

The Messenger

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH
NOVEMBER 1977



O GIVE THANKS UNTO THE LORD

**"Thanksgiving Altar"
Kitchener New Church**

Photo by Jeannie Czudyjowycz

Editorial

IN THIS ISSUE

It has been a great joy and privilege to assemble this issue of the *Messenger*. It doesn't always happen that way. Sometimes there is a dearth of material; promised articles mysteriously fail to appear; or the contributions that do come in may not be appropriate. And the editor looks longingly at travel folders. Not so this month.

Everything fell into place so beautifully and easily. The lead article by Gertrude Dole on "The Ordination of Women", which first appeared in the January, 1977, issue of *Studia Swedenborgiana*, deserves careful reading by everyone in Convention. Not only for the conclusions she arrives at, but observe also the manner and the spirit in which she reaches those conclusions.

Convention's philosophy of education and the brief report of George Dole's Fryeburg lecture go hand in hand. What does it mean to educate the whole person? How is personal change affected and what is the role of education in this ongoing process? In these two articles some fundamental positions are clearly outlined for all to see.

The picture of living on an island off the Maine coast, by Melissa Clark, is sheer delight. Most of us live in metropolitan areas and we tend to forget that some people still live "the simple life". At a deeper level, much of what she says is also applicable in any large city.

The passage by Reuel Howe and the lovely sketch by Nancy Schneider speak for themselves. . . with a message that touches the heart.

And the "Letters to the Editor" are especially interesting this month. They point up some of the concerns, the hopes, and the dreams we have for the New Church. I hope you will read them and respond in some way that is appropriate for you.

Externally, there is not much about Thanksgiving in this issue. Beneath the surface, everything breathes the spirit of Thanksgiving.

In 1863, in the midst of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln penned these lines. "The year that is drawing toward its close has been filled with blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. These bounties are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come. . . It has

seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American people."

Have a blessed and joyous Thanksgiving!

P. Z.

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Paul B. Zacharias, Editor

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The Starting Line by Eric Zacharias

Acres of Diamonds

Diamonds! Diamonds! Acres of Diamonds! People all around us — their backs bent and their eyes intense — scratching at the heavy, black clay soil of south - western Arkansas — in search of the illusive stone that millions of years ago was formed deep in the bowels of the earth.

Thus, a somewhat unusual setting provided for the preparation of an article for the November issue of the *Messenger*. It is now late in September. The summer schedule was a busy one with the Convention, the Western Canada Conference, and the New Church Assembly at Fryeburg. When it was learned that the only active diamond mine on the North American continent is located in Arkansas and that all the precious stones found here are the property of the finder, adventuresome thoughts began to emerge. Here had already been found the Star of Arkansas, a diamond of 40 karats. We were advised that an average of two diamonds a day are found here and that in total more than 6000 have been taken from the crater.

We arrived at the crater to find more than seventy acres of relatively barren Arkansas clay surrounded by the forests and mountains of that region. With appropriate tools and high hopes, we followed a column of people into the crater area. The atmosphere was essentially light - hearted — however, one also sensed that there was with most people a quickening urgency. "If this could only be my lucky day. . . !"

On entering into an experience of this nature, there arises within one's self a tide of expectancy. "In all probability it won't happen . . but it could." There they lie — all those open acres — and somewhere out there are the diamonds — enough diamonds, that, if found, would easily meet all the financial needs of Convention, of Urbana College and the Zacharias' too.

Well, for hours we scratched — closely examining promising bits of stone till our backs ached and our eyes strained. And always nagging questions preyed upon our minds. Could a precious stone have been missed by failing to lift that stone — or that one? Also, having no previous experience in the art of diamond hunting — would one recognize a raw

diamond, if seen? Finally, in a voice, restrained with some effort but still stirred with excitement, Betty called, "I believe I found one." Together, we examined her find. It appeared to have the crystal formation of a diamond and it shone with a kind of dull light. Very carefully the stone was deposited for safe keeping until it could be evaluated by the resident geologist.

The time came — and we eagerly spread our findings before the geologist and nervously awaited his verdict. Without hesitating a moment and seemingly in a most off - hand manner, he said quietly, "This is a bauxite crystal. . . this is. . . this is. . . But no diamonds, I'm sorry to say. You are on the right track. Better luck next time."

Later, as I reflected upon the events of that day, a number of thoughts came to mind. Indeed, this had been a day rich not in diamonds — but rich in symbolism and correspondences. In AC no. 9868 in which is given the significance of Aaron's breastplate, we read, "A chrysoprase, a sapphire, and a diamond. That hereby is signified the celestial love of truth." And in TCR no. 34, we read, "The Divine life that actuates man by means of the influx from the sun of the angelic heaven may be compared to light from the world's sun and its influx into a transparent object — the reception of life in the highest degree to the influx of light into a diamond." We are not born into a knowledge of truth — we acquire it only by a long, oftentimes tedious process. Persistence in this search is surely the very heart of it all. Sitting in the shade of a tree, as pleasant as this may be, and looking longingly out over the field of diamonds cannot accomplish our need. Digging into the soil we discover bauxite crystals and a whole variety of diamond - like stones — and momentarily these excite the mind but, in the end, they are false. So, the life process becomes one in which a constant process of sorting out takes place — to sift out what is true from what is false. Falsity wants so much to be accepted as truth, that the very capacity to determine the distinguishing features between them must be under constant scrutiny. Surely, it can only be a growing relationship between ourselves and the Lord and His Word that can sharpen this capacity.

WOMEN IN THE MINISTRY

Gertrude Tremblay

I am very much aware of the nature and extent of the controversy which has arisen in the General Convention, and in the New Church generally, over the authorization in 1973 of the ordination of women into Convention's ministry. Much has been said and written on the subject, and a serious effort is being made in some quarters to persuade our societies that support of the ordination of women can come only from those who have denied the authority of the writings of Swedenborg or who have not seriously studied them. . .

First, I think you are entitled to know where I stand with respect to the authority of the writings of the church (hereafter called simply "the writings"), as I believe that this is the focal point of any valid discussion of my position on the issue in question. I was born into and grew up in a doctrinally oriented New Church minister's family, and have read the writings for myself for over forty years. . .

I cannot remember a time when I did not regard the writings as the means chosen by the Lord for making His Second Coming in a fuller revelation of Himself. I still hold this view. I believe that through the truths revealed in the writings a New Age or dispensation has been inaugurated in religious thought and in Christian life. . .

I believe that the "nunc licet" inscription, which has become a kind of motto for the New Church, is a statement of the basic principle which constitutes the spirit of freedom of the New Age, and which guarantees that each human being has the right and in fact the obligation to do his or her own thinking in matters of doctrine. If the Lord protects this freedom of choice and reason above all else, how can we do less?

The Role of Fundamentalism

I am deeply disturbed by the tendency of some who champion the writings, when they take the stand that those whose interpretations differ from their own are spiritually dead. I have even heard it advanced that the General Convention is dead because it has authorized the ordination of women into its ministry. It seems to me that the "fundamentalist" position in any religion (including the New Church) is a permission (permissio) of divine providence

intended to challenge the minds of others to begin to think for themselves; and this is what I see happening in the General Convention. . . While I personally cannot take an eclectic (pick-and-choose) approach to the writings, I believe that such a position can be quite sincerely taken by others, and should therefore not be treated as an offense to be condemned. I feel that insistence upon being allowed to make one's own interpretation of the writings is the position which any free and rational mind will adopt, and is a sign of life rather than of death in the General Convention. In fact, as I see it, those who do not wish to do their own thinking, while they may be members of the New Church, have not really caught its spirit. . .

The scribes and pharisees had many rules and regulations growing out of their literal interpretation of the commandment that no work should be done on the sabbath day. The Lord gave us the spirit of the law when He personally disregarded the rules of the pharisees and said, "It is lawful to do well on the sabbath day." (Matthew 12: 1 - 13). When He visited Mary and Martha, and Martha wanted Him to insist that Mary help her with the traditional woman's duties, He gently but firmly refused to let Martha impose her bias upon her sister (Luke 10: 38 - 42) — a case very much to the point in discussing the duties proper to women. . .

I believe that it is essential to the protection of freedom of thought, that the presentation of differing points of view be encouraged rather than stifled. It is for this reason that I have chosen to remain in the General Convention, where I feel that there is the most room for the development of that freedom. This is the basic position from which I will be speaking in the following comments on women in the ministry. . .

The Roles of Males and Females

The position that women ought not to be ordained into the ministry is based usually upon statements made in the work *Conjugial Love*, particularly those in which the differences between the sexes are presented. (See CL 90, 174 - 175, 176, 184 - 192). If we squint myopically at some of these statements, such as the statement that there are duties proper to one sex or the other which can be properly

performed by one sex but not by the other, we may easily miss what I feel is the main point: that it is the intent and purpose of these distinctions to provide the strongest possible incentive for the two sexes to work together. (CL 65 - 69). If we look with more perception at the list of "duties proper", we do not find any concern for such externals as who changes the baby's diapers, gives Junior his allowance, does the dishes, mows the lawn, etc., etc. Such a listing would have delighted the scribes and pharisees, but seems to me to have no validity in the context of the New Age. Duty rosters are very useful in their place — if they are acknowledged to be man - made, and if they are responsive to the circumstances and feelings of those individuals who must live with them; but the following words of the Lord seem appropriate as a warning against incorporating duty rosters into formal doctrine: "Thus ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your traditions. . . But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (Matt. 15: 6, 9).

What I believe we find, if we look at the spirit of the passages in *Conjugal Love* referred to above, is that the joy of marriage is found in working together. The division of duties is not an exercise in domestic efficiency, but a recognition that men and women bring different qualities to the common use. For example, in the education of children, according to *Conjugal Love*, the parents work as a team, the father undertaking those tasks for which his intellect particularly fits him, and the mother those for which her affections particularly fit her; but it is made quite clear, to me at least, that they share a mutual interest, derive from each other and from their common concern the true meaning of parenthood, and in time become able to stand in for each other when the situation requires it. (CL 176) Two people do not become one by staking out territories and posting "keep out" signs. And who would insist that if one parent is absent or dies, the other should refuse on principle to take over the absent partner's duties as far as possible?

The writings state, and we cannot dismiss the statement as an "error", that a woman cannot lift up her mind into the same light of heaven as can a man; but there is a companion statement that a man cannot lift up his mind into the same heat of heaven as can a woman. There are also statements which indicate that in working together each receives from the other that which he or she cannot achieve alone. (CL 191 -

192; 196; 199 - 201). If this last were true, men and women would never make it to the same heaven after death! In other words, the driving force, as I see it, is the need of each for the other — the compelling need to share in the use for which both were created. . . .

In the *Spiritual Diary* (SD 5936) Swedenborg makes what is perhaps his most thought - provoking comment in considering the admission of women into the ministry, when he takes exception to women who "preach in meetings", and concludes with the statement that "woman belongs in the home. . . ." *The Spiritual Diary* has long been a controversial work with respect to its validity as a doctrinal presentation, because it is a diary and not an organized presentation of doctrine. In it Swedenborg records his spiritual experiences, and from it he draws many of the illustrations which appear in his other works. There is some reason to doubt Swedenborg's intention to publish his diary (or permit its publication by others), or to advocate acceptance of its contents as doctrine. This, however, does not invalidate the comments he makes in it; and I think we may safely assume that passages such as the one just mentioned are available to us today under divine providence for our instruction.

