs last only a week or two weeks and have as their objective a more immediate kind of achievement and, because of time pressures, a more crowded schedule.

We agree with Mrs. Blackmer that we have available all the elements to make this dream come true and that it could, if we cared enough, be realized; and that it could bring renewal of the dream which spurred the earliest New Churchmen to follow its light along rough pathways. Dreams are not impractical. They are only uncomfortable! (Ed.)

"Every year we promise ourselves that, should winter and regular schedules ever relax their hold we will spend the summer doing some special work for the Church that we have not been able to accomplish under the pressures of modern living. When summer comes we find that, as usual, we have not escaped the complexities of time and circumstances. Those leisurely conferences to which we looked forward; the studies we hoped to make on subjects that need long research; the altar candlesticks we wanted to design and model — all of these we realize, need a setting of freedom, leisure and quiet. They need that carefully worked out harmony of solitude and fellowship in which creative work best flourishes.

"A dream begins to take form and grow, a dream that we might provide such a setting or several of them — retreats for the work of the Church somewhat like the MacDowell Colony for writers, artists and composers which is located in the woods of New Hampshire. Summers devoted to the re-creation of the Church; havens of peace where vision could be brought down to reality by the quiet unfolding of hopes and ideas long dormant; gathering together in His name to open up new channels of influx with worship and meditation under the trees or under the stars; simplicity of living to remind us what the essentials are for a regenerating life; work done cooperatively for

common needs; the stimulation of companionship, of good talk, music, reading; the opportunity to work alone, undisturbed.

"How then to translate a dream into terms more concrete and practicable? Small, isolated cabins in the woods; a central meeting place; a garden for our supply of vegetables; library, workshop, studio. Several weeks, a month, an entire summer, according to our several needs and opportunity. Provisions for a new type of conference for young people, for Sunday school teachers, ministers, laymen, committees and boards — where groups can have the experience of living and thinking together according to orderly processes of organic growth. Young and old living together in a normal family relationship; conflicting ideas and attitudes finding a common basis for cooperation and mutual trust; sectional differences coming to a better understanding of special needs; a deepening sense of kinship with each other to make us feel less lonely in our small, isolated spheres of church work.

"Idyllic? Yes, but as vitally necessary to our growing as a Church in symmetry, health and enlarging usefulness as are budgets, elections, suppers, committees and all of the extraneous matters that have attached themselves to that single and simple need we have for worshipping the Lord. Impractical? No, for if we take stock of our resources we shall find that we now have many of the necessary elements for realizing our dream. We have skills for planning and building; funds that have been given for educational and missionary purposes; properties that seem ideally suited for such a use; and talents for organizing, for writing, and for restoring the waste places of our church life with new order, beauty and stability.

"Our great need is to bring all these elements together in settings and under conditions that invite the shaping of dreams for the New Jerusalem, and that offer time and opportunity to turn dreams into action.

"Let each church society, board, and committee earnestly and prayerfully consider its most pressing needs in the light of such possibilities for new direction and growth, and the way will open to make this dream come true."

Perry Martin, most recently a resident of Massachusetts, writes of a new beginning at the Wayfarer's Chapel in California.

LIFE IN PALOS VERDES

I went out into the evening to pick a lemon — sweet smelling, pungent, somehow more essentially a lemon than any I ever picked off a grocery shelf. The sky was a shining orange, and spread its color in waves over the Pacific. The mountains of Catalina Island glowed violet in silhouette. As dinner cooked we sat in the peaceful gathering twilight, sharing about the busy day that was disappearing into darkness. We watched the changing sky and sea grow gold and orange and violent red before fading into the deep blue of night.

Winter in California. Lemons and fresh flowers and warmth, while much of the country is swept with cold and snow. Though I have felt the cold and watched the snow, it seems as unreal as our blue lilies, orange calendulas and red sweet peas blooming in mid-winter may seem to you.

This beautiful evening brings a peacefulness and a quiet that is new to me. No children tussling in the living room, no Rolling Stones blaring from the stereo, no homework papers scattered about the house. Suddenly life offers an emptiness of time and space that is mine to waste, to mourn, to shape into new life.

The building materials have been accumulating for 50 years now. Like the furniture in our house, some are inherited, some more recently bought, some are in need of repair and some I wish were quite different in style or comfort. But they are mine and basically what I have to work with.

One of them is my interest, training, and degree in counseling. The Wayfarers' Chapel offers me an opportunity to work with those who come there, whether out of desperation or desire for growth, wanting to make change in their lives. I believe our business on this earth is growth toward wholeness and fulfillment. As we learn to face our inner blocks and hidden feelings, our strengths become more available to ourselves and others. When we take responsibility for our choices and stop blaming or making excuses, we find strength and courage to take risks and step out into life. I have experienced some of this kind of growth, and in the counselling relationship I convey to others some of this faith which I call Swedenborgian.

My counselling holds a central place in my new life. Study and supervision help me keep learning, and new clients bring new challenges. My practice is still small, and I have time for gardening, playing tennis and the creative work

I love which is making pottery.

With children grown, we are giving much thought and attention to the nurture of our marriage. We are taking more time together. The yard work never ends with the seasons, we play tennis, we are beginning to explore this new country where we live, and we enjoy evenings by the fire.

I have been lonely here. Moving to California has made me feel very far away from many of the people I like to have close. It is sad for me to leave my family and friends. I don't make friends as easily as I used to. I'm more particular about spending time with people who are willing to relate on a deeper level. I'm just beginning to find new friends.

