

The Messenger

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH
DECEMBER 1977



Let us honor Him
with tender care
for one another

— Christmas Blessings

Editorial

Once Again: Merry Christmas

Once more we find ourselves surrounded by Christmas. The sights, the smells, the sounds, the expectations of Christmas are all around us. Most of all, the feelings. They're everywhere. And that is what makes Christmas the grandest time of the year.

It's difficult — almost impossible — to write about Christmas. Someone has said that Christmas and poetry are alike in that no one can fully interpret their meaning for anyone else. How true! Christmas is the most personal holy day of the year.

Christmas has very little to do with the tinsel and trappings, the gifts and the glitter. Sometimes these externals get in the way of the real meaning. We must try to see through them. Then we find that Christmas is a *renewing force* in the world. It reaffirms our faith in God, in people, and in life itself. It helps us to see what the world could be like — would be like — if we all lived the Christmas message the year 'round. For a few, fleeting days there is a different atmosphere in the air; people are more considerate; the happiness is contagious; you can almost reach out and touch the warm, good feelings that belong to the Christmas season. True, it doesn't last very long.

By the time we put away the tree decorations for another year, we're back in the old, familiar world . . . with its problems and troubles. But then, this too is part of life. Always there is light and shadow. Bethlehem and Jerusalem are separated by just a few short miles. Only by contrast can we know the meaning of joy and sorrow. And regardless of what happens to us, the promise of Christmas — the meaning of Christmas — always remains.

Isn't it strange how clearly we can remember our childhood Christmases! Or maybe it's not so strange after all. Perhaps it's a measure of how much they meant to us. Real candles burning brightly on the biggest tree in the whole world . . . Aunt Marie singing "Stille Nacht", with starlight pouring through the church windows . . . and on Christmas afternoon Grandparent's house was jammed with uncles, aunts, cousins and the aroma of food was thick enough to ladle. Beautiful memories. Christmas memories.

The years go by so quickly. Several good friends, and family members, who were around last Christmas have since graduated into the spiritual world. We miss them very much, and

you wonder what Christmas celebrations are like in the Land of Light. It reminds us, as the years go by, that we may not have that many Christmases left in this world. And so we treasure every one. And treasure more, too, the blessing of family and friends and church.

May Christmas peace and joy be yours.

P. Z.

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Paul B. Zacharias, Editor

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The Starting Line by Eric Zacharias

I would like to share with you several significant actions in which I have participated in recent weeks. The Urbana College Task Force, consisting of college administrators, faculty and Church representatives, met in late September to continue the study of Church — College relationships. This has been a stimulating adventure. Those who have assumed the responsibility for “Higher Education” are searching for those directions which will make this an ever more effective and rewarding process. The spiritual development of personality cannot be ignored or neglected. Thus, the challenge. How can the College and the Church work together to promote the well - balanced education of the whole person?

I recommend to all *Messenger* readers the recently published booklet, “The Story of Swedenborg And The Swedenborgian Church” written by Vicky Dixon, an Urbana College alumnus. This informative pamphlet is available without cost through the Central Office.

The Western Canada Conference, at its July meeting in Penticton, B.C., voted to expand the Edmonton Training Program. The purpose of this program is to train persons for the Lay Ministry and also to provide a learning opportunity for anyone interested in growing in an appreciation of the teachings of our Church and in serving the Church more effectively. The faculty consists of instructors from the Swedenborg School of Religion. The cost of this program, which now is being expanded under the direction of Gertrude Tremblay serving as Co - ordinator, is borne jointly by the Western Canada Conference and Convention.

Since the expansion decision was made, Mrs. Tremblay has visited a number of our centers in Western Canada and made plans for the first weekend session which is to be held in

Battleford, Saskatchewan, under the leadership of Dr. Friedemann Horn and Dr. William Woofenden. We view this as one significant way by which the Church reaches out to our people. It is our hope that all who are able will take advantage of this opportunity, and that the benefits of this program will strengthen the New Church in Western Canada.