I do feel that in reading the *Spiritual Diary*, because it is not an organized presentation in which Swedenborg is developing a doctrinal point but is rather recording the experiences he had, we need to be particularly careful that we do not supply the wrong context for particular statements. The short paragraph on preaching is an example. Others have already called attention to the force of the first eight words, "Women who think *in the way men do*. . ." as being the keynote of the passage. The act of preaching is rather a case in point than the substance of the argument. Both men and women have intelligence, but the quality of that intelligence is different and expresses itself differently in outward appearance. (CL 218; HH 368, 369).

The Spirit Gives Life

If we think of the outward form of the soul as it appears in heaven as a picture of the thoughts and affections, (AC 9306; AE 1001; CL 33; 218; HH 47, 48) it seems reasonable that the sexual characteristics (the voice, distribution of hair, and general roughness or softness) have to do with the basic motivation of the life, and not with any particular set of outward acts. Women "who think in the way

men do" would be those who like to think of themselves as having the male characteristics of intellectual acumen and physical hardiness. Women on the other hand, who assume various duties from a loving concern and desire to be of use, and who have no desire to compete with men or to express themselves in masculine ways, would not be among those who "think in the way men do", and would be at heart feminine.

I think that Swedenborg's insistence that by undertaking traditionally masculine functions a woman would acquire a coarser and harsher nature (which was apparently his chief concern) arose from the conditions with which he was familiar. Consider the working conditions, the long hours of labour, the lack of electricity and telephones, the difficulty of a journey or even thirty miles — in short, the lack of our modern everyday conveniences and means of protection — and clearly the world outside the home was no place for the gentle sex. Even a man like Swedenborg who could foresee the airplane and submarine could scarcely have imagined a time when a woman could hold the variety of jobs we now take for granted, unless she conditioned her mind to a man's way of life. Today a woman can pick up a phone, reserve a seat on a plane, and in a few hours be halfway around the earth from her home — with no thought of behaving like a man; in fact, she might be planning a shopping spree in Paris.

In other words, a woman's world is no longer confined to the "safety" of her home and immediate neighborhood. Today in a very real sense, just as one's community, one's country, and the world itself may be considered a larger neighbor, so may each be considered a larger home. "Woman belongs in the home" — but what is a home today? What of the home-away-from-home which the church can certainly be for many in today's mobile society? The church particularly, and businesses generally, have in our time become much more "family" affairs, in which men and women, and even children, participate freely. . .

It seems to me that women who think *as women*, from affection, may also speak and write and even preach *as women*, from affection, without losing their feminine qualities, provided that in matters of judgement they "consult with men" (CL 175) whom they respect, and in particular consult with the Lord through the reading of the Bible and the writings. At the same time, it seems obvious to

me that *men*, thinking and writing and preaching *as men*, should in the normal course of church life be doing most of the intellectual work. If the church suffers a lack of intellectual leadership, it is in my view not so much from the efforts of women gone crazy, as from the lack of sufficient intellectual input from the men of the church.

The Situation Today

In Swedenborg's day the church was essentially a place of instruction for the intellect, while the affections were nurtured in the home. Today's churches are of quite a different character, providing not only for the instruction of church-oriented families, but also for the full range of spiritual and often even of physical needs of many of all ages who have no other real home. While we might wishfully think of a return to the old days of home-based community life, this is not likely to come about in our time, if at all. . . .

It is worth comment that the ministry provides more opportunities than most occupations for a woman to be at home: her "office" can be there, she can entertain parish members, and she can visit neighbors and friends, and help out at daytime church affairs far more easily than would be the case with any of the jobs women normally have to accept. In addition, the ministry is of such a nature as to encourage and inspire affection for people, and is far less competitive than most positions. In short, it seems to me that if women are to be required to work, the ministry is a far better situation than most other occupations.

The traditional forms of parish ministry are in a state of transition from the traditions of the first Christian dispensation to those of the New Age: and in view of the greater freedom of our times we may well ask whether the minister-and-wife concept of division of duties is adequate for our times. It seems quite reasonable to me that within the church family a partnership of men and women desiring to serve the uses of the ministry may frequently cut across the lines of marriage, and may include not only husband-and-wife teams who interiorly share the same love for the uses of the church, but also those whose marriage partners do not share that particular interest, and also may include single men and women. Where, if not within the church family, can men and women be guaranteed participation in promoting that spiritual development of which the raising of children in the natural home is the outward form? . . .

Symbols and the Ministry

A question is sometimes raised regarding men and women as representative figures in the ministry. In the marriage ceremony, the groom (not the minister: in heaven a minister does not even participate in the ceremony) represents the Lord, and the bride the church, (CL 20, 21), but after the ceremony both together represent the church. (CL 125) We do have a certain amount of symbolism in the sacraments and rites, but it seems to me a regression to allow the New Church to become encumbered with representatives. The ancient Jewish Church was a representative type of church, and Biblical Jewish history and leaders were representative, for the sake of the writings of the Word. Such formal and detailed representatives came to an end upon completion of the Old and New Testaments, (AC 5136), and were summarized by the Lord in the sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Supper. (TCR 670). . . .

As a minister, the man is a shepherd; and the Bible does mention shepherdesses — for example, Rachel. (Genesis 29: 9; AC5201). One might also wonder whether a sermon has to be “preaching” in the sense of an essentially intellectual presentation. While I would agree that the men ought to carry the intellectual burden whenever possible, I would question whether the traditional pattern is the only valid pattern of ministry. In the passages noted in connection with Rachel, it is interesting that the concern is with the *feeding* of the flock; and the preparation and serving of food is one of the most firmly established of the duties of women in the home. It seems to lend itself spiritually as well to the abilities and interests of women.

I very much doubt that the Lord “ordains” ministers at the command of men. Ordination does not seem to me to be a sacrament, but a rite for the orderly provision of leadership in the spiritual affairs of the church. It might also be noted that in the Gospels the Greek words translated “ordain” are not unusual or special words, but very common ones — in fact, among the first words learned by the beginner: *poieo*, meaning to make or do or bring about; (Mark 3: 14), and *tithemi*, meaning to place or set. (John 15: 16). They do not involve anything of ritual or supernatural significance. I share my father’s view that our ordination ceremonials are of human origin, and confer no special status beyond the duties and privileges of the office as formulated by the church organization as the ordaining body. I do not feel that a minister represents either his church or his Lord *by correspondence*, but simply that

by his association with the office of the ministry he stands for the principles and practices of his church. Like the holder of any other office, he should do his best to do it credit and serve his church and the Lord. . . .

The Essence of Ministry

It is my hope that since a decision has been reached by Convention, continuing serious consideration by the members leads them in the direction of allowing full freedom on the part of each individual, particularly in the matter of the uses which he or she feels called by the Lord to undertake. The ministry in its highest form is a calling by the Lord to serve Him. Isaiah is described as a prophet (not a preacher or priest) called by the Lord; the Bible also recognizes prophetesses. Isaiah describes his call in these words: “I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I: send me.” (Isaiah 6:8).

The individual — man or woman — who feels called by the Lord is answerable to the Lord, and to Him alone. It is for this reason primarily that I voted in favor of the ordination of women in 1973, and continue to support it. I believe that suitable divisions of duties between men and women, whether or not they include ministerial services, are best worked out by each church family to meet its particular needs; that there need be no conflict between men and women in the performance of such duties; and that each can bring to the life of the church qualities which the other cannot bring. Men and women working together can give to each other the priceless balance of love and wisdom so badly needed in our church societies today. Perhaps also, by setting an example of the true partnership of men and women within the framework of the church family, we may help to restore the concept of true partnership in marriage within the social structure. . . .

I believe that we have something special going for us in the General Convention. I feel that the full participation of women with men in our ministry can become a powerful force for good, both in our Convention, and in the world by our example.

(Gertrude Dole Tremblay, presently serving as Co-ordinator for Ministerial Training Services in Western Canada, is well known in New Church circles. We are indebted to the author for this thought provoking article; and we are also grateful to the Rev. William Woofenden, editor of Studia Swedenborgiana, from which this article, considerably condensed, was taken).

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Position Paper adopted by the Board of Education of the Swedenborgian Church

August 1977

Swedenborg foresaw a New Age in which the Lord's presence would enable human beings to live in free, people - centered societies on this earth. The goal of the Swedenborgian Church in this New Age is to help persons become aware of the presence of the Divine in their growth process as they learn to experience their own integrity and meaning as unique individuals, and as they ultimate their potential to become angels who return the Divine love consciously and freely.

This goal is essentially educational. It is based on the assumption that each person is created with a never - ending potential for growth, self - actualization, and discovery of meaning in life, and that the experience of this growth gives insight permitting participation in the growth process of others. Human beings are not mechanically functioning pieces of matter, passively responding to conditioning and behavioral control. They are active beings, capable of self direction. Within basic human limitations, they have the freedom and responsibility to make choices for their own lives, which affect the lives of others.

Choice, however, has little meaning without an understanding of alternatives and implications. Education can provide an atmosphere in which possibilities are revealed and clarified, and in which informed, intelligent choices can be made, so that individuals can discover for themselves their own conceptions of what is of value. Such a non - parochial atmosphere contains a respect for variety and difference. Learners are offered the opportunity to experience the effects of their choices in interactions with others in a climate of trust rather than blame. Learning takes place when choices are viewed as actions with consequences rather than unchangeable decisions leading to success or failure, and when the individual can risk trying out new behaviours and discover that the world may not operate as he or she has always assumed.

This education of whole persons as feeling, caring individuals, learning through experiencing intellectual and spiritual growth, de-emphasizes the mere memorization of facts and information. Truth is not taught by the

simple telling; learning is through struggle, engagement, and an involvement that links knowledge to feelings to create a sense of meaning. The goal becomes the development of persons who do not passively reflect the values and ideas of their culture but who actively seek to understand and transform that culture. This process involves freeing minds from prejudice and arbitrarily - imposed authority, allowing them to think for themselves and make their choices freely and rationally.

For Swedenborg, knowledge of facts or of sense data is necessary material for learning. Facts must be provided. But learning comes in relating these facts to love, in committing them, as he says, to life rather than to memory. The ability to connect sense data with feelings is dependent partly on sensory awareness. Education of the whole person includes re-educating and sharpening sensory perceptions and expanding bodily awareness and potentialities. The process of connecting what we see and hear with our intuition, imagination, and feeling reactions may still be largely unconscious for the learner or for the teacher. But the degree to which learning takes place will depend on the depth of feelings and the openness to new ideas tapped in the educational process.

This depth of feelings and this openness go far beyond the individual. Swedenborg speaks of Divine love constantly flowing into each person, coming to us through many and varied means: through spirits and angels, through reading the Bible, through worship experiences, through love between friends and family, through wonder at the beauty of nature, through becoming aware of truths, through looking within and feeling something from beyond flowing into ourselves. Swedenborgians understand one of the major goals of education as helping people to get in touch with this trans-personal aspect of life in a continuing process of renewal. As Swedenborg says, the basic "cause of man's ignorance is man's belief that he lives from himself, and that he has no connection with the first Being of life. . . Yet if that connection were broken a man would instantly fall dead." (HH 302).

Swedenborg emphasizes that this Divine love desires diversity. No person is encouraged to imitate another, nor to imitate a given standard model, in order to make connection with the source of life. Rather, each seeks to use and to integrate his or her unique talents to experience and to respond most fully to the particular and distinct act of life present in an individual human life. This response means action as well as understanding. It meets the needs of others, and uses talents effectively for good in society.