Unlike our other moves, we were not welcomed by a Church congregation here. Neither was I greeted with demands and expectations for the new minister's wife. The chapel is indeed a brief resting place for the wayfarer. I feel a freedom to be myself, to give what I have to offer, and in the quiet beauty to partake of the spiritual nourishment that abounds. A spirit of devotion and cooperation emanates from the friendly staff, while the joy of the many couples married at the altar permeates the stone and wood and glass that make the chapel. I too am a wayfarer here, enjoying a new life today and wondering what challenges will come tomorrow.

Perry S. Martin

Of interest and importance to New Church members and perhaps especially so to women — is a knowledge and awareness of the ways that the teachings and theological problems of other, older denominations differ from ours. Here follows a digest of a report that appeared in *The Christian Herald* in the spring of 1976, as a prediction for the year so recently ended.

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR THE CHURCHES?

A report on the denominations.

1. "The churches are facing many issues in their internal life. Especially notable is the situation in the Episcopal Church. Episcopalians must come to terms with the issue of women's ordination, (and the additional question of whether this issue can be resolved without splitting the church.) What - ever the convention next fall decides, a refusal by the convention to approve women's ordination could readily bring a split.

The following description of the crisis over how the Bible is to be read shows more clearly than anything else the extent to which the New Church is "new". Note the line 'And this issue troubles Christians of nearly every denomination.' How confusing it would be to have to argue this basic truth.

2. "Another instance of a crisis looming dramatically . . . is seen in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. The problem troubling the Missouri Synod . . . starts with a dispute over how the Bible is to be read. *And this issue troubles Christians of nearly every denomination.* 'Conservatives' (of the Missouri Synod) contend that the Bible must be interpreted literally, whereas 'moderates' argue that *some* elements may be taken symbolically, or that *some* stories may be read as parables.

"This question of decision about how the Bible is to be read and how its authority is to be expressed has long disturbed thoughtful Christians. Though the Scopes trial . . . is now half a century past, *American Christianity as a whole has yet to find a generally acceptable way of resolving these questions.*

3. "Another issue that will continue to face Christians is the neo - Pentecostal or Charismatic movement . . . which has spread like a forest fire, having made significant advances among Catholic, Lutheran and Episcopalian groups . . . In some cases these prayer groups are tied into a structure of authority which opponents call a dictatorship, contending that the 'shepherds' are taking the place of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the lives of individual Christians.
4. "In the ecumenical movement there will be a searching for new directions . . . The National Council of Churches is under the leadership of a new president, William P. Thompson. In his first address Mr. Thompson emphasized the quest for *Christian unity* as the pre - eminent task of the Council.

The next point is worth particular attention. There has been among all denominations in the last few years, a marked movement away from the "social issues" programs of the 1960's. The idea that churches should actively champion one side or another in controversial social problems has been tried and found by many to be sadly wanting.

*In 1973 the National Council of Churches conducted a national survey of this and related questions, and published their findings under the title **Punctured Preconceptions**. This study showed beyond any question that the laity all over the United States do not want social issues programs as the central concern of their church life, or their clergy. What they do want from their clergy is more intensive Bible instruction; helpful pastoral services; and the strengthening of their faith through meaningful devotional programs.*

The study showed also that it is most often the clergy who feel the need of participating in social causes, especially so in urban churches.

Most significantly, it showed that the strongest urging toward social action programs comes primarily from clergy in administrative work in church councils or theological schools — men far removed from actual parish work, and the needs and longings of the average parishioner.

As this present report points out, the issue may well be forever with us, swinging back and forth in pendulum fashion. But the present mood of that very non - average "average" layman reflects a desire for emphasis on instruction and worship.

Both paragraphs No. 5 and the final paragraph of the report attempt to define the *unique* contribution of the churches.

5. "The fundamental cleavage in American Protestantism however is not denominational, but it is the division between those stressing evangelism, worship, Bible study and personal morality on one side; and on the other side those emphasizing church involvement in social issues.

"Here too there could be some coming together by the end of 1976 . . . Some younger evangelists have begun to argue for participation in the efforts for racial equality, world peace, etc; and some Christians who have in the past been absorbed in these causes now say they must give *more attention* to the sources of spiritual power."

6. "The article concludes with a brief discussion of the relation between church and nation. The author feels churches and congregations will be forced by the focus of attention on the historic significance of 1976 to question the spiritual health of the nation — more deeply because of the troubled period just over: the long and futile Vietnam war; the scandals that forced

(Con't. on page 71)

THIRD CAREER — USEFUL RETIREMENT

by Tom Zehner

Challenges of Retirement, Attitudes and Role Adjustments — Meaningful Use of Time.

Before we get too far into our discussions regarding Retirement I would like to quote some sentences from Brian Kinglake's sermon "On Growing Old" in his book *For Heaven's Sake*. I hope these quotes will tease you into looking up that sermon and reading it in full.

"When we are using our allocation of time too quickly, God sometimes reminds us of the need to slow down, by allowing us to fall sick. This is like putting the brake on in a car when it is travelling so fast that its occupants cannot see the countryside through which they are passing!"

"There is nothing to be alarmed about in the aging process, nothing to be ashamed of; and I cannot understand why people should ever try to disguise their age or pretend to be younger than they are. Why try to go back to states you have outgrown?"

"In the WORD, growing old usually has a good significance, relating to experience and wisdom."

"Another thing we must learn to accept, is that a person's USES change as we grow older."