The Planning and Development Committee, a committee of the General Council, met for three days at Blairhaven, Mass., in October. This is not “just another committee.” The excitement of this group of people, both clergy and laity, runs high as the vision of the New Age and its implications for the Church comes into clearer focus. What is happening in our society? Many things, of course! There appears to be the emergence of a need to bring the external of life and the internal into closer harmony. More and more external forms are showing themselves to be meaningless and empty if they are without the support of a corresponding internal. This, then, raises a profound question, namely: How can that which is internal be most appropriately expressed in external forms? What is the nature of those external forms?

Is the First Order of Service the most useful way by which to express an internal devotional need?

How adequately do our church buildings give expression to the church that is within us?

There is much in our Church teaching that gives support to our efforts to bring all dimensions of our being into a pattern in harmony with the Lord and His kingdom. This must surely be an ongoing process — ever new in the life of every individual and in every age of a struggling human community.

(con't. on page 266)

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Friedemann Horn
President, Swedenborg
School of Religion

There is much questioning among Christians about the nature of the Holy Spirit. This would not be the case — at least not in the same sense — if Christians in the past had read the Bible more thoroughly, and with open eyes. Indeed, for more than 1500 years, their eyes had been blinded through the erroneous dogma of the Divine Trinity. Together with God - Father and God - Son, God the Holy Spirit represented the Trinity of Divine Persons. This doctrine had to be believed by every Christian for the sake of eternal salvation. The final formulation of this dogma, the so - called Athanasian creed, begins with the threatening words: "Whoever wishes to be saved, it is necessary for him to keep this Catholic faith. Unless one keeps that faith whole and entire, without doubt he will perish for ever . . ." To avoid open tritheism the fathers of this faith claimed that these three Divine Persons were one in essence, the only difference between them was that the Father was "ungenerated", the Son "generated by the Father before all times", and the Holy Spirit "proceeding from the Father" through the Son. But, of course, no one — including the leaders of the Church themselves — could ever really understand this doctrine. So they called it "a mystery of faith" that everybody had to believe. But from time to time more independent spirits arose to doubt the truth of this dogma; they were persecuted without mercy by the Church, as well as by her so - called "worldly arm", the state. Even the Reformers, such as Martin Luther and John Calvin, did not accept their more rational approach to the trinitarian problem. Calvin even condemned men like the famous Michael Servetus as a heretic on the funeral pile at Geneva. To a certain extent we might regard Michael Servetus as a forerunner of Swedenborg.

On the other hand, those who opposed the old, petrified trinitarian dogma, usually ended up denying the Divinity of Jesus Christ, thus cutting the "Gordian knot." The present day Unitarians are their descendants. Denying the Divinity of the Lord, they were ardently fought by Swedenborg. He approached the problem in a completely different way, starting from the conviction that, contrary to the Unitarian view, the Lord Jesus Christ was the only God of the universe. This conviction, however, did not cause him to neglect those basic experiences with God that the Gospels indicate by using the

term "Father", "Son", and "Holy Spirit". He rather described them as the three essences or aspects (to use a Barthian term) of the one only God, whose "tangible" and "communicable" form is the "Son". Swedenborg often quotes from John 14:9, "He that has seen me, has seen the Father," or John 10:30, "I and the Father are one;" and from Paul's letter to the Colossians (2:9) Swedenborg quoted no less than 30 times the word — "In him (viz. Christ) dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

In his short work on the *Doctrine of the New Jerusalem concerning the Lord* Swedenborg gives us the remarkable passage: "The doctrine of the Athanasian creed agrees with the truth, *provided* that by the Trinity of persons be understood the Trinity of person which is in the Lord." (55).

So it is certainly wrong to maintain — as some theologians do — that Swedenborg denied the Divine Trinity — he does not! What he is opposed to is the wrong and dangerous definition of the Trinity, as being a Trinity of Divine Persons. Nowadays we may open the most distinguished theological works or encyclopedias, and we'll find that many of them clearly criticize the old trinitarian dogma. Several of them would even use Swedenborg's argument that the idea of three distinct Divine Persons almost inevitably leads to some kind of tritheism.