As persons experience this unique growth process through their interchange of ideas and feeling with others, they become more capable of individualized learning and self - direction.

Whether they are children, young people choosing careers or life styles, or adults reflecting on the direction of the motives and goals that express the meaning of their lives. Their freedom and responsibility for their own education becomes a greater reality. The educational process these individuals experience as growth - producing becomes a model for them to expand and refine in their personal and professional lives. As each life is touched and changed as the connection with the Divine is more conscious and more functional, such education becomes an expanding reality, reaching out to affect unknown lives in generations to come.

ON THE PECULIAR EXCELLENCE OF CONVENTION.

George Dole

After quite a few years of exposure to criticisms of Convention in general and the theological school in particular, it has finally dawned on me that a critical issue is Convention's choice of non-parochialism. I use "parochialism" to mean advocacy of church - controlled education in place of education in public schools, and more broadly advocacy of religious residential communities.

The doctrinal basis of Convention's choice is, I believe, the principle that a life of use must be a life out in the world. (*cf.*, e.g., *H.* 528).

How does one best prepare for that life out in the world? Overall, Convention has opted for gradual exposure from childhood by living in secular communities and attending public schools. This has the liability of separating religious from non - religious education, and the merit of first - hand exposure, during the formative years, to the people and ideas that we will be living and working with.

It is somewhat like raising plants in a garden rather than in a greenhouse. A greenhouse can often provide a nearly optimum environment for growth because that environment can in many ways be controlled. But the longer a plant stays in the greenhouse, the more difficult it is to transplant.

Plants raised outdoors are different. They grow more slowly. They have a higher mortality rate. They take a wide variety of forms in response to a wide variety of conditions. But with proper care, they become healthy,

disease - resistant, and hardy. They may rarely look as good as greenhouse specimens, but they are far better equipped to live out in the world.

A parochial system provides an atmosphere that fosters assent to its religion. Only part of this atmosphere results from formal education. Of equal significance is the fact that the community approves of assent and supports and defends the assenter. The kind of thought and belief that develops under these circumstances is different from the kind that develops in a less supportive atmosphere, and the two ought not to be compared in any direct way.

What can we say, then, about the peculiar excellences of Convention? The faults seem obvious enough, and that in itself is a virtue. The writings apply to all kinds of people and all kinds of life-styles, and Convention's diversity means a unique appreciation of the infinite variety of the relevance of revelation. We know first - hand many of the unlikely externals in which spiritual beauty occurs, and have reason not to judge people solely on the basis of their outward words or deeds. We have learned from childhood the language of the people around us, we have shared education with them, and we are particularly trained to appreciate and talk with them.

But above all, we are hardy. There have been relatively few rewards from the world around us for loyalty to the teachings and to the church. It may not be a spectacular loyalty, but

it is a tested one — one battered by circumstance, perhaps, but very much alive.

There is room for a great deal of criticism within this image, and Convention has demonstrated its hardiness through some strenuous sessions of criticism. But useful criticism will be grounded in an understanding of Convention's "worldliness" and will recognize that we cannot live in the world without being affected by it.

Perhaps what I most want to say is that constructive criticism will be ecologically sound. It will recognize the existence of a pest, so to speak, but it will not assume the simplistic solution of pesticide. Rather, it will look for the function of the pest, for the natural defenses against it, and thereby seek to develop not only a healthy plant, but a healthy world around it.

(Summary of a lecture on New Church Education delivered by the Rev. George Dole at the Fryeburg Assembly this summer).

Island In Common

Melissa Clark

(Here, in this vivid description of island living off the Maine coast, a different set of ethics is at work; it presents a different perspective on the Doctrine of Use. How do you feel about this article? Editor)

There's an island off the coast of Maine where the natives have a saying, "You can buy land here but you can't act like you own it." And they mean exactly what they say. "No Trespassing" signs are used for target practice and disappear. A chain across a road is an insult that rankles in local minds for years. The words "Private Road" on a plain piece of board set well off the road will be left alone if the owner doesn't have too many other counts against him, such as using his horn in town to persuade islanders not to gossip in the center of Main Street.

Families from Connecticut, Boston, Philadelphia, New York City, and now from as far away as Ohio own summer places on the island. And each member of each family has had to come to grips with the unwritten laws of this rocky, tree covered island where the deer still run free. Some have found it an exasperating experience — sunbathing nude on a private piece of rock only to look up to see a clamdigger marching stolidly past. Some have found it humbling — as when a firewood thief turned out to belong to the island's poorest family. And some have found it tragic — such as the couple whose house was ultimately burned down as a climax to a series of skirmishes over property rights and privacy. No one can stand back from these experiences and presume to judge, "This was right and that was wrong, you were justified and he wasn't." Primitive peoples don't stride into forests

crunching the vegetation noisily beneath their feet — they creep in, keep silent, and wait. They observe the rightful tenants of that piece of land, the animals and birds and fish and insects all pursuing separate paths and bent on private destinies, and then they see how their presence — whether to hunt or live peaceably — can best fit into this eternal pattern. We Space Age passengers seem to have lost that art. But it can be revived.

The island I'm writing about is not a paradise. That's a fantasy as common as the one about private property and as quickly lost. The islanders lead a constant struggle for existence, they are fishermen dependent totally upon the price of lobsters. They appreciate the beauty of deer as well as anyone, but they are unsympathetic to laws that forbid them to hunt a large meat-bearing animal on an island where winters are long and hard. A landowner here must learn to expect deer and rabbits to be hunted on his property (sometimes even pheasant and grouse), clams dug on his shoreline, and mussels harvested from his dock. In the autumn branches might be cut from his trees for "slash" (insulation around the foundations of houses), and for the making of the lobster pots according to an ancient and honorable art.

There are two ways to deal with this situation: attempting to fight it, and observing it quietly, to see where one might fit in. Anyone who chooses the last course will find it opens a new world one had thought lost. If the land exists for the benefit of all, then we are all its protectors as well as owners. Cooperative landowners suddenly find they have an army of caretakers who protect them against personal vandalism, and who are ever-vigilant against exposed wires, sudden floods, frozen piping and fallen trees. The terror that one's beautiful property will be stripped melts away as soon as one discovers that the other unwritten law on the island is that the land and the creatures who

live on it and off it are sacred. No one takes pot bows and slash from the same trees, nor picks too many cranberries or digs too many clams. A natural sense of proportion seems to protect us all.

And the friends! No one is so loyal, so eager to stand against fate with a fellow than an islander. Several donated wood, nails, muscle and time to build a house for a dispossessed and senile war veteran who had been living in a rusty, abandoned school bus. It wasn't called charity or welfare; it wasn't called anything. The man needed a place to live, anyone could see that. In gratitude he deeded his tiny half-acre to the town.

On this island it's unbelievably easy to get plumbers in the middle of the night, doctors (there's only one) on Sunday, and the full crew of the ferry is ready to turn out at any time to take stricken islanders to the hospital on the mainland. The grocery store owners carry the

accounts of their customers over the bad periods, "Just till he gets his boat fixed or his bones mended." Gratitude isn't looked for or expected. "You'd do as much for me."

Summer people come and summer people go, on this island. Many are shocked at having to adjust to a way of life they regard as downright un-American. But others, the ones that stay, feel that something has been brought into their life that was absent before, a special kind of caring in which we are all heirs and all benefactors; not only people but plants, animals, and the island itself.

(Melissa Clark is a Quaker, the daughter of Bronson Clark, who was raised in the Swedenborgian Church in Cleveland. Miss Clark is a writer of fiction and poetry. Her first novel, Devlyn, was published in September by Harcourt and Brace, under the pen name Alysse Aallyn. We welcome Miss Clark to the pages of the Messenger.)

THE STARTING LINE cont.

Can we see ourselves, as a Church, probing for hidden diamonds somewhere in acres and acres of seemingly unproductive soil! Our educational programs, the national ventures of the Church, the life we have together in our local congregations are a part of that search to discover those precious stones that symbolize our "affection for truth." Happy hunting! And we are to remember that these precious stones may well come to light in this experience or that — we will never know for certain till we become an active participant as a seeker of diamonds.

President's Travelling Schedule

October 27 -29, Urbana College Board of Trustees
November 4 - 5, Board of Managers, Wayfarers' Chapel
November 6, Los Angeles
November 18 -19, Kitchener, Ontario 1978 Convention Planning Meeting
November 20, Detroit Mich. Installation Service
November 21, St. Paul, Minn.
December 1 - 3, Board of Managers, SSR., Newton, Mass.
December 4, Worship Service, Baltimore, Md.

Mrs. Zacharias joins me in wishing for all of our *Messenger* readers the richest blessing of the Thanksgiving Season.

New Addresses

Rev. and Mrs. Edwin Capon
26349 Dundee,
Huntington Woods, Mich. 48070
Tel: 313 - 546 7583
Rev. and Mrs. Andre Diaconoff
4512 Gilbert Place
Los Angeles, Calif. 9004
Rev. Eric Allison
110 Jefferson Ave.
LaPorte, Indiana 46350
Mrs. Margaret Briggs
Worcester Hill Rd.
Intervale, N. H. 03845

CHANGING YOUR ADDRESS?

If you are changing your address please be sure to notify us so that you will receive every issue of the *Messenger* promptly. When advising us of a change, please indicate both your old and new address, including postal code. Allow six weeks for the change to be made.

Address: The Messenger, Box 2642, Stn. B, Kitchener, Ont. N2H 6N2.

Time Is for Choosing

The myth of creation reveals that Adam and Eve's first act was to make a choice. Their choices became a decisive part of that story and of evolution's necessity and history. Now in our own time we choose.

Time, therefore, is for choosing:

For choosing to go on a pilgrimage to find myself in the deepest sense

For choosing to use what I find in creation for implementing the fullness of creation, for adding to what creation means to me and others

For choosing to die to lesser values for the sake of greater ones

For choosing to share vulnerability in order that trust may grow between persons

For choosing to love others out of the power of having been loved

For choosing the kind of seeing that finds a creative meaning and purpose in situations and facts

For choosing to explore and make conscious the self - defeating and destructive parts of my inner self so that I will not unconsciously project it on to the world around me

What kinds of choices do you characteristically make?

Will you choose to ask yourself the above question for the sake of your future choices?

Reuel L. Howe

Nancy Schneider
Kitchener, Ont.



THOUGHT WHICH OPENS THE EYE

Florence Murdoch

Are you one of those who find Swedenborg difficult reading? Do the long, involved sentences, translated so carefully from his Latin, require re-reading to get the gist of them?

Perhaps you are a beginner, or one more accustomed to listening than to study. Perhaps you have attended too many classes, lectures discussions and sermons, and have succumbed to the theory that all doctrines are too "deep" to be understood except by theologians, and that it is easier to let them do it.

This is a rather common complex, both in our own ranks, and in the public mind, and it is one which we must try to overcome! It is true, as Emerson puts it, that there is "material for whole colleges of scholars" in Swedenborg's works, but our "founding fathers" were able to find within them enough to set them afire with the zeal which established New Church societies, schools, publishing houses, and whole libraries of collateral literature. Are we less intelligent or less persevering than they?