If a person has not faced challenges all of his or her lifetime, that life to a great extent has been wasted. Why start wasting it now when you retire or come near to retirement? You now have the experience, time, wisdom and new opportunities for full, rich living. What greater assets could one have? Your retirement can possibly be fifteen, twenty, twenty-five or more years of your lifetime. Too much to waste because of lack of thinking and planning. As we think of retirement as a couple we must realize that there will be a time of parting when one or the other will be taken by death.

I have constantly met challenges all of my life. During High School days teaching looked interesting, but, finances in the early 1930's made further education and preparation impossible. In the late thirties a temporary job as the Boy's Work Supervisor in a Community House stretched into twenty years. Self-employment in insurance and retirement counselling followed.

As I began approaching retirement age there were some thoughts of the ministry, but, time would not permit the proper preparation and training. So the closest possibility has been a lay leader in the Pittsburgh Society. This has opened up a vast field of opportunities. The challenge to get the Dole Notes preserved in book form, work with the Sunday School Association, Board of Education activities, and especially this series of articles as an assignment of the Board of Education: All have been stimulating. I am not a writer and have found it necessary to make myself work at putting into words what I can talk about by the hour face to face with people.

One of the greatest challenges is to create opportunities for oneself and others. Why do it now? Why not later? The answer is that time to your retirement

can be growing short. The older you are now, the longer you may expect to live. After retirement you will have 50 hours a week — 2600 hours a year to use for yourself and others. Prepare so you don't waste those precious hours.

Adjustments must be made. Look again to Brian's sermon — he points out that the Lord has ways of helping us slow our pace and adjusting to our present abilities. For instance, take twice as much time to spade the garden or shovel snow, etc. Do as much as possible sitting down. Take more rests and enjoy what is happening around you. Sleep during the day if needed, but don't get into the habit of sleeping or sitting away all of retirement. Most people when regularly employed could not take a nap after lunch, now we can.

Changing roles can be especially good for married couples. Husbands often find that the chores of housekeeping and cooking can be real fun and a change from the former business and professional duties. Wives can try a hand at home repairs and gardening as well as having more time for politics and other community affairs than she had when there was the responsibility for a rigid housekeeping schedule. This new life style makes possible the change of roles and opportunity to enjoy the company of one another and friends. Word of warning: the husband may accomplish the same ends in cooking and housekeeping, but, use different approaches, so don't criticize until you try the stew! The wife may have some different ideas about politics and community affairs, so don't grouch until you see what the candidate of her choice does. We all find hidden talents when we have the time and opportunity. When we think of the 2600 hours a year we should freely discuss it with all who will be concerned, spouse, family and friends.

What is leisure? Does it mean only a hobby that we have never tried? Many people in the excitement of retirement preparation invest heavily in equipment and material for a hobby, then before they have completely unpacked it or paid the bill, find they already have lost interest. Do you really want to do nothing but fish for the rest of your life?

In the A.I.M. Literature I have found the following definition —

LEISURE is something we:

- want to do rather than have to do;
- anticipate doing and remember fondly;
- do alone or with someone; (our choice)
- feel free about — physically and mentally;
- contribute to others as well as to ourselves;
- do for fun and/or profit.

Credits and Resources:

American Association of Retired Persons, Action for Independent Maturity, Heartline, For Heaven's Sake, Allegheny County Bar Association, Department of Health Education and Welfare, County, State and National Consumer Organizations, State Insurance Commissioner, Changing Times, Consumer's Research Magazine, Retirement Living Magazine, and many other publications.

REPORT OF GENERAL COUNCIL'S MID-WINTER MEETING

General Council met for its mid-winter sessions January 20 — 22 at Urbana College. Attending the meetings by invitation were the Rev. Randall Laakko, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Stewart Poole, Chairman of the Augmentation Fund Committee, and Roger D. Paulson, Director of Convention's Central Office.

Reports were made by the Officers, and by the Central Office Director. Mr. Paulson noted that the typescript for the first volume of the Dole Memorial Notes had been set on Convention's composer, and to date one hundred pages of the new Book of Worship have been typeset for the Council of Ministers' Committee on Worship.

The Convention Planning Committee has been given firm quotations on room and board rates for the Convention session. It was noted that children attending Convention with their parents must be carefully supervised.

Reporting for the Council of Ministers, Mr. Laakko noted that the Rev. Chungsun Lee has resigned from his Los Angeles pastorate; that the Rev. Ivan Franklin is serving in the U.S. Navy in Okinawa; and that the Rev. John Odey has resigned as Lay Minister for the Temple City, California, society, which society has disbanded as of late December.

The Planning & Development Committee presented several recommendations to General Council, chief among which are:

a) That the Planning & Development Committee be formalized as a standing committee of General Council.

b) That General Council approve the concept of localizing Convention operations such as Central Office and Board and Committee meetings at the Urbana College campus, and record itself as in favor of relocating the Swedenborg School of Religion to Urbana.

Dr. Turley reported for the Swedenborg School of Religion, with information about students and faculty. The Committee on Admission into the Ministry (CAM) is now charged with assessing prospective students, and this has been most helpful to faculty members.

Council voted to approve a budget for 1977-78 of \$241,553, with an estimated deficit of about \$21,000.

Mr. Roland Patzer, President of Urbana College, met with General Council during its Friday afternoon session. The College has set up an out-reach program with centers in Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton and Springfield, which has brought the total student body to over five hundred students, of which two hundred and fifty-five are actually on campus.