This critical attitude of many present theologians does not mean, however, that they would favour *our* trinitarian view, according to which the Lord Jesus Christ is the "only God of the universe, in whom the Father is the soul, and the Holy Spirit the forthcoming truth, power and operation." As already indicated, the modern trend among theologians is rather to deny the Divinity of Jesus Christ, taking him simply as the most important of all religious men, the leading prophet of God. This concept of Christ goes back to the days of Arius at the beginning of the 4th century.

An especially critical issue of all this arguing back and forth regarding the Divine Trinity is the Holy Spirit. In the early days of Christianity there was very little reflection upon the nature of the Holy Spirit, but much personal experience of its impact upon life — the life of each single Christian as well as of the whole Church. We now turn to Paul's famous list of the Charismata in his first letter to the

Corinthians (12), to see that in the days of the Lord on earth he equipped his followers with supernatural powers, so that they not only preached the good news of the Divine kingdom, but also healed the sick and cast out demons from the insane. And didn't the Lord promise his disciples that, because he would go unto the Father, they would do the same, and even greater works? (John 14:12) So Paul's list of the charisms simply reflects the reality of the life of the Christian community of his day. (I Cor. 12: 4 - 11).

"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit: and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills."

Paul does mention the Spirit as the sole origin of these nine different gifts of charismata, but he does not make any distinction between the Spirit and the rest of the Godhead. After showing that all the different gifts belong together, just as the different members of one body, he goes on to say that God Himself has arranged this diversity within the body of Christ.

So Paul does not contradict our conviction that the Holy Spirit is the very essential of God, that reaches out to His followers in order to perform through them His loving goals.

In the familiar passage in John 14, the Lord announces his going to the Father and promises his disciples, "And he shall give you another Comforter . . . even the Spirit of truth," and immediately afterwards he says: "I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you." His own presence among them he promises also at the end of the gospel of Matthew, where we read: "And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Literally: until the consummation of the age.)

If we consider the fact that the Lord in his valedictory address to his disciples, three times

explicitly called the Holy Spirit or Comforter "the spirit of truth", while in the same context he called himself "the truth," then again it seems impossible to think of him and the Holy Spirit as being two distinct Divine Persons.

Swedenborg makes an interesting remark in the opening section of chapter III of *True Christian Religion*: "By the Holy Spirit is properly signified the Divine truth, thus also the Word, and in this sense the Lord Himself is also the Holy Spirit: but because in the Church at this day the Divine operation which is actual justification is described by the Holy Spirit, therefore this is here assumed as the Holy Spirit: and of this chiefly we speak for the reason also that the Divine operation is effected by the Divine truth which proceeds out of the Lord; and that which proceeds is one and the same essence with Him from whom it proceeds, like these three, the soul, the body and the proceeding power, which together make one essence. . . " (139).

In other words, the Lord as the incarnate Word and the truth *is himself the Holy Spirit*. He operates everything that Christians commonly attribute to a separate Divine Person they call the Holy Spirit.

Calling upon the Holy Spirit, then, is nothing else than calling for the presence of the Lord in His Divine Human. It is opening our externals toward the internals where He is constantly present. It is "knocking at the door" that we may hear his voice, and open the door, and let him enter into our daily lives that He may take over our thoughts, our feelings, our ideas, our aims, our bodies, to work through them for the establishment of His eternal kingdom.

CONVENTION CALENDAR

Ministers and Wives Institute, DeLand, Florida	Jan. 12 - 18
General Council, DeLand, Florida	Jan. 19 - 21
C.O.M. Exec. Com. Newton	Feb. 13 - 15
Dept. of Pub.	Feb. 23 - 24
Bd. of Education, Newton	March 3 - 5
Planning and Development, Boston area	April 12 - 15
Com. Admissions Min. Newton	April 17 - 18
1978 CONVENTION, Kitchener, Ont.	June 28 - July 2

THE WORD OF THE LORD

Andre Diaconoff
Los Angeles, Cal.