Let us try a new method; writing the passage, which we wish to read, in a free verse form, but without changing the wording, thus:

In the precise degree
In which man prepares his understanding
By means of truths
From the Word
Does he adapt his understanding
To receive faith from God,
And precisely
As he prepares his will
By means of works of charity
Does he fit his will
For the reception of love from God,
As when a workman
Cuts a diamond
He fits it to receive
And emit
The glow of light.

Perhaps Swedenborg is more of a poet than we realized! Do you not see how, with this phrase - by - phrase arrangement, a pleasingly rhythmic

quality appears? And how thrillingly clear the message becomes, when a little light is let through the chinks provided by the pauses at the end of each line? It is said that every great poet is an awakener, rather than a teacher, making us aware of life's values, not lecturing us about them.

The origin
Of spiritual light
Is from the Lord;
And no others can accept that light
Nor receive it,
But they who are conjoined
To the Lord;
And conjunction
With the Lord
Is effected solely
By the acknowledgement
And worship of Him,
And at the same time
By a life
According to his precepts
In the Word.

(Apocalypse Revealed, 796)

Try reading one of these prose - poems aloud:

It is a wonderful thing
That the Word in the heavens
Is so written
That the simple understand it in simplicity
And the wise in wisdom,
For there are many points. . .
Hidden in the Word
That is in the world,
In fact all angelic wisdom,
Which is ineffable,
Lies hidden in it,
And after death
A man who is being made an angel
By the Lord
By means of the Word
Comes into that wisdom.

(Sacred Scripture, 72 - 75)

Now, after you have transposed a sufficient number of passages to get rhythm into your reading, you will find it easy to divide the phrases mentally, as you read to yourself, but these little writing exercises are like the "thought from the understanding which opens the eye."

It is true that the general trend of religious thought is in our direction; the more necessary then, that we have our unparalleled source - material in order, available for layman and scholar, and that we clarify and set in order our own understanding of them. We believe the phrase system will help.

LEARNING TO READ RECEPTIVELY

Mildred B. Calby

Learning to read Swedenborg has been, for me, one of the most rewarding efforts I have ever made. It has given meaning to living and enriched my thinking. So these following observations are purely personal.

As I consider those I know who are constant readers of Swedenborg, I find some in the membership of the Church, and some among those who merely profess an interest in or acceptance of our teachings. They cannot be typed by mental activity or educational background. *The common factor seems to be some inner urge for truth, some thirst for knowledge.*

With that as the prod, the individual does not allow Swedenborg's style of writing to stand in his way, but sticks to it until his need is satisfied. By that time he has become a "reader" and seldom drops it entirely. I have yet to see anyone start to read Swedenborg in a casual way and come back for more. Of course there is the use of compilations and extracts which contribute knowledge on a chosen subject, but to gain real values requires persistent effort.

When the time came that I could read Swedenborg with continued interest and a feeling of stimulation and growth, I discovered two things had occurred. First my interest had been aroused along the lines which always hold my attention. For instance, as long as my information concerning *Heaven and Its Wonders and Hell* was limited to the idea that it contained a description of the kingdom of heaven and the heavenly life, I was content with second - hand instruction. But when I learned that this book also presented the laws of living, I wanted to see for myself. In much the same way psychology is chosen instead of travel.

Then I had to learn *how* to read Swedenborg. I found he has to be read differently. With other writers, one subject is usually presented in a pattern of thought which includes only closely related points. Let anyone try Swedenborg with the same expectation! When I tried it and set up the usual patterns in my thinking, confusion resulted and this method had to be dropped.

Now, if I can hold my mind constantly receptive to the ideas as they are set forth, and go along with Swedenborg's particular approach, presently a new pattern emerges, a sort of cross section of the usual patterns, but all related to a central truth. If a seeming contradiction or an obscure point occurs, I let it lie.

To try to insert my own interpretation only leads to more confusion. The chances are good that further along the difficulty will be solved. But always some answer can be found to a question or need, and with continued reading the pattern deepens and my vision enlarges.

There is also richness from my reading that comes with maturity. Conclusions formed during the years of living are confirmed and corrected, and questions answered that have long been pondered.

(Florence Murdoch and Mildred Calby, well known and befriended by many in Convention, entered the larger land of Light this summer. We thought it a fitting tribute to re - print these two articles, taken from a 1956 Messenger. Editor.)

*All Writers and
Prospective Writers —*

**See Page 240
for news of an
exciting**

**MESSENGER
WRITING
CONTEST**



Marion Priestnal, Editor

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: Greetings from California,

Our Pacific Coast State Alliance was so pleased to have had you as our guests at our Annual Alliance Meeting in San Francisco, and to meet so many "sisters" from the length and breadth of this continent!

This year our National Alliance is offering several projects for your consideration. There will be a Bible Study Course for individuals, or Alliance groups; — A friendship quilt in which to participate; — Our regular Mite Box thank-offering; — the Round Robin - letters so vital for isolated, as well as others, to keep in touch with Church friends in Canada and the United States.

You will also be asked to select a design for a new pin for Alliance members to wear. We hope too, you will write and send interesting news items to the editor for use in the Bulletin.

If every Alliance would participate in these projects, it would help to foster more interest in our organization as well as sharing our concerns and hopes for the uses of our Church.

Sincerely,
Lisa Reddekopp, President,
Alliance of New Church Women.

TO FURTHER MANY CAUSES

In the questionnaires filled out by local groups last summer and returned to Louise Woofenden, we found a number of requests for fresh, new, money - raising ideas.

Since then we have done some research on this question. We searched for a book or pamphlet on the subject, but in vain. However, two recent periodicals were found to have articles dealing with what is a perennial problem facing women's groups everywhere.

Here we present a few of the more practical suggestions; perhaps you will be able to use one of them.

1. Organize a picnic for members and their friends, young and old. Have box lunches made by your Alliance members, for which you charge \$2.50 (at least!) Ask someone with a large yard or garden to offer space or arrange for space in a public park where all picnickers will meet. If any of your young members play a guitar, have them on hand to play favorite songs so people can enjoy singing together. Provide a "rain date" so the picnic can easily be postponed if necessary.

2. A Saturday Brunch for members, friends and strangers. Charge as much as you think feasible. Serve everything buffet style with attractive small tables where people can sit. Combine this with a small - scale fashion show if you can. Local shops will often help by making clothes available.

3. A plant sale held in someone's front yard or driveway, or a vacant store — where passers - by will see — can be very lucrative. Nurseries will give you plants on consignment. Make the display very attractive and have plenty of small plants that people can easily carry. Also sell plant food, watering cans, baskets, etc.; and make sure to have a successful indoor gardener on hand to answer questions. Sell refreshments: children love to help with something like this.

You can adapt any of these ideas to your particular situation; add, subtract or change some details. Try to have fun doing it — that's contagious and your friends and neighbours will join you. Lots of planning will make all the difference imaginable. We would like to hear whether or not you do try one of these suggestions and how it works for you. If your group has had especially fortunate results with a particular fund - raiser please write to us about it, so we can publish the information here. Good luck!

THE MOOKI FUND

Last June we reported to Mr. Eric Zacharias and the General Council on the status of the Mooki Fund, as follows:

In October, 1976, \$4,000.00 was sent to the Rev. Obed Mooki.

At that time \$1,000.00 was retained in the account in New York.

In June, 1977, the balance had grown to \$2,000.00.

Since June, 1977, an additional \$498.00 has been received and deposited — making our balance now \$2,498.00. This balance will be kept here at least until the total reaches \$4,000.00, and then forwarded to Obed, if that is advisable.

OFFICERS OF THE ALLIANCE OF NEW CHURCH WOMEN

It has been suggested that printing the names and addresses of the Officers of the Alliance in the Bulletin would prove helpful, especially to many readers who do not have access to a Convention Journal.

May we recommend that you clip this column and keep it with your address book.

President	Lisa Reddekopp 361-31st Ave. San Francisco, Cal. 94121
1st Vice President	Dorothy Farnham 318 W. Palmetto Ave. DeLand, Florida 32720
2nd Vice President	Marion Courtney 3944 ½ Maratho Street Los Angeles, Cal. 90029
Secretary	Janet Harms 9741 Tusculum Way Bethesda, Md. 20034

Treasurer	Doris Tafel 115 Treaty Rd. Drexel Hill, Pa. 19026
Mite Box Chairman	Margaret Sampson 330 East 84th Street New York, N.Y. 10028
Worship Committee	Alice Van Boven 446 Chestnut Ave. Redlands, Cal. 92373
Round Robin Committee	Jean Hoyt 12942 Third Street Yucaipa, Cal. 92399
Publications Committee	Marion Priestnal 112 East 35th Street New York, N.Y. 10016

REPORT OF THE BULLETIN EDITOR

At the 1977 Convention Meeting of the Alliance Of New Church Women in San Francisco, the following report was presented. We know that many of our readers were not attending that meeting; therefore we repeat the information here.

"During the year since the 1976 Convention the Alliance Bulletin has appeared four times in the *Messenger*, covering at least four pages each time. We know that almost everyone receives the *Messenger* so we will not enumerate the contents of each issue nor list the contributors who have written articles.

"Our objectives are still the same — to encourage as many women as possible to write, and thus to share their thoughts, hopes and experiences with everyone within reach of the printed page, so that we may all understand and appreciate each other as fully as possible. Usually to know and to understand is to love, and this is the magic thread of linkage which in our widely separate lives as New Church women we so deeply need.

"A year ago we suggested that the plan of including the Bulletin in the *Messenger* be for one more season considered an experiment. Although it is harder to handle the purely technical aspects of this arrangement — that is, we are far removed from the type - setter and printer where formerly they were ten blocks away; corrections are scarcely feasible; and material must be prepared almost six weeks

before its emergence into the finished product — still we have learned to work within these limitations and have found them not insurmountable. To be practical, to save money, to reach many people — all these are worth an effort. Therefore we feel the experiment has proved an acceptable means of continuing the Bulletin and is no longer on trial.

"May we call your attention to one small difficulty. Very often someone will ask us if we have a certain article in the *Messenger* when in fact it is an article in the Alliance pages, and one we urged the writer to submit. Remember — we have four consecutive pages, occasionally part of a fifth. When you see the identifying mast - head at the top of a page you know that everything on that page and the *next three pages* is Alliance material. Perhaps we can work out a sign-off symbol with Paul Zacharias that will mark the close of our special section of *The Messenger*!

"As always we would welcome your suggestions, your criticism, and your participation."

Respectfully submitted, Marion Priestnal,
Chairman

* * * * *

A postscript; October, 1977

Since the opportunity exists, we would like at this time to amplify the statement about objectives. It is a further wish of this editor, shared we believe by many, to encourage an exchange of views about the compelling issues of our time and about the problems and concerns within our church. Since we are New Church women, we look at the world from that perspective; we evaluate experience from that perspective. So our views, thoughtfully expressed, could be of very real aid to each other in the perplexing time where we live. Because distances between us are so great it is by means of the printed word that we can learn about and learn through each other. The printed word, always important, is perhaps especially so to us.

Another point: there has been some excellent writing in the past, to all of which we fortunately have access because of the excellent Brooklyn Memorial Library housed at our address. Carefully selected excerpts from this store of good writing can also provide insights into the very questions before us now.

Also, various New Church periodicals not available to everyone come to our attention. Often they present striking ideas from other parts of the world which, occasionally, we attempt to extract for your benefit. Do our readers feel that the above two categories of material should from time to time be drawn upon, or not?