After prolonged discussion, and after hearing reports from the Planning & Development Committee (Mr. Ebel), the Feasibility Committee (Mr. Liebert) and the President of the Swedenborg School of Religion, General Council voted unanimously to approve the recommendation (b) of the Planning & Development Committee cited above. The Committee had drawn up a list of twenty-six uses of the Church that could be served by a move to the Urbana campus, which led Council members to vote approval of the concept, and Paul Giunta offered to write up a paragraph or two on each of these points for publication in the *Messenger*.

Dr. Harvey presented information from the Board of Education which covered the many aspects of the Board's program. Request for an appropriation to pay for a Professional in Religious Education to work half-time in this field, and half-time in serving one or more societies was approved.

In response to requests made at Convention, a new item — Public Relations — was included in next year's budget.

An inquiry was received from the British Conference about how Convention would respond to the concept of a "working conference" in Great Britain in 1980. Council voted its willingness to publicize the event among Convention members, but decided to take no official part in the undertaking.

Council voted permission for the Sunday School Association to continue to solicit funds through the *Messenger* and personal solicitation through 1977, for publication of the Dole Notes.

General Council voted to extend financial support for the expansion of facilities at the Wayfarers' Chapel. The Visitor's Center will be enlarged and nearby property is to be purchased for the purpose of building a Conference - Counseling Center.

STANDING RESOLUTION ON DEFINITION OF ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMPUTING DELEGATE STRENGTH AT CONVENTIONS:

It is recognized that the establishment of the requirements for membership is the responsibility of the individual society or other body, and that various types of membership are utilized by different bodies. However, for the purpose of determining delegate strength for voting at Convention sessions only adult active members defined as follows shall be counted: An adult active member of a society is one who is eighteen years of age or older and who has been accepted by the Society through Confirmation or other appropriate service of introduction, or by transfer from another Society, and who within the year has shown active interest in his/her membership. This demonstrated by joining in the programs of worship and work or by contributing towards its needs physically and financially. It shall be the joint responsibility of members and Societies involved to insure that the member is not counted in more than one Society's count for delegate strength.

Serious consideration was given to defining "active" membership for the purpose of determining delegate strength at Convention. A Standing Resolution was framed, text of which follows this report.

It was voted to propose an amendment to Article 4, Section 2 of the Constitution by inserting the words, "and Lay" before the word, "Ministers", this amendment to be adopted at the 1977 meeting of General Convention, but subject to possible reconsideration upon receipt of input from the Council of Ministers and the Committee on Amendments.

Much consideration was given to the subject of nominations at Convention. It was voted to ask the Editor of the *Messenger* to publish pictures and biographies of prospective candidates if requested by a Society or Association of Convention. The complete wording of this motion is to be sent to all Society and Association presidents, so that these church bodies may be encouraged to nominate qualified members for Convention offices.

Respectfully submitted,
Ethel V. Rice,
Recording Secretary.

WE GET LETTERS

Dear Mr. Editor:

Your January Swedenborg Birthday issue is indeed very interesting, especially, it seems to me, Rev. Horn's account of Swedenborg's "airplane".

To this a postscript may be added. First, a model of his "flying machine" was accepted some time ago by the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., for exhibition in its airplane section which includes Lindberg's famous "Spirit of St. Louis". Then there is a considerable article, with illustrations, about Swedenborg's concept which appeared in *Popular Aviation* for January, 1938, honoring his 250th anniversary.

Again, for several years I brought to Convention a small model of the "plane", on one occasion receiving a write-up about it in *Time* magazine.

Somewhat in the same regard, I've suggested to the Swedenborg Scientific Association that it have models made of all Swedenborg's mechanical "inventions", sending them on circuit for exhibitions related to the subject and for display at institutions, including bank lobbies, as is done for Da Vinci's inventions by the Society devoted to that purpose.

Leslie Marshall,
St. Petersburg, Fla.

Swedenborg Scientific Association

The Eightieth Annual Meeting of the Swedenborg Scientific Association will be held in the auditorium of Pendleton Hall, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, on Monday, March 28, 1977, at 8:00 p.m.

Brief reports and election of President and members of the Board of Directors will be followed by an address by Dr. Thomas W. Keiser, whose subject will be "Remnants of an Ancient Curse."

All interested are cordially invited.

Hilary Pitcairn,
Secretary.

NEW ADDRESSES

Rev. Yuzo Noda,
1 — 15 — 13 Akatsutsumi,
Setagaya - Ku, Tokyo, Japan.

Rev. Harvey A. Tafel,
25837 Oak St., No. 110,
Lomita, Calif. 90717

Dr. Ivan D. Franklin, LCdr.
U.S. Naval Regional Medical Center,
P.O. Box 50,
APO San Francisco, Calif. 96331

ADVANCE CONVENTION REGISTRATION
University of San Francisco
June 29 - July 3, 1977

Name.....

Address

.....

Accompanied by:		
Names	Relationship	Ages of Children

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Arrival	Departure
Date and Hour	Date and Hour

Arrivals at San Francisco International Airport take airport bus to downtown terminal. Cost \$1.65. Take taxi to University of San Francisco, Golden Gate entrance between Roselyn and Kitterage Streets. Registration will be at University Center. Room assignments, keys and assistance with luggage will be available at the Registration Desk.