The Word of the Lord is the expression of His love, wisdom and life seeking comprehension and response in human life on all levels of human capability, and according to the freedom of man at each level. The Word is a creative expression. It seeks to beget, to form and to promote life, and not merely to explain or instruct. It may be said to be the word of a supremely creative artist and effective doer, rather than that of a teacher only. "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return not thither but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55: 10, 11). Mark the double expression of purpose, ("accomplish that which I purpose . . . for which I sent it"). It applies to the Word throughout.

So also in John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life . . ." (John 1: 1 - 4.)

The Being and the Power of the Mind of God are involved in the Word from its source to its reception and use. So, even in its ultimate expression in Sacred Scripture, the faith of the New Church can say: "The whole Sacred Scripture teaches that there is a God, because in inmost content there is nothing but God, that is, the divine which proceeds from him . . ." And further, "From these things it is evident, in the first place, that the sacred scripture is the fulness of God." (True Christian Religion 6.)

To obtain comprehension and to win response as the Word reaches the human being it uses human experience for its language. To be sure it is very selective. Here is Abram, the earliest historical character in the Bible. We

meet him for a first time at age seventy five, hardly a usual starting point for a full biography of the man. So with Elijah the Tishbite. We know very little of Moses in all his years of growing up in Egypt. For that matter we know little of the early life of the Lord Jesus Christ, except as we reach into the deeper sense of Sacred Scripture and as we perceive there some of the story of the *Life of Jesus Little Known*, (as the Reverend William L. Worcester titled his valuable short work on the subject.)

That is the sense lodged by correspondence in the Bible, telling of the spiritual experience of man, as the Lord works to create and to form man a living being through regeneration. The "selection" we have observed in the composition of Sacred Scripture follows that inner wisdom of the divine Inspirer.

The words in the Sermon on the Mount apply to the reading of the Bible. "Ask and you shall receive. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened to you." Let the reader ask for meaning for his and for his fellowman's life; seek for the truth and its strength; and knock, that is, press to bring his life into the communion of the kingdom of heaven.

Thinking more widely we can say that the Word of the Lord is "written" also in history and in all realms of nature, because it is the creative truth coming forth from his love. There is "correspondence" between his eternal wisdom and the order of creation. "Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made." So wrote Paul in the opening chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.

Then can we not say that man's conversation with the earth and the universe which is growing so wondrously in depth and outreach in this day, will yet reveal that the greatest of all commandments of truth is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself."

A Visit To The Spiritual World

*Nina Tafel
Philadelphia, Pa.*

The twenty - eight members of the Middle Atlantic Association who attended the Retreat at Drayton Manor in Maryland, October 7 - 9, had a most unusual and thrilling experience. The theme, "Getting Ready To Live Forever," promised to carry forward the subject of our previous mini - retreat, which had been a presentation and discussion of Dr. Moody's and Dr. Kubler-Ross's remarkable discoveries about *Life After Life*. Yet we had no idea of what was in store for us!

Our Friday evening session began with the reviewing of a film, which most of us had already seen, that told about the experiences of those who had "died", had been clinically declared "dead", and who had been subsequently resuscitated. We listened, absorbed, as they told us of their experiences on the other side of life, particularly the sights and sounds as they left their bodies.

Just at that moment, there was a terrific crash and banging and a rolling as of thunder somewhere beyond the door our meeting room. The Rev. Richard Tafel ran out to see what had happened. He returned, white as a ghost, scarcely able to talk. He finally said that he had been instructed to tell us that we had all somehow passed into the spiritual world, and that that noise was our passing through the "death tunnel" — just as we had heard it described on the film.

You can imagine our reactions. Incredible! Weren't we the same persons we had always been? Didn't we have the same bodies? Didn't everybody still look the same? Weren't we as real, as real could be? And weren't we still in the same beautiful mansion we had entered just a short two hours ago? When the initial shock has passed, we returned somewhat to our Swedenborgian senses, agreeing that it could be true what was told us, though as yet far from really believing it.