MP

AN UNRESOLVED ISSUE

Those who love the doctrines of the New Jerusalem and recognize how clearly they define the life of charity are often puzzled and disturbed by the conflicts, arguments and strong emotions which have erupted throughout the history of the organized New Church.

Because we can better understand the present by examining the past, may we suggest that Marguerite Block's *The New Church In The New World* (1932) is a very perceptive history and analysis of the New Church in its somewhat stormy course.

In her final chapter headed "Conclusion" Miss Block begins with the parable "Behold a sower went forth to sow . . . some seeds fell by the wayside . . . some fell upon stony places . . . others fell into good ground and bore fruit." Drawing an analogy between this parable and the New Church she says: "We have studied its first 100 years of growth and its thirty years of decline and striven to understand the reasons for both. In the New Church itself there are two opposite opinions."

Miss Block then devotes 12 pages to presenting phases of the dissension between the so-called liberals and the so-called conservatives. Eventually she re-names the categories "Fundamentalism" and "Modernism". Finally she writes:

"Perhaps after all the issue of the New Church is not the simple and obvious one between 'Fundamentalism' and 'Modernism', but the more ancient one between *literalism* and *mysticism* which has appeared in almost all the world's religions at various times.

"The literalists on the 'conservative' side cling to the very letter of Swedenborg . . . whereas the literalists on the 'liberal' side are

equally dogmatic in their rejection of authority, whether in the Writings or in the church organization itself. Like the modernistic literalists of all denominations they are in grave danger of 'Throwing out the baby with the bath.'

"The non-literalists, or symbolists on both sides of the other hand, are holding loyalty to their belief in the divine authority of the revelation given to the world through Swedenborg but feel that this revelation can be understood only by a new, and purely spiritual, form of interpretation. They admit quite honestly that in the Writings there are inconsistencies and irreconcilable differences with the finding of science and scholarship, but feel that with a deeper and more spiritual understanding of Swedenborg's thoughts, truth may be found even in apparent errors.

"For this reason they feel that far from having exhausted the possibilities of doctrinal study, *the New Church is actually only at the beginning*. Perhaps the trouble is that the 'modernists' take too literally Swedenborg's statement that the life of religion is to do good', for that is only the half of it — the 'Martha' half. It should never be forgotten that one who was a greater authority even than Swedenborg said: 'But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.' " (Block: pp 390 - 402).

These are excerpts from *The New Church In The New World* we think are both relevant and timely. In our continuing search to understand the philosophical conflicts that have beset each succeeding generation of New Churchmen perhaps we have overlooked some of the points made in Miss Block's concluding comments. In the objective views of a sensitive writer like Miss Block can be found many grains of wisdom.

* * * * *

WHAT DO PEOPLE THINK?

In the interests of learning exactly how a number of Alliance members view the Bulletin: its purposes and effectiveness, we have sent to a list of about 25 women a questionnaire which we hope they will think about and return to us with answers.

The list was made up partly on a geographical basis and partly because we thought the recipients might have views they would like to express. Current officers of the Alliance were not included since they do have frequent opportunities to make their ideas widely known.

We will print the results and a copy of the questions as soon as this is feasible. Of course, anyone may write a letter at any time expressing his or her thoughts, and this will be greatly appreciated.

Ed.

End of Alliance Bulletin



EVANGELISM, PUBLICITY, AND CHURCH GROWTH

*Bill Etue
Washington, D. C.*

This article on church growth was intended to be a letter to the editor, however I found that I could not make my remarks compact enough for that column. So instead I've expanded that letter into this article which I'm glad was accepted for publication.

In the September issue of the Messenger the editorial entitled "Facing the Facts of Life" dealt candidly with the problem of church growth. I'd like to offer some viewpoints on this question. It seems to me as though many New Church people are looking for some sort of "magic formula" to make the church grow — secular books mentioning Swedenborg, media participation, scholastic giants in our pulpits, or whatever. In fact what makes a church grow, including the New Church, is a lot of hard work on the part of its individual members, especially in helping new people find their way into the church. A recent poll asked the question; "Why do people choose a church?" The answers were categorized the following way.

- 3 percent — Minister's personal visit
- 9 percent — Architectural beauty
- 14 percent — Previous church affiliation
- 18 percent — Convenience to their homes
- 56 percent — Direct or indirect contact from a lay person.

As you can see, the whopping majority were brought into churches by lay people largely on a one - to - one basis. I think Swedenborgians sometimes mistakenly feel that we should not evangelize, since a part of our beliefs is that each person must move toward the Lord at their own determined speed. And in fact it would be totally wrong to "evangelize" the way some churches do — with threats of the wrath of an angry God. Our evangelizing should be a steady effort by each of us to present to other people New Church truths for their consideration and at the same time be constantly thinking of ways to involve new people with the routine workings of the church. Whether or not someone has become a member yet, if they show any interest or curiosity in the church, we should take every opportunity to involve them with our affairs.

Some examples: Invite them to come along on church retreats or church picnics. Invite them to observe Association meetings or local church board meetings. Occasionally an invitation to dinner might be appropriate. Let them know that if they're looking for a church, they would be welcome members. Solicit their participation in a bake sale, or some clean-up project at the church. People want to be useful. I think that each one of us that's able to do so should set a personal goal of bringing one new member per year into the church. Evangelism is as Swedenborgian as apple pie from Chapman's orchards. And by each of us doing some serious hard work in this area we can reverse the downward trend and grow again. Incidentally more Americans went to church in 1976 than at any time since 1958 reversing an 18 year decline. Forty - two percent attended *regularly*. So far as 1977 goes, there's not been a better time for turning people toward religion for some years. The distractions of war, political intrigue, the drug culture, and the generation gap, are largely behind us now in America. Young people are interested in finding a permanent and serious source of self - fulfillment, and they are turning toward churches in large numbers for answers. Evangelism (the right kind) is going to be an essential part of our program if we are to grow.

A second area of concern is publicity. Publicity like evangelism seems to evoke a complete spectrum of opinion within the church, ranging from "We never do that in this church" to "It should be our number one priority." Again, like evangelism, publicity is a loaded word with entirely different meanings for different people. There is good, bad, and useless publicity. There is costly, inexpensive and free publicity. It is such a broad term that a commonly accepted definition may be a little out of reach.

But it is reasonable to say that we do not have an *organized publicity organization* within the church, and I think the case can be made for the need of one. When this idea is discussed, often the first question raised is "What would it do?" I would say that although it might be able to plan some small part of its program, it is likely that the majority of its work would be spontaneous, reacting quickly to opportunities as they present themselves. Let me site some examples.

When Raymond Moody's book started selling like wildfire last year, there was some justifiable excitement in the church since the author mentioned that Swedenborg's

description of events following death was in harmony with twentieth century medical experiences. Moody, besides being an excellent author, is an extremely warm and magnetic speaker (sort of in the style of Senator Sam Ervin). His matter - of - fact speaking style drew an estimated crowd of 2500 people this spring to hear him at the National Presbyterian Center in Washington D. C. A variety of groups had exhibits and sales tables in the adjoining lobby — burial societies, death education groups etc. If we had the organizational apparatus to act quickly we could have set up a book - sales table and reached a lot of people with the writings. (Moody mentioned *Heaven and Hell* by name that night.)

Another example: I met a young woman at Convention in San Francisco who was perplexed because she did not know which committee to approach with a specific youth group idea. Since I had given a "publicity workshop", she assumed, I suppose, that I was on some related committee. Her idea was a bold and imaginative one that had already shown success in her own society where she had personally underwritten much of the cost. When new people such as this come into the church, they are amazed that we do not routinely have a group of some kind that can weigh the merits of publicity ideas and give advice, encouragement, financial support, or help disseminate and coordinate ideas around the country. Such a group could even exist with no budget at all. It could at least act as a clearing house for ideas, and as a mechanism for putting individuals in contact with other people in the church who could be of the most help. Perhaps the formation of a group like this would even inspire special contributions designated for publicity work.

In closing let me capsulize my viewpoint on evangelism and publicity. I think an organized approach to publicity in the next few years is highly desirable. Either forming a publicity committee, or giving broader responsibilities to existing committees. When this might happen, of course, would be subject to the desire of the Convention membership as a whole. Evangelism, however, is a *must*. We have got to reach out as individuals and bring people to us, we can not simply sit back and wait for knocks at the door. Like a taxicab, an organization is useless unless it's moving. And our church, though certainly unique, is an organization none the less, and we must function aggressively to grow.

WE GET LETTERS

CALLING ALL LEAGUERS

Dear Paul,

Any New Church person between 13 and college - age is officially a member of the American New Church League, whether that person knows it or not. Now that the ANCL has become active again, we would like to let all those Leaguers who *don't* know, in on the secret. For those who *do* know, we would like to continue our communication. Aside from personal correspondence, the ANCL communicates with its members by means of our publication, "Clear Blue Sky," a magazine made up of stories, poems, pictures, articles, short essays, etc. — all contributed by Leaguers.

Unfortunately, our mailing list is pitifully small. We can't possibly be reaching more than one - third of the Leaguers on this continent. And there is very little hope of our correcting this situation unless we reach out for help. So, we are sending this request to all our ministers and churches:

Please help us by compiling an address list of all the Leaguers in your area (especially the isolated ones and those who don't attend services regularly) and send it to the "Clear Blue Sky" editor.

If we get responses from all of our ministers and churches we can be sure that we will most likely be able to reach 99 percent of the Leaguers in North America. And that would be a wonderful thing indeed!

Trevor George Woofenden
Editor, "Clear Blue Sky"
c / o 139 East 23rd Street
New York, N. Y. 10010

THE UPPER ROOM VISITED

Dear Paul:

It is with pleasure that I read and re-read Leon LeVan's article in the August issue of the *Messenger*, 'The church in obscurity and glory.' It gives a depth and beauty beyond the promise that the New Church will not remain forever in the wilderness. . .

Christianity looks to the Church as the body of Christ, and those who belong partake of His flesh (bread) and His blood (wine). There is some confusion of thought when the Church is

represented by the 'Bride and Wife' as well as the body of Christ. . .

The appearance of a duality in external things has occurred before, especially with the Father and Son, in which the external appearance is suggestive of two persons, but the internal idea insists on one person in which love and wisdom are united.

Good stuff coming from the Upper Room and hope we get more.

Tommy Neilson
New Westminster, B. C.

LISTEN TO THE GROUNDWELL

Dear Paul,

I have just finished reading your editorial in the September issue of "The Messenger." I have several thoughts I would like to share with you in response to the issue you address — the declining membership of the church, specifically with young people.

I was "brought up" in the Swedenborgian church of Cincinnati. As a family we attended church often enough for me to gain a sense of belonging. However, in terms of any formal training that would have helped me to understand my "religious upbringing", I had very little. My only memories of Sunday School include the little wooden chairs, singing hymns, and playing the recorder as an angel in the Christmas pageants. But somehow intuitively I gained a strong identity as a Swedenborgian. This I attribute to what my parents taught me in their own quiet ways.

In 1970 and '71 I attended L.E.I. These were my first experiences in working within a group on personal growth and religious issues and questions. How important both sessions were to my life! They influenced me to become interested in the "helping" professions. (Presently I am working toward a Masters Degree in dance therapy and psychodrama.)