RATES:

Room and board, based on double occupancy in rooms, is \$10.75 per person, per day.
Room and board for a private room is \$12.25 per day.
Parking for autos is \$2.50 per week.
Registration fee is \$15.00 for persons 18 years or older. This fee helps pay for meeting rooms and receptions.

RESERVATION DEADLINE: May 15, 1977

All reservations should be addressed to: Rev. Erwin Reddekopp
Church of the New Jerusalem
2107 Lyon Street
San Francisco, California 94115

Early reservations would be greatly appreciated.

GROWING IN THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

Post - Convention Conference

July 3 — 8, 1977

On the slope of Mt. Tamalpais, the redwood trees reach tall and their spreading branches sing praises to the heavens. A beautiful old mansion nestles on a green lawn; its spacious rooms breathe with memories of happy gatherings of New - Church families. An alcove holding the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg invites the curious reader to settle in the window seat. The sun shines on orange and grapefruit trees, and a volley ball court promises active fun.

This piece of paradise, which once belonged to Mrs. Ruth Bowie of the San Francisco Church, is ours and yours for the Post - Convention Conference. Starting with supper on Sunday, July 3, you are invited to be a part of a learning, loving, growing community which is the Post - Convention Conference.

There will be opportunities to relate to the whole group, to experience the loveliness of the woods alone, and to be involved in an ongoing small group of your choice. An afternoon at nearby Muir Beach will add to the fun and enjoyment of the California beauty. An experienced and well - trained Swedenborgian staff — some new and some familiar to former PCCs — has volunteered their time and talent. Worship, movement, creativity, and celebration will contribute to our theme: Growing in the Beloved Community.

Plan now to take part in this opportunity for living and learning with others in the church. The Conference center is in Mill Valley, close to the Muir Woods, about an hour's drive north from San Francisco. We will gather for dinner on Sunday evening, July 3, and leave after breakfast on Friday, July 8. Cost, including room, board, and registration will be \$100 — no extras. Register early — attendance will be limited by the available space. The Board of Education sponsors the Post - Convention Conference and invites you to come. Be with us for Growing in the Beloved Community.

POST - CONVENTION CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Mail to: Nancy Perry, Executive Secretary
Board of Education
48 Sargent Street
Newton, Mass. 02158

Name _____

Address _____

Will you need transportation from San Francisco to the Conference center and return?

Please enclose \$20 registration fee, non refundable. Make check payable to the Swedenborgian Church.

THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION

by Richard H. Tafel

Since the landings on the moon by man, and other vehicle landings on other planets, what impact does all this now have on what Swedenborg has written in "*Earths In The Universe*"?

Unless we insist on making Swedenborg infallible as to every jot and tittle of what he wrote, and hold that he was not limited by the knowledge and science of his day, I do not believe that the reader of his books needs to be troubled at his occasional misstating of facts as we now know them. If we sincerely believe that God has inaugurated a New Age, in which there is to be a progressive breaking through into new and further truth on every level and in all areas, why should we think that even a Swedenborg of the 17th century could or should speak in the light of the knowledge of the 20th century?

For most people the war between science and religion ended at the turn of the century with the "Monkey Trial" in Tennessee. But there are still Christians who believe, on the basis of their faith, that the earth is flat, all scientific proof to the contrary. There are likewise Swedenborgians who, as Defenders of the Faith and quite inexplicably to me, maintain that Swedenborg is right, even when his findings run counter to modern science. "Swedenborg said he met spirits who had come from the moon. Our moon-landings have found no trace of life there, certainly no human life. But they have explored so little of its surface! Maybe the moon-men have been forced to live under ground!" It has even been suggested that they live in a different physical dimension, and so were invisible to the astronauts! Anything, you see, to prove Swedenborg right, down to the very bottom line.

How petty and trivial all this seems in the light of the grand theme he is pursuing in his *Earths In The Universe*! By his other-world experiences and on the basis of a spiritual sensitiveness built up over half a lifetime, Swedenborg brings us assurance that there is human life on other earths besides ours: that it exists upon thousands and thousands of earths in the boundless universe!

There are many worlds, as may be clear to every one by the fact that there are so many constellations visible in the universe. It is known in the learned world that every fixed star is like a sun in its place . . . Consequently, like the sun of our world, each has round it planets which are earths . . . For what other purpose is there so great a heaven with so many stars? For the goal of the creation of the universe is man, that from man there may be an angelic heaven. What would the human race, and thence an angelic heaven from one earth, be for the Infinite Creator, for whom a thousand earths, nay, tens of thousands, would not be enough?" (E.U. 126).

Once the mighty theme of this book has been grasped, how trivial a detail is the matter of Swedenborg's faulty identification of some of these earths with the only planets he knew of!

Still it might be (and has been) asked, "Well, if Swedenborg could have made mistakes about natural facts, couldn't he have made them about spiritual truths also?" I think we have to make, and ever keep

in mind, the same distinction which Swedenborg made, as to what is doctrine and what is not doctrine in his writings. He is very careful to say, "I have received nothing of doctrine from any angel, but from the Lord alone as I read the Word." Obviously, then, when he is learning from angels, or reporting on heavenly things on the basis of first hand observation, what he says is not "doctrine," as he has defined it. He is very careful to label his wonderful book, *Heaven And Hell*, "From Things Heard And Seen."