At this point, suddenly and inexplicably, a table appeared with the most attractive food and drinks which, obviously, none of us had prepared! (This, as we were to discover over and over again, was the way things happened in this wonderful place. To the delight of particularly the ladies, delicious meals would be suddenly placed before us without having to be planned and cooked, and then just as suddenly

and mysteriously whisked away, with the dishes not even having to be removed or washed). Naturally it occurred to us that we should avail ourselves of this strange bounty, which we did. Then, tired from our journeys and exhausted by the experiences of the evening, we sought our beds, consoling ourselves and one another with such thoughts as, "This may be just a dream, a nightmare" . . . "Things will look different in the morning."

But when we awoke nothing was different. We found ourselves in the same surroundings familiar to us by many a Retreat. But was it Drayton Manor in Maryland, or the projection of the memory of our last scene in the world now left behind? Logically it could be either, yet something very powerfully but very reassuringly told us it was the latter. Again a wonderful meal was spread before us, disappearing when we were finished as mysteriously as it had appeared. We were quieter than is our wont on such occasions, each one sunk in his own thoughts and ponderings. The Rev. Randall Laakko, who would have been one of our three leaders if our Retreat had gone as we had planned it months ago, shared some of this thoughts and feelings with us. He said that, while he was glad to be alive, he had a deep sense of loss and grief. He did not want to die and leave behind so much that was unfinished. He sadly missed his wife and children . . . What would they do without him? . . . And his church and congregation . . . What would become of them? . . . And there was yet so much that he wanted to do with life! All this found ready echo in the hearts of us all. He then suggested that we turn to the Lord, as we used to do. So we sang hymns, listened to the beloved words of our Lord, "Let not your hearts be troubled . . . in my Father's house are many mansions," and poured out our hearts in prayer. We immediately felt better, and somehow more thankful and joyful.

He then told us about a very interesting man whom he had met that morning, and asked if we would care to have him come and talk to us. He said that what first attracted him was the book the man was carrying, *Heaven and Hell*, and how one thing had led to another. He

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SUNDAY EVENING

*Lillie May,
Bellevue, Wash.*

I am sitting in the living room again. The pot-bellied base burner still dominates, standing firmly on its lion paws. A half - filled bucket of coal and shovel for stoking are nearby. I remember as a child staring through the isinglass covered door into the orange - blue flames. Could Daniel and his companions, Shadrach, Meschech and Abednego really walk there?

Sunday evening was the best. Even though there was snow on the ground, Mamma bundled up the five oldest children and took them to church. Papa stayed home with the three youngest. Now I was the oldest — well, I was eight, Carolyn six, and Madeline just learning to walk and talk.

I sat on the hard uncomfortable sofa with the elegant head rest, running my hands along the worn rust - colored velvet. So soft. Made me think of something, but I couldn't remember what. I stroked it like Carolyn stroked her cat. That was it, I liked the feel, it pleased me. I just sat there waiting, filled with excitement. Something was about to happen.

Sure enough, Papa took his wooden box down from the closet shelf, placed it on the table. The lamp light shone on the polished brown surface. I smelled the kerosene. In the unsteady light I saw the raw - hide hinges and the little brass tacks that held them to the wood. He lifted the lid and picked up an envelope. We stood on tiptoe as he took out a letter, tossed the envelope aside. He tore another across the end, removed its contents and let it fall on the floor. Carolyn and I watched as he sorted through all his papers, our hands eager for each castoff. They were our treasures for playing office the next day.

We quarreled over the blue one from the insurance man. My father had insurance. If he should die, a thousand dollars would be paid to my mother, and we would be rich. Would she buy me a baby doll then? There was such a pretty one in Sutton's window. I was tired of that lumpy old rag thing. Besides, the sawdust was leaking out of her.

In the flickering light, I looked across the room. The pump organ was silent now, and I was glad. Here and there the yellowed keys were chipped, some of the ivories missing.

Whenever Mamma played the organ, the foot pedals clicked and the bellows wheezed as they sucked in the air. She sang a lot about troubles and heaven. All was right in heaven, but it was very difficult to get in. Must not be caught "backsliding", whatever that was. Would I make it through the gates? God was always watching. I must be careful to obey all the rules, that was certain. I must make it into heaven when I died, and no one knew the day or the hour.

Papa sat in the big rocking chair. How I loved that rocker, but I never could gallop as I wished. It tipped over so easy. There was always that little catchy moment — had I gone too far?