Attending L.E.I. brought me in contact with many other young people who also shared my quest in defining their "Swedenborgianism." (I'm still working on it!!) I found myself saying several times: "You mean, you too cannot verbalize what it means to be a Swedenborgian, but you know that you are one?" It was in the large group discussions and the talks I had with new friends that a sense of my religion became clearer. I must add that I was fifteen at the time and never had ANY exposure to the church and its teachings been relevant to me previously.

Thus, it was through my involvement with L.E.I. that my first relevant religious and personal explorations were made possible. The staff was clearly there to SUPPORT our questions, doubts, difficulties, and individual thinking. Being both a young woman and a Swedenborgian was acknowledged. This made it possible to recognize and give attention to myself as a person with both feelings *and* values and beliefs.

Paul, I too believe strongly that the New Church needs to explore the ways in which its teachings can be made available, appropriate, AND relevant to young people (myself included). Obviously, our generation must be regarded with serious commitment if one is concerned with the FUTURE of the church. (I am not talking about numbers either, but rather the future of the New Church).

I am aware of the recent struggle (5 years) to achieve the necessary enrollment for L.E.I. (or W.E.Y.S.). What was to be my third and last year in L.E.I. was cancelled for this reason in 1972 (or at least I was told this). Something must be amiss. When I was notified that L.E.I. had been cancelled, *my* own ideas and suggestions for making necessary changes concerning MY own peer group were not even solicited. I fear this is a mistake made too often. The opinions and ideas of young people too often are not heard. Up until that point, my previous two summers at L.E.I. had "fired me up" with energy to give to the church. However, I then began to feel somewhat "turned off" — my own input as a young church member did not seem to matter. Is this the problem today (five years later)? I agree with you Paul. We need to do more than exercise academic discussions on this issue. First and foremost the young people MUST feel that their own individual thinking and ideas are valid. Secondly, has the church ever considered asking the young people directly what it is that they want and need from the church in their own personal growth and development as a young church member and adult?

My suggestion is to first bring together those people who are interested in working on this issue. (And I include myself here also). The next step is to arrive at a means of reaching the young people to ask THEM for their ideas — in a forum at the next convention, a special meeting, in the mail, etc. If I could find a way to volunteer my energy that seemed viable and worthwhile, I would love to! (I am willing to explore with others to find "this way" also.)

One of my beliefs as a Swedenborgian (and I will not try to unearth its origins) is that we are ALL children of God. We are all vital members of the "family of man". So let us open our ears and our hearts as adults to those other members of our family that have been "turned off" or "shut out". Let us, as responsible church members and adults in our own communities find the ways to make the Swedenborgian religion accessible, understandable, and relevant to a young person's life.

Thanks so much,
Laura Lawson,
Brattleboro, Vermont.

A LIGHT IN THE SHADOWS

Dear Editor:

I would like to respond to the comments by Bessie Behrendt concerning New Church growth. First of all, I feel that her attempt to present an exposition of didactic enlightenment was shortsighted and not very accurate.

As for the truths that Swedenborg taught being surpassed by more "knowledgeable groups, I would like to know what, or who, these groups are?

She stated that the Church has stood still for 200 years. Stood still in what way? Certainly not the vibrant searching for, and teaching of, the true doctrine. And certainly, it has not stood still as to personal expression of this doctrine, as evidenced by the three divisions of the Church. If anything, very little has stood still.

It must also be remembered that the true Church doctrine will always be confusing, misunderstood, and unacceptable to the natural mind. Genuine doctrine can only be accepted by a spiritual mind, and in varying degrees. As such, Divine truths are perceptive from the spiritual mind; not something that can be packaged and processed for the general palatability of the world. We of the Church are often confused as to certain parts of doctrine, but isn't that part of our spiritual condition — to obtain spiritual enlightenment by degrees to eternity?

I never limit my sources or searching for truth, for our Lord teaches by all means and experiences. But surely, there is no spiritual truth in scientific and philosophic literature in themselves, for we learn by the means of these, and nothing more.

Finally, our Church is the light, for our Lord is within it; we see it but the world cannot. And

yes, I do expect the world to come seeking the light — at the Lord's good calling.

S. P. Libiszewski
Brimfield, Mass.

MORE THOUGHTS ON CHURCH GROWTH

Dear Rev. Zacharias,

Your editorial this month is very interesting. I send along an excerpt from The Cincinnati Enquirer that you might care to read. (See below).

I have written before about the general decline of church membership because fifty years ago the respectable family wanted to be seen in church on Sunday, they wanted to worship the Lord, they felt it was their duty, and they had home worship daily with their families. Now, people act as if it bores them because it isn't as interesting to go to church as to watch television. And they ignore the value of Christian fellowship and prayer for each other by saying they can worship God alone out on the golf course. Call it rebellion because what else is it?

The reason I am not against women ministers is because I know in her day Mary Baker Eddy's congregations were 80 percent men. If women ministers can bring men back to churches, then I am for them. I don't like these pushy, aggressive women who are hateful and bitter, but if church women can improve the status of women I am all for that. Men need to realize just how long they could be happy if they were a woman. Half a day? Women need to realize just how long they will be content painting a bridge, shooting it out from trenches, repairing motors, etc.

We cannot expect our ministers to compete with professional entertainers on television. That is a travesty on religion! But some do, and I think it is a mistake. The two worst churches people can join are those who bring them in because of fear (the "end days" at hand) and the ones who offer liquor and cigarettes and free lunch along with a Bible Study class — yes, I know of one doing exactly this right out in Hyde Park. It is better to build a church slowly through Love, but you know yourself a challenge often makes a church grow. Example: — early history of Christian Church when opposed by Roman Government. These times present many challenges so we need to somehow present them for excitement — but not to the point of fear such as Jehovah's

Witnesses use — and perhaps Love will conquer all!

Sincerely,
Ruth Abalcherli
Cincinnati, Ohio

ONE-THIRD OF TRI-STATE PEOPLE 'UNCHURCHED', STUDY SHOWS

At least one - third of all Tri - State (Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky) residents are "unchurched", according to a recent study, but they want church people to listen to them about religion, nevertheless. J. Russell Hale, professor at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, took a year's sabbatical to do his field research. "The overwhelming experience my conversations with the unchurched conveyed to me was that those outside the churches want and need to be heard." Hale defined unchurched as "persons who are not on the church rolls of any Christian denomination."

"There appears to be no essential relationship between a particular type of unchurchedness and an individual's religious heritage as a Protestant, a Catholic, a Jew or a person without church connections. . ."

Hale's research yielded specific categories of unchurched Americans:

Anti - institutionalists are "defectors" who quit because of what they perceive to be the church's preoccupation with self - maintenance. "They think of themselves as solitary Christians or unaffiliated fellowtravellers. By avoiding membership in the institution they can avoid some of the contamination and thus be 'purer'."

Boxed - in Christians usually are former church members who said they felt constrained or thwarted in the church. This group also includes independents who are "fierce individualists" who want no external restraints.

Burned - out Christians say their energies have been "utterly consumed by the church," and Hale found two subgroups among them. The *Used* say they were "exploited or manipulated", and usually were church leaders or extremely active participants. *Light Travellers* consider their previous participation, however voluntary, to have been "baggage" they carried as part of their family and communal roles. They're beyond that now.

Cop - outs never were committed to the church and their participation was peripheral. Some are *Apathetic*, without deep feelings for or against the church, while others are *Drifters*, moving from church to church, adopting nothing.

Happy Hedonists are leisure lovers whose church obligations consequently were seen as "intrusions on the time they could more profitably spend. . .as participants in or spectators of those things 'that turned them on'."

Locked - out say the churches have closed their doors against them by formal excommunication, a slight or overt or covert discrimination.

Subgroups include *Rejected*, barred because of divorce or disapproved birth control practices, because of "persistent disobedience of a church's moral codes," or because they perceive themselves as unworthy compared to expectations of holiness or perfection.

Another are the *Neglected*. "Many of the poor, the ethnic minorities and the aging feel locked out less because of the churches' overt actions than because the churches simply neglect them and their needs. . ."

Nomads "feel themselves in virtual exile" because of their chosen or job - enforced mobility. "They can find no church in the new community with any semblance of or continuity with their past affiliation. . ."

Pilgrims "describe their religious beliefs as in the process of formation. . .searching for satisfying meaning and values. . ."

Publicans "constitute by far the largest group of the unchurched. . .They call those within the churches hypocrites, phonies, fakers, and persons living double lives. . .They feel the lives and acts of Christians are just like their own, not corresponding in the least to Christian doctrine."

The *Scandalized* reject the church for the denominational disunity, "knifing" and "knocking."

True Unbelievers involved a "minute proportion" of Hale's encounters.

In this general group, there also were *Agnostics / Atheists* "who deny the existence of any such ultimate reality as God or hold that such reality is unknown or unknowable;" *Deists / Rationalists* whose "theology, whether formally or informally articulated, is based on human reason rather than revelation."

(From the Cincinnati Enquirer)

WRITING CONTEST

Sponsored by
THE MESSENGER and OUR DAILY BREAD

In 400 words describe
“A NEW CHURCH FOR A NEW AGE”

Can you summarize the essential spirit and thrust of the New Church in 400 words? The winning entry will be used on the back cover of “Our Daily Bread,” Convention’s monthly devotional magazine.

Rules

1. Contest entries should be typed, double spaced, or neatly written.
2. Articles **must** be between 375 - 425 words.
3. Send your manuscript to: Messenger Contest, Box 2642, Stn. B, Kitchener, Ont. N2H 6N2. All entries become the property of the Dept. of Publication.
4. The editor of *Our Daily Bread* reserves the right to edit the winning entry for use on the *Daily Bread* back cover, this in consultation with its author.
5. The author of the entry selected and used will be awarded \$50.00.
6. The Contest deadline is February 1, 1978.
7. This Contest is open to all readers of the *Messenger* and *Our Daily Bread*.

REPORT ON MINI COURSE “CHURCH MUSIC”

by Chris Laitner

The mini course entitled “Church Music” was offered by the Rev. Richard Baxter at the 1977 Convention. It was an interesting and worthwhile course dealing mainly with the hymns used in the Book of Worship. Participants discussed various hymns and also were given a list of hymns (compiled by Mr. Baxter) divided according to some further categories embodying the New Church philosophy.

Selecting hymns to enhance the church service was discussed, as were ways to make hymns a more integral, meaningful part of each service.

As an extra attraction, Mr. Baxter was kind enough to arrange a short trip to St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in San Francisco where the group was treated to a short demonstration of

hymn and prelude playing on a most beautiful pipe organ in a lovely gothic sanctuary. Our thanks go to Mr. Burton Weaver, organist at St. Luke’s, who invited us.

All in all, this mini course offered a new look at some old and some wonderful new hymns, and it is to be hoped that the participants can help to increase the effectiveness of music in their various churches.

A terrific job by the Rev. Richard Baxter!

(Our apologies to Richard Baxter and Chris Laitner for this belated appearance of the report on the Church Music Mini Course held at the 1977 Convention. Gremlin problems!)

THIRD FLORIDA CONFERENCE SWEDENBORG HOUSE

February 22 - 26, 1978

Relaxation!

Meditation!

Reflection!

Time to Relax — to re-establish old friendships and to make new ones.

Time for Meditation Practice — a means of opening awareness to our intuitive knowing of what is good and true and as a means of enhancing our sensitivity to the Lord's presence with us.

Time for Reflection — on the meaning of our common experience together as well as our Swedenborgian belief system.