We also have to make the same distinction *within* each book of doctrine as to what is doctrine in it and what is Swedenborg's own supportive urging of the validity of that doctrine. His setting forth of the doctrine of a spiritual meaning in Scripture is brief: "There is an inner meaning in Scripture hitherto unknown." But he devotes many pages of many books to urging that doctrine upon us and to validating it. This he does by setting forth that inner meaning at length, by citing other passages of the Word, and by arguments and illustrations drawn from science, history, common experience, or from his other-world experiences. As valuable and interesting as all this is, one has to keep constantly in mind as one reads the theological works what is doctrine ("received from the Lord alone as I read the Word"), and what is supportive and further elucidating of that doctrine.

Because Swedenborg carefully labeled his *Earths In The Universe* (just as he had his *Heaven And Hell*) "From Things Heard And Seen," i.e., that it is not to be considered a book of doctrine, we are all the freer to employ our reason and imagination in wondering about his identifying particular spirits with particular planets. Let us be bold enough to accept as true the findings of the moon-landings and the vehicle probes of Mars, and let us assume that in the near future it will be determined that human life does not exist on Mercury, Jupiter, Saturn and Venus. Can we account in any way for Swedenborg's making the statements that he does about the planets?

Swedenborg described five other "earths in the starry heaven" which he visited, or rather visited spirits who had come into heaven from those earths. From the length of his journeying to them — psychological or spiritual time — we gather some idea of the distance of those earths from us, as well as being expressly told that they are out of our solar system. Quite sensibly, he did not ask them the name of the world they came from. Had he done so, they probably would have said, "The earth," just as he himself would have answered if they had asked him this question, and neither would have been the wiser. The only point of contact with them in Swedenborg's mind (a necessary factor in all communication in the World of Spirit, as he tells us) was his heaven-given knowledge that there were other earths than his which are inhabited by human beings. The closest he came to identifying those "five earths in the starry heaven" was by way of roughly comparing his sun with theirs, and finding that mutually each one's looked to the other like a distant star.

But when Swedenborg came in contact with the spirits whom he tells us about in the beginning of the book, he not only felt that they were closer to him psychologically and spiritually, but found that there

was much in his memory which served to make possible a more intimate communication with them. He knew the five planets and the moon; he had observed and studied them on earth. Furthermore his mind was stored with much data drawn from astrology, philosophy, mythology and even folk - lore. Swedenborg tells us that he could not meet anyone in the other world unless he knew him personally, from history, or from hear - say. In the case at hand, this data in his mind served as points of contact with these various spirits and, quite naturally I suppose, led him to identify them with those specific planets and moon. If he had known other planets, and had similar data about them, he might conceivably have made a different identification. But at any rate this problem most certainly should not serve as a stumbling - block to the mighty truth of this book: that God has created innumerable inhabited earths in his inconceivably vast universe, and that each one serves as a seminary of heaven.

"God moves in mysterious ways his wonders to perform." Until a few years ago, with signal exceptions, only Swedenborgians believed that there were other earths inhabited by people much like ourselves. Today, in this age of inter - planetary

travel, the average person confidently expects that our astronauts sooner or later will be greeted by sentient beings as they land on some distant earth. Dr. Shapley of Harvard, an internationally famous astro - physicist, has stated, "Conservatively, there are at least 100,000 earths in the observable corner of our universe which duplicate the conditions for life as we know it." One of the pressing problems facing orthodox Christian theologians today is the possibility — no, the probability — of our meeting people from outer space who have not "fallen" as we have, who therefore have no "original sin," and who consequently do not have to "be saved."

There you have the present scene: God making us aware of his larger human family, a humanity as far flung as his illimitable universe. Are we not to add our voice to this growing chorus, because we can't make up our minds about the testimony of his servant Emanuel Swedenborg?

Send your religious queries directly to:

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

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

BIBLE STUDY NOTES — Vol. I

by Rev. F. H. Blackmer

A Review

In presenting the Memorial Edition of Lesson Notes by Anita Sturges Dole, Rev. William R. Woofenden has preserved nearly all features of the four - year course prepared by Mrs. Dole. Lesson - by - lesson the material retains Mrs. Dole's words, except for a few minor changes of arrangement, all of which make the Notes more serviceable to class - room needs.

The one major change is the sequence of lessons as they are found in the Bible, which has been the arrangement used by most of our Sunday Schools during the past six years. This has resulted in some abbreviation of Mrs. Dole's writing, because her spacing of lessons in four - year cycles has necessitated review of some Bible sequences which were being omitted. Thus, the presentation of a given lesson comes more quickly to its point, with pedagogical advantages. In the new format, notes for Primary and Beginners have been combined, printing about two - thirds of the material for elementary pupils. There have been few classes for Beginners. The special sheet for teachers has been discontinued, but its material appears for each department. "Doctrinal Points", which formerly supplemented Teachers' sheets, are now found near the beginning of each lesson. For each lesson a quotation from Swedenborg has been moved from the sheet for Seniors to a more prominent position following notes for Adults. These changes give a systematic and effective summary of each lesson.

It is assumed now that each Sunday School will make up its own schedule of lessons, as seems most

suitable for its various classes. A double - page form at the end of the Introduction would guide a School wishing to continue the four - year surveys of the entire Bible. But references which had been made to a next lesson — or a last lesson — are now omitted from the text, producing a Handbook of Bible Study which is completely flexible. There is no numbering of lessons; everything is designated in terms of the Bible sequence, as summarized in the Table of Contents for each volume and there listed according to page - numbers of the volume.

The Memorial Volumes are prepared primarily for teachers, but they can serve in home plan for children or in any plan of personal study by young people or adults. The new series divides the Old Testament into 99 lessons, plus 4 Psalms. In the New Testament the material is presented in 46 Gospel lessons and 12 for the Apocalypse.