Now he took Carolyn and me on his knees. With a twinkle in his eyes, he began to tell about Brer Rabbit and the Old Fox. Brer Rabbit always got stuck to the tar baby and couldn't move, and begged the old Fox to do anything he wanted, even cut his heart out, but not, oh, please not, to throw him into the Old Briar Patch. And the Old Fox was so dumb, that was just what he did. Carolyn and I sighed with relief as Brer Rabbit scampered away free again.

We sang, "Froggie went a - courting, he did ride, um - huh, um - huh, with a sword and a pistol by his side, um - huh, um - huh", and Papa's foot kept time to the music.

That night Mamma had set her house plants out of the south bay window: geraniums, begonias, coleus and wandering jew. The wind blew in around those loose windows and the plants might freeze. They were lined up at the edge of the rug.

The flowered rug, Mamma's prize possession, made the floor warm and soft to walk on. Once it belonged to the richest man in town, Mr. Goodrich. Did he really own half the town? Mamma washed and ironed and mended to pay for the rug. The worn spots hardly showed if the furniture was turned just right.

Those were the years when Mamma did laundry for the traveling salesman. I can remember the man - smell as she sorted his clothes. A faint odor of stale tobacco, perfumed hair oil and perspiration meant a

man of the world. Mamma "did" curtains for all the rich ladies in town also. So it was she earned the nickles and dimes to buy the flowers on the floor.

The red cloth - covered Books of Knowledge, 20 volumes, almost filled the book shelves. Everything I needed to know was in them, I was told. Stories and rhymes and pictures. Best of all was the Book of Golden Deeds. Stories about real people. Might I do a golden deed one day too? The lowest shelf held the set of Bible story books with shiny brown covers and slick pages with pictures. Mamma opened them one by one and looked at them a long time. That fast - talking salesman had sold them to her and she washed and ironed for months to pay for them.

Papa put his wooden box away and we held our breath. Would he? Instead, he moved toward the stove. Reaching up, he flipped the stovepipe damper. Then he bent down to tip the coal bucket and, with the shovel, scraped the sides and bottom. The pieces of coal rattled into the hollow of the shovel. Opening the heater door, he carefully spread the shiny black bits over the soft red - gray coals. Instantly new sparks shot up. As the door clanged shut, he reached to reset the damper. We waited. Now?

Our eyes followed him as he went to the closet, took the faded black wooden case down from the shelf, placed it on the table and opened the metal catches. We danced around him laughing with delight. First he took out the bow with its inlaid pearl handle. He twisted it tight, picked up the piece of yellow rosin and drew the real horse hairs across it several times. Laying both down, he lifted the green felt cover, and with a smile caressed the fiddle. The lamplight mirrored on its varnished surface. From a pocket in the case, he took out a metal tuning fork in the shape of a Y. He tapped the tines against the table, quickly put the base on the wood, and a soft note rang through the room. He plucked a string to see if the sound was the same. Then followed more notes from the tuning fork and turning of the black pegs on the neck of the violin. He tested the strings together, moved the pegs, until he declared at last all were just right.

Then the music began . . . "Turkey in the Straw" . . . "Oh, Dem Golden Slippers" . . . "Yankee Doodle" . . . Oh, play another, we begged, and so he did. And another. We were cozy and oh, so happy in the old house on the hill.

INCREASED ENROLLMENT AT URBANA COLLEGE

Urbana College President Roland D. Patzer announced today that the college has exceeded its enrollment projections for Fall Quarter 1977.

"We hoped for a 20 percent increase on last year's total of 500 students. In fact we have a Fall Quarter enrollment of 614 students," Patzer said.

"At a time when national statistics show that college enrollments are steadily declining, we are very gratified to have a substantial increase. However," Patzer added, "the increase is due primarily to the development of our Outreach Programs throughout the state."

Urbana College currently has Outreach Programs in Bellefontaine, Lima, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, Columbus and at the State Correctional Institutions at London and Marysville. In addition, this fall they introduced classes at the Lima State Hospital for Forensic Psychiatry, where there are currently 23 staff and residents enrolled.