Under the sponsorship of the Adult Work Committee of the Board of Education, the staff will include the Rev. Dr. Calvin Turley, and his wife, Marilyn, and a theological student from SSR.

Who is it for? Mature Adults — who plan to participate in the full program as we build a sense of community and deepen our spiritual awareness. Program will begin with supper on Wednesday, February 22nd and end with breakfast on Sunday, February 26th.

Costs

Registration fee: single \$35.00
 couple \$50.00

Swedenborg House

Room and Meals single \$16.00 per person, per day
 double \$14.00 per person, per day

Motel (meals at Swedenborg House) single \$25.00 per person, per day
 double \$19.00 per person, per day

(Make reservations for Swedenborg House early, please)

Dates include travel time

APPLICATION: PLEASE RETURN WITH

REGISTRATION FEE TO: Nancy Perry
 Central Office
 48 Sargent St.
 Newton, Mass. 02158

Number of participants
will be limited due
to space

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ NUMBER IN PARTY _____

We / I plan to arrive on _____ at _____ We / I will travel
by _____ (date) (time)
 and will arrive at _____
 (car, plane)

We / I 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: General Convention

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.

Swedenborgian Latin Translators Conference Held in England

Lee Woofenden, a 16 year old senior at the Alternative School in Sharon, Mass., and Gardiner Perry, 28, a second year student at SSR, attended a week long Latin translators school this past summer at Purley Chase, England. Lee was able to attend through the sponsorship of the Board of Education, while Gardiner was sent by SSR. Both had backgrounds in Latin; Lee had finished two years of study and Gardiner five years of training before graduating from high school.

The purpose of the Conference was to familiarize students of Swedenborg with the problems that members of the Swedenborg Society in England have encountered in translating his Latin manuscripts into appropriate English. The Swedenborg Society is responsible for keeping *current* translations of Swedenborg's works in print.

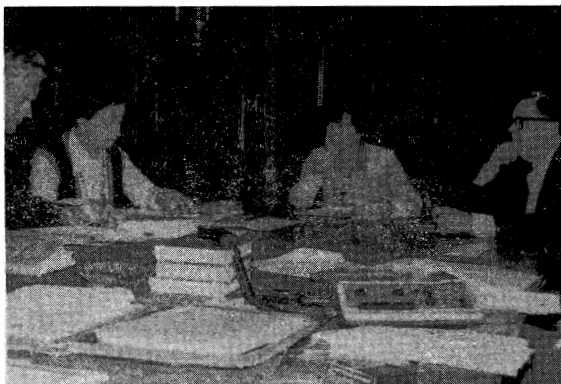
The "tutors" were Dr. John Chadwick, who has a Chair in Classics at Cambridge, Rev. John Elliot, a New Church minister currently translating the *Arcana*, and Rev. Norman Ryder, a minister and Conference College tutor. Lee and Gardiner were from Convention, seven young people came from the English Conference, and five were from Bryn Athyn. The group was divided so that Lee, the youngest there, was with intermediates who studied the "Speech of Angels" from *Heaven and Hell* to acquaint themselves with Swedenborg's vocabulary and grammar. Gardiner was in an advanced group which translated *Soul — Body Interaction*.

Mornings were used for study, sight translation, and dialogue with the tutors. After lunch, there was a break until 4 o'clock when study was resumed. Following dinner, everyone relaxed with a spirited game of volleyball. Vespers, led by tutors and the students, were held each evening at 10 o'clock. Some people played the piano, but Lee contributed his French horn for the informal services. Afterwards, there was an opportunity to share fellowship that reluctantly ended anywhere between 11 and 12 o'clock.

Overall, it was an excellent week. Purley Chase is a large house set on beautiful grounds, making a fine retreat center. Lee and Gard found the Conference people warm and hospitable. They returned with deepened interest to continue the work of translating Swedenborg's Latin.

Note: The above information was based upon conversations with Lee and Gardiner, upon their return from Purley Chase, by Nancy Perry, Executive Secretary of the Board of Education.

DEPT. OF PUBLICATIONS MEETS



(l. - r.) Roger Paulson, Judith Guest, Virginia Branston and Paul Zacharias

The Dept. of Publications held its fall meeting at the Swedenborg School of Religion, Newton, Mass., on Sept. 15 - 16. Judith Guest, author of the current best selling novel, *Ordinary People*, spent several hours with Department members. Ms. Guest, niece of noted American poet Edgar Guest, attended Sunday School in the Detroit New Church, and at the meeting observed that in recent years the religious dimension of life had taken on renewed meaning for her. *Ordinary People* is a powerful story of the disintegration of a marriage, and of a teen age son "finding himself" in his crumbling world. The reader is very much involved; the author has the uncanny ability of getting inside "real people in a real world." The idea of an historical novel based on Swedenborg's life was mentioned and it is devoutly hoped this seed will bear fruit in coming years.

Virginia Branston reported that the Swedenborg Foundation sponsored film, "The Man Who Had To Know", should be completed by early winter. Three new pamphlets by Paul Zacharias, entitled: "The Flow of Life", "Let the Bible Speak to You", and "God's Most Challenging Gift — Life", will be available by Nov. 15.

Other Department members in attendance, not included in the above photo, were: Cecile Werben, Corinne Tafel, Richard Tafel Sr., Chairman Ed Bohlander, and Howard Miller.

Convention People And Places

Each year at Convention the Poole trophy is awarded to the Young People's League that has done the most for the church — locally and nationally. This year the Bridgewater League received the trophy. Our congratulations to the Leaguers in Bridgewater, Mass.

The Rev. and Mrs. Brian (Jill) Kingslake, of Bath, England, who in past years have served Convention societies in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Cleveland, are presently visiting many of their friends in the mid-west and eastern seaboard. Rev. Kingslake will preach in the Philadelphia church on November 6.

Reprints of Raymond Moody's best seller, *Life After Life*, which appeared in the January issue of *Reader's Digest*, are available free of charge from the Philadelphia New Church, 2129 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19103. Payment to cover postage would be appreciated.

The New Church Prayer Fellowship is now under the direction of the Rev. Horand Gutfeldt, 579 Vincent Ave., Berkeley, Cal. 94707. This is a service group within the New Church that functions as a network of people who pray for the needs and requests of members and friends of the church. You may join the Prayer Fellowship by writing to the Rev. Gutfeldt.

A number of Convention Associations are holding week - end Retreat - type meetings, with little or no business — primarily for spiritual renewal and the deepening of Christian commitment. Typically, much more "happens" in a concentrated weekend than in a month of Sundays. This fall Retreats have been held in Ontario, Kansas and the Mid - Atlantic area. The theme in Delaware was "Getting Ready to Live Forever", which intrigues both mind and heart.

The former stamp office in the St. Petersburg church has been completely renovated and is now being used as a reading room and library. A similar transformation is taking place in the Kitchener church where the choir room is being turned into a book room and lending library.

Peggy Howland of Wichita, Kansas, has undertaken an ambitious project. Wichita U. has started a new program called "The Free University" which offers a wide variety of courses to the public at a very nominal fee. Ms. Howland, with some assistance from Galen Unruh and Eric Zacharias, will lead a course entitled: "Heaven and Hell and Emanuel Swedenborg". We would like to hear more about this.

PRIZED POSSESSIONS



Mrs. Edith Cass, Kitchener, Ont., prizes her Swedenborgian treasures.

This past year Mrs. Edith Cass, member of the Kitchener Society, received two cherished gifts from a close friend. One is a first edition of Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell*, printed in Latin in London, England, in 1758, beautifully bound in leather and in excellent condition.

Mrs. Cass was also given a bronze medal struck in 1852 by the Swedish Royal Academy of Sciences in honor of Emanuel Swedenborg. One side of the medal features Swedenborg's profile, and on the reverse, a man wearing a floor length garment, with eyes unbandaged, standing before the temple of Isis, at the base of which the goddess is seen. The Latin legend reads, "The Swedish Royal Academy of Sciences rejoices in so great an alumnus. This great investigator of nature was in an earlier day a most highly esteemed associate."

Mr. and Mrs. Cass were confirmed in the New Church fifty years ago, in November, 1927, by the Rev. A. Diephuis.

FROM CHURCH RECORDS

BAPTISM

CONANT — Franklin Page Conant, son of Barry and Francine Conant, was baptized into the Christian faith in the Bridgewater New Church on September 18, the Rev. William Woofenden officiating.

WENTWORTH — Harold Earle Wentworth IV, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harold E. Wentworth III, was baptized into the Christian faith in the Fryeburg New Church on October 2, 1977, the Rev. Robert Kirven officiating with Student Minister David Rienstra assisting.

CONFIRMATIONS

BENTON — LEMEE — TILLSON — Suzie Benton, Loretta Lemee and Sarah Tillson were confirmed into the faith of the New Church in Bridgewater Mass., on June 19, 1977, the Rev. William Woofenden officiating.

MACDONALD — Penny MacDonald was confirmed into the faith of the New Church at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly on August 27, 1977, the Rev. George McCurdy officiating.

MARRIAGES

LEDERMAN — HALLAM — James Lederman and Glenna Hallam were married in the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, on October 1, 1977, the Rev. Paul Zacharias officiating.

FLEMING — FEKETE — Neil Fleming and Joy Fekete were married in the Almont Chapel on September 24, the Rev. Edwin Capon officiating.

BURNELL — GARDINER — Dennis Burnell and Elaine Gardiner were married in the Fryeburg New Church on August 6, 1977, the Rev. Michael Salvetti officiating, assisted by Student Minister David Rienstra.

GAGNON — ROGERS — Louis Gagnon and Debra Rogers were married in the Fryeburg New Church on August 26, 1977, the Rev. William R. Woofenden officiating, assisted by Student Minister David Rienstra.

PRIEST — CHARLES — Charles Priest and Cindy Charles were married in the Fryeburg New Church on September 10, 1977, the Rev. William R. Woofenden officiating, with Student Minister David Rienstra assisting.

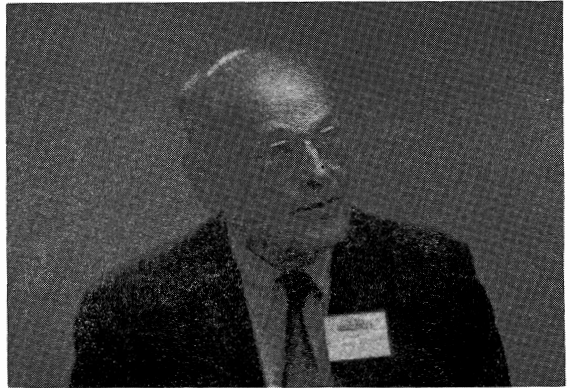
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FREE LITERATURE

Those of us who attended Convention this summer will recall with fond memories the delightful "trip" we took to the spiritual world, guided along in winsome fashion by Ethel and Henry Swanton. This delightful and informative dialogue has been duplicated and is now available, free of charge, from:

The Central Office, Swedenborgian Church
48 Sargent St., Newton, Mass. 02158.

A Tribute To The Rev. Franklin H. Blackmer



FRANKLIN H. BLACKMER
1899 - 1977

There is a stereotype of an older minister who cannot accept change — a stereotype which ignores the amount of change the minister has accepted and is accepting. And if an outline of Franklin Blackmer's career does nothing else, it does remind us that he was a man in motion.