This Memorial Volume, published by the Sunday School Association and dedicated to Mrs. Anita Dole, provides much flexibility in arranging courses in Bible study. Accompanying Mrs. Dole's lessons are sheets in quantity for each department, along with handwork for younger pupils. Old Testament lessons are grouped into seven booklets and the New Testament into three.

Order blanks may be requested from:

Rev. Franklin Blackmer
928 Middle St.
Bath, Maine, 04530

FROM CHURCH RECORDS

BAPTISMS

The Rev. Horace W. Briggs of Fryeburg, Maine, officiated at the following baptismal services:

GRAFFAM — Jeremy Mark, son of Mr. & Mrs. Robert Graffam on September 14, 1975; **GERRISH — BALLARD** — John A. Gerrish and Sherry B. Ballard on May 29, 1976. On June 6, 1976: **BAKER** — Wade Allan and Matthew Frederick, children of Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Baker; **BOOTH** — Robert Alan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Robert Booth; **BURNHAM** — Ellen Jean, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Richard Burnham; **EMERY** — Tonya, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Alan Emery; **EMERY** — Marcy Kim and Mark James, children of Mr. & Mrs. Barry Emery; **EMERY** — Leon Isaiah and Lorne Christopher, children of Mr. & Mrs. Philip Emery; **GOULD** — Sue Ann and Angela Christine, daughters of Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Gould; **MATTHEWS** — Melissa, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Dwayne Matthews; **RICHARDS** — Dawn Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Alan Richards. On June 13, 1976: **WEBSTER** — Meggan Aileen, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Austin Webster; **WHITTAKER** — Tracy Ann, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Scott Whittaker. On October 24, 1976: **CARRIER** — Greyson Barrett, son of Mr. & Mrs. Grafton Carrier.

SUGDEN — Michael Allen Sugden, son of Fred and Sherry Sugden, was baptized in the Riverside, Cal., New Church on January 23, 1977, the Rev. John Spiers officiating.

ASHBRIDGE — Wendy Ashbridge was baptized into the Christian faith in the Boston New Church on January 30, 1977, the Rev. George McCurdy officiating.

CONFIRMATIONS

BRIGGS — GOFF — HEATH — WOOD — William David Briggs, Julie Anne Goff, Jacqueline Sue Heath, and Alice Wood were received into membership of the New Church at Fryeburg, Maine, on April 18, 1976, the Rev. Horace W. Briggs officiating.

EGAN — KAHAN — KNODT — ROSENBERGER — During the 1976 Christmas season Mrs. Margurite Egan, Mrs. Agnes Kahan, Mrs. Freda Knodt and Mrs. Leona Rosenberger were confirmed into the faith of the New Church, St. Paul, Minn., the Rev. Richard M. Baxter officiating.

MARRIAGES

The Rev. Horace W. Briggs of Fryeburg, Maine, officiated at the following marriage services:

SMITH — BRESSETTE — Roger C. Smith and Kelly L. Bresette on November 1, 1975; **DRECHSLER — FARRIS** — Eric L. Drechsler and Susan L. Farris on November 30, 1975; **EASTMAN — EASTMAN** — Van C. Eastman and Madelyn A. Eastman on December 31, 1975; **HATCH — PARENT** — David Hatch and Donna Parent on March 21, 1976; **GERRISH — BALLARD** — John A. Gerrish and Sherry B. Ballard

on May 29, 1976; **GRAVES — ROBBINS** — Wilfred Raymond Graves and Rebecca Ann Robbins on June 8, 1976; **BURNELL — SAUNDERS** — Ralph Sidney Burnell and Brenda Gail Saunders on August 20, 1976; **SEVERY — OTTES** — Gordon Edward Severy Jr. and Lisa Ottes on August 28, 1976; **HAMILTON — THURSTON** — Lawrence Hamilton and Marie J. Thurston on September 4, 1976;

DAVIDSON — SHAW — Donald S. Davidson and Shirley Shaw on September 11, 1976; **HARNDEN — DOWNS** — Dean Elliott Harnden and Mary Lee Downs on September 27, 1976; **WHITTAKER — DESJARDINS** — Robert Nathan Whittaker and Elinor Mary Desjardins on October 14, 1976.

BUNCH — DIRKS — Michael L. Bunch and Laura Jean Dirks were married in Wichita, Kansas, on January 8, 1977, the Rev. Galen Unruh of Pawnee Rock, Kansas officiating.

TRECARTIN — ELLIOTT — Dana Walter Trecartin and Ann Marie Elliott were married at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ont., on December 4, 1975, the Rev. Paul B. Zacharias officiating.

RHODDA — SCHAFER — Clifton Rhodda and Joan Schaffer were married at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ont., on January 7, 1977, the Rev. Paul B. Zacharias officiating.

BERNIER — BRIGGS — Steven R. Bernier and Rebekah Jean Briggs were married in the New Church in Bath, Maine, on January 8, 1977, the Rev. Franklin Blackmer officiating.