"We are confident," Patzer added, "that we will be able to reach our target of 1,000 students by 1980, which will be the highest ever enrollment for the college."

THE URBANA COLLEGE STORY

The history of Urbana College, tracing the institution from its founding as a Swedenborgian institution in 1850 through its stormy history as a four - year university, a high school, prep school and junior college to its re - instatement as an accredited four - year institution in 1974, will be available in mid - November.

The history is written by Frank Higgins, who spent many months researching not only old college records, but in addition copies of early Urbana newspapers, biographies of old students and administrators to produce a lively account of the college's development, its changing relationship with the local community and its stubborn commitment to an educational philosophy which in the early 30's only succeeded in attracting four college students.

The mischievous behavior of young Thomas Colemann DuPont, who was almost expelled for carving his initials on the hallowed portals

(con't. on page 262)

BLESSED EVER SINCE

Celesta Dunn
Citizen Staff Writer

On a mild summer night in Urbana, Ohio, in August, 1973, the Rev. Stanley Scott knelt beside a curb on Buckeye Street, stared beyond the tangled debris of a 107-year-old gutted sanctuary and thanked God for such a blessing.

The blessing, as this community will recall, was that no one had been injured when the roof of the Jerusalem Second Baptist Church collapsed. Within minutes, 200 black parishioners were without a house of worship.

They've been blessed ever since.

A clock found under the fallen roof on that Sunday, August 12, was stopped at 6:03 p.m., less than an hour before scheduled evening services. In remembering the incident Deacon Tracy Rhea says that "not one service was cancelled as a result of the roof's collapse."

"In fact," he smilingly emphasizes, "by the very next Sunday our morning worship was held in a church that is still home to us."

Rhea refers to the Swedenborian Church of the New Jerusalem, located at the corner of Main and Reynolds Streets in Urbana. Its doors were opened to the Baptists almost immediately with the result being a unique sharing experience that has enriched both congregations during the ensuing four years.

On the night of the incident, while local firemen secured the premises and kept the curious at a safe distance, the Baptists joined in evening worship services with the Bethesda Apostolic congregation. By the next evening, Deacon Glenn Sloan had met with Dr. Horand Gutfeldt, a Swedenborgian and member of the Urbana College faculty, to discuss the possibility of the Baptists worshipping in the Church of the New Jerusalem.

"As a security officer at the college, I had had quite a few dealings with the Swedenborgians," Sloan points out. "I knew them to be generous, warm individuals, whose church membership was very small and whose sanctuary served as the college's chapel. Dr. Gutfeldt didn't hesitate a moment in offering us the use of the church and indicated that the other Swedenborgians would feel the same way."

Baptist Church members assert that only positive things have happened since the sharing began.

For their part, the Swedenborgians were happy to oblige. Dr. Dorothea Harvey, minister of the New Church and professor of

religion and philosophy at Urbana College, says she would have been sadly disappointed if the Swedenborgians had not offered to help the displaced Baptists in some way.

"Several of the church members, including myself, were on vacation when the Baptist sanctuary was destroyed," Dr. Harvey explains. "Upon our return to Urbana we were delighted to hear of Dr. Gutfeldt's offer."

Assuming the same attitude is Dan Nielsen, church treasurer, who says, "after all the Kingdom of Heaven is the Kingdom of Uses, is it not?" Nielsen explains that the church needed to be used more frequently since Swedenborgian services are limited to one a week. Although the college, which is church-owned and operated, may use the sanctuary, seldom are the occasions when the need arises.

"Weddings and plays and special programs are held here," Nielsen says, "but it's never been used to its fullest potential."

A few joint services have been held with the most successful being the annual Christmas Pageant which traditionally has involved only Swedenborgians and the few children of college faculty members willing to participate.

"Our staging of the pageant was always limited before," Dr. Harvey explains. "But with the arrival of the Baptists, who were eager to share in the production, the pageant was a remarkable presentation." With more shepherds and angels than the altar could accommodate, the play was eventually staged in the Presbyterian Church with youngsters throughout