He was born in Melrose, Massachusetts, in 1899. He studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the first program for administrative studies offered in this country, graduating in 1920. He then went to our Theological School, graduating in 1923. After ordination, he served for one year as assistant minister in his home church, the Boston Society.

Thereafter, he was pastor of the San Francisco and Berkeley churches (1924 - 26), President of Urbana Junior College and pastor of the Urbana church (1926 - 1932), pastor of the Brockton church (1932 - 36), President of the Theological School (1936 - 53), President of Convention (1953 - 56), and minister, with Ken Knox, at the Wayfarers' Chapel (1956 - 57).

From 1958 to 1968, he and Carolyn made their home in Urbana, and from there he gave part - time service to our churches in Cleveland and La Porte. In 1968, he retired, moving to Bath, Maine. In the course of his ministry, he was active in the Sunday School Association and its production of lesson material, in improving our libraries at Urbana and the Theological School, in the mission field, in Association affairs, at Almont, and with the Trustees of the Rotch Fund.

It probably took you less than sixty seconds to read the last two paragraphs, which summarize perhaps three hundred and fifty thousand hours of labor for Convention. They

were difficult hours. These were the years when the rosy glow of Convention's first surge was fading, when painful decisions had to be made, when election to office called for condolence rather than congratulation. Helen Keller once wrote that when one door of opportunity closes, another opens, but that we often linger so long looking at the closed door that we miss the open one. Franklin showed an extraordinary ability to accept reverses without rancor, and to look for the open door. He seemed to see no real difference between the highest office and the most menial task — he would simply do what he could for the church, with unfailing patience, courtesy, and craftsmanship.

His patience was so thorough that it could be hard to believe how sensitive and perceptive a person he was. His grasp of our theology was clear and creative, and always in contact with the personal realities within and around him.

At the time of his passing, he had completed a history of the churches of the lower Kennebec valley for the bicentennial, he was chairman of the Bath Ministerial Association, and he had just seen the publication of his thorough bibliography of New - Church collateral literature. He was wholly alive to critical issues within Convention, and at work to convey his concerns with the utmost fairness and clarity.

He has indeed been a man in motion, and surely his passing is at most a brief hesitation in his life of service — the momentum of that life has carried him smoothly into the uses of the spiritual world.

G. F. Dole

CONVENTION CALENDAR

Convention Planning Com., Kitchener, Ont.	Nov. 18, 19
Human Sexuality Com., Newton	Nov. 25, 26
S. S. R. Bd. of Managers Newton	Dec. 2, 3
Ministers and Wives Institute, DeLand, Fla.	Jan. 12 - 18
General Council, DeLand, Fla.	Jan. 19 - 21
C.O.M. Exec. Com., Newton	Feb. 13 - 15
Dept. of Pub.	Feb. 23 - 24
1978 CONVENTION, Kitchener	June 28 - July 2

"THE STORY OF SWEDENBORG AND THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH"

This is the title of an excellent new pamphlet just released from our Central Office. This attractive, thirty page booklet by Vicky Dixon, of Springfield, Ohio, gives a bird's eye view of Swedenborg's life, presents the basic theological tenets of the New Church, outlines our Church history, looks at Convention as it is today, and concludes with a view down the future. There is also a complete directory of all Convention churches and Swedenborgian book centers.

Ms. Dixon graduated *summa cum laude* from Urbana College in 1975, and spent several weeks in Newton, Mass., researching this material.

This handsome pamphlet, featuring a sketch of the Wayfarers' Chapel on the cover, is ideal for those people inquiring about Swedenborg's life or those who would like to know something about the New Church way of life. Available free from the Central Office, 48 Sargent St., Newton, Mass. 02158.

Please send money or stamps to cover postage.

FROM CHURCH RECORDS Cont.

DEATHS

BOUCHELLE — Mrs. Helen Bouchelle, 91, a member of the New Church in Chicago, Illinois, died in Florida on September 3, 1977. Funeral service was held at Riviera Beach, Fla., on September 7, the Rev. E. Eugene Thompson of St. George's Episcopal Church officiating.

HAMILTON — Mrs. Eunice Hamilton died on September 22 in DeLand, Florida. The Rev. Edwin Capon officiated at the resurrection service at Almont, Michigan, on Sept. 25. Mrs. Hamilton was a life long supporter of the Almont New Church Assembly, and will be sorely missed by her many New Church friends in Michigan.

SAMPSON — Mr. Oscar Sampson, 87, of Armstrong, B.C., died on Sept. 5, 1977. The resurrection service was held from Mountain View Funeral Home, Armstrong, on Sept. 8, the Rev. Harold Taylor officiating.

STEVENS — Mr. Harold Stevens died in Hamilton, Ontario, on October 3, 1977. The resurrection service was held on October 5, the Rev. Paul Zacharias officiating.

STOP — LOOK — LISTEN

Five - year - old Jimmy is walking with his father along the street. The man, deep in thought, is pacing briskly along when he remembers whose small hand he is holding. He looks at the little boy. "Jimmy, am I walking too fast?" "No," Jimmy says, "but I am."

The Lord Jesus does not walk too fast for His children. When one of them hurts He would fain stop to find out and to help. Do you remember the story in Mark?

As the Lord Jesus was on the road from Jericho with His disciples a great many people went along with them.

A blind man, Bartimaeus by name, "sat by the wayside begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth he began to cry out, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. Many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called." Mark 10: 46 - 49.

What a depth of meaning and what counsel of wisdom is here. The Divine Human answer of Jesus to man's need was first to pause when the crowd, bent on "getting there," would have walked on. Is there not here a revelation of the Lord's readiness to take time spiritually — to take thought at the point where man's need is greatest?

To convey the healing power of the Word to restore the life of a human being, the friend will put aside the compulsions of the day that he may truly listen so to understand, to commune and to pray. The sufferer knows something has gone wrong but he is at a loss to know where it happened or why. He cries out "to understand fully even as I have been fully understood" — "Master, let me receive my sight."

To understand and to be understood is already a beginning of healing. It is in a sense a first step on the road of return to the land of living. Even in medical practice a true diagnosis, together with trust and respect for the whole person of the patient, opens the way to healing. The Lord would stop. Do we?

True prayer is not always of words. It may be in our pausing to find out and to help to overcome things that hurt.

Andre Diaconoff
(From the Prayer Fellowship
Bulletin.)

PRAYER FOR OTHERS

All that matters is that a need exists and that a *desire* is expressed for God to meet that need. It is as simple as that. Again and again in the Gospels Jesus reiterates: ask. . .ask. . .ask. This is an absolutely fundamental principle in man's relationship to God. It is the principle of Freedom of Will.

The first step is to be in the right attitude to pray for another. If we are personally or emotionally too involved we might obstruct the full flow of Divine Power and our prayer could become what we wish the Lord would do, rather than "Thy will be done." We must *believe* that His Will is always best, and we must be ready to want it. Pray that *the need will be met* — not *how it is to be met*.

Accept the fact that we can never have proof that our prayers bring specific results. Just know that our part is taking the problem to God — turning it over to Him in the absolute certainty that *whatever is needed* will receive His attention (because we, in love for fellow man, have *asked* for it). Thus we have done a good thing. If we have done a good thing its results can be only good — although we may never be privileged to know what they are.

The second step is in giving form to the prayer. This is so simple that many do not grasp it. They feel that somehow it should be a production (a ceremony). Prayer is conversation with God — no more complicated than chatting with a neighbor or writing to a friend. It is done exactly the same way.

It helps if we can visualize the Lord standing beside the one for whom we are praying, and the person receiving His healing love. Thus the prayer really has two parts: first, asking the Lord for His Presence and power; second, *projecting* to the person a "thought form" of himself turning to the Lord. This, by a sort of telepathy, brings the *help* and the recipient together.

Do not be concerned with telling the Lord the details of the problem. He already knows them. And never allow yourself to think that prayers are not answered. Sometimes results are delayed because of complications unknown to us, or are different from what we decided to expect. But the Lord always answers, and He does so from His own perfect Wisdom and Love.

Gwynne D. Mack

The Upper Room

THE NEW CHURCH IS AN INTERNAL CHURCH

Leon LeVan

As Moses strove with Pharaoh to free the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, each successive plague grew more severe. Jehovah said: "Let my people go that they may serve Me." But Pharaoh would not let them go. He was willing to let them sacrifice in the land of Egypt; but Moses could not consent. The Israelites had to be completely free to sacrifice to the Lord their God without the least enslavement.

In the spiritual sense of the *Word* "sacrifice" means worship. The "children of Israel" are the men and women today who are truly "of the church." They worship the Lord. They have internals. You and I are "Israelites" to the extent that we have internals that conjoin us with Heaven.

That this may be clear, we should remember that every man, spirit, and angel is encompassed by what is called a "sphere of life". That sphere is the sphere of affections and thoughts. Such spheres of life are extremely plain to the perception of angels, who see them more vividly than you and I see solid objects in the noonday sun. Your sphere of life may be more vividly seen by angels than a stained-glass cathedral window is seen by earthly eyes. According to our spheres angels recognize us either as "children of Israel" or "Egyptians".

LIKE ALTAR FLOWERS

Every man and woman in whose internals Heaven resides is surrounded by a sphere of living and beautiful colors, forms, and fragrances. Beautiful flowers on the church altar remind us of the beauty of Heavenly spheres. Such spheres of beauty are seen only around those who have Heaven in their hearts — that is, whose thoughts and affections are of Heavenly quality.

"Egyptians" on the contrary signify such persons as are in external thoughts and affections only — who are entirely in loves of self and the world. It is hard to describe the baneful things that angels behold in selfish and evil spheres. All deceit, all hypocrisy, all avarice, all filthy and unclean things are there. Such spheres are saturated with thefts, cheatings, malice, adultery, condemnations, hatreds, revenges. The spheres of those who are

completely in worldly affections and thoughts must be likened to stagnant swamps or sewers.

THERE MUST BE SEPARATION

Because the spheres of life are so contrary between those who are internally "of the church" and those who are not, there must be separate existence of Heavens and Hells; for it is impossible that the unclean spheres of the merely natural man can be in Heaven among the purities, beauties, and fragrances of the angelic societies. Nor can selfish and unregenerate spirits so much as breathe the atmospheres of Heaven. So there must be separation. "Let my people go that they may serve Me."

The "children of Israel" had to make a complete separation from the "Egyptians". They had to take with them everything that pertained to themselves with nothing left behind; for the reason that spiritual men and women cannot be partly the Lord's and partly their own. They must be wholly the Lord's or wholly their own. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

HEAVEN IS IN INTERNALS

Let us give one more thought to "internals". "Everyone" declares the *Celestial Arcana* "is able to know that it is by means of internal things that man has communication with Heaven; for the whole Heaven is in internal things; and unless a man is in Heaven in respect to his thoughts and affections he cannot go to Heaven after death, because he has no communications with it. This communication is acquired by man during his life in the world by means of truths that belong to his understanding and goods that belong to his will; and unless he acquires such communication during his life in the world, he cannot do so afterwards — because after death his mind cannot be opened toward interior things unless it has been opened during the life of the body".

Moses told Pharaoh: "We cannot sacrifice the abominations of the Egyptians to the Lord our God", by which is meant spiritually that we must not mix celestial and infernal things in our worship. To worship from both would destroy both. There must be separation. There must be distinction. The New Church is an internal church. The New Church is a spiritual church. The New Church is the church of man's spiritual and internal liberation.

"Let my people go that they may serve Me."

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