DEATHS

The Rev. Horace W. Briggs of Fryeburg, Maine, officiated at the following resurrection services:

BURNELL — Glenna L. Burnell on September 12, 1975; **HODGDON** — Charles R. Hodgdon on November 19, 1975; **LEACH** — Bertha Leach on December 17, 1975; **ANTHONY** — Allen D. Anthony on January 15, 1976; **DUTTON** — Warren Dutton on January 28, 1976; **HARNDEN** — C. Archer Harnden on April 16, 1976; **GALLAGHER** — Luella B. Gallagher on April 24, 1976; **PIKE** — John W. Pike on April 24, 1976; **HALEY** — Clarence Haley on May 15, 1976; **ANDREWS** — Urban S. Andrews on June 5, 1976; **GLINES** — Lee Russell Glines on June 26, 1976; **WALKER** — Lewis A. Walker on September 22, 1976; **BARTLETT** — Debra Sue Bartlett on October 2, 1976; **WILEY** — Dorothy E. Wiley on October 11, 1976; **HALEY** — Audrey F. Haley on October 17, 1976; **LaCASCE** — Raymond E. LaCasce on October 23, 1976.

LOEPPKY — Mrs. Sadie Loeppky of Calgary, Alberta, passed away on Dec. 29, 1976, after a lengthy illness.

BARNARD — Miss Katherine Barnard of Washington, D.C., died on Dec. 31, 1976. The resurrection service was held on January 5, 1977, the Rev. F. Robert Tafel officiating.

HALL — Mr. Thomas Hall, of Washington, D.C., died on December 31, 1976. The resurrection service was held on January 3, 1977, the Rev. F. Robert Tafel officiating.

PARSONS — Mr. Richard Parsons, 68, long an active member in the San Francisco Society, died on January 12, 1977. A memorial service was held on January 17, 1977, the Rev. Erwin Reddekopp officiating.

THE LAST WORD

THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

by Wilson Van Dusen

Perhaps I should warn you, that though I am of Convention and work in concert with you, I am even more fundamentally of the Universal Church. By my definition, a member of the Universal Church is one who can find good in all churches. Swedenborgians, members of one of the world's smallest denominations, often feel despair and wonder: Where is the New Church which is to spread over the globe? *The New Church has spread over the globe and is growing at such a pace that it burdens the imagination to try to follow its growth.* As usual, the fault is that we wait for the Divine to appear and do as we expect. It is as though we wait for the Divine to walk through the door of Convention, and fail to see that meanwhile it is coming through many doors and walls in ways so rich and varied as to stagger the imagination. I would suggest the general dictum that almost all errors made by interpreters of the writings rest upon treating in too low and mundane a fashion, matters that in the writings are rich, varied, subtle and very human.

The writings indicate clearly that after the Last Judgment in 1757 there would be little sign of change. The most central change would be increased religious freedom (LJ 73). When we compare things now to those in 1757 there is a decided, massive improvement in religious freedom almost everywhere in the world. But there are countless other signs of the New Church. Are people as a whole more considerate of each other? Decidedly. In the 1700's the announcement that a thief of a loaf of bread was to be publicly hanged would bring crowds with their lunch to enjoy the spectacle. Can you imagine the commotion such a display would cause now? The media have helped link us together. If people starve in East Africa, much of the world is aware of it and sends help. The work of UNESCO and of countless organizations across cultural and national boundaries is a notable example. Even a 30 year old film in which Americans joyfully blow up Japanese is now badly out of date. The glorious trappings of war have been stripped away and there is a widespread questioning of any killing. There is a growth of the rights of the individual before the law. Some would say too much.

Yes, some would say, we are generally more considerate of each other but awareness of the spiritual is less. Not so. In the age of Aquarius, there is much more spiritual awareness. It is simply more varied than we expected. In religions we are less advanced than the international travellers who are accustomed to work across language differences. Spiritual differences produce differences in terms that we seldom try to overcome. Are the Bahai, in their universal religion, part of the New Church? Rarely has anyone looked to see. The Buddhists worship the Divine in a human form (the Buddha equals the Divine Human) and will be joined with the Christians in heaven (LJ 51). Moreover their central teachings are the same as the New Church. But who has noticed? Was the New Church to carry the name of Swedenborg as high as the sky? I can just hear

Swedenborg saying, "I sincerely hope not." Then what is to spread and reign over all? The essential teachings of the New Church which have spread and taken root to a fantastic extent. I see the New Church in the concerns of ecology, that the limited riches of the earth are in some sense everyone's property and concern. I see it in the concerns of youth. Swedenborg refers to *the church* (DWL 25) which is all scattered churches functioning as a single organism under its one head, the Lord. Be cheered that it is so. There is One Church.

The uniqueness of Convention lies in being one of the many bearers of this universal good will and understanding which all good people can see if they look for it. We should rejoice that the New Church is doing so very well; that it is so vast in members and so universal in scope. This does not take away importance from the writings but adds greatly to it. But this does chide us to take the writings more seriously, to see how true they really are. The international traveller, who adjusts to foreign languages and ways, has a language and customs of his own. Even so, I am at home in the writings, though a member of the Universal Church.

(Alliance Bulletin con't from p. 62)

resignation of a president; illegal campaign contributions by prestigious corporations; financial corruption; abuses of power; followed by a recession, an oil shortage, etc.

"These crisis will force Christians to a deeper self-examination of problems in America and of our place among nations, the reporter feels. The report ends:

"What is the unique contribution the churches can make in the present year? It is . . . a demand for simple truth and integrity."

Perhaps, says the author, Americans will be more ready now to listen to the old principle that God asks for *truth in the inner man*; that this is not just an ideal but a realistic and necessary principle of business, government and all of life.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE —

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Ted Klein

Capital Punishment
George Dole

Our Church in Tokyo

The Song of Spring
Horace Briggs

THE MESSENGER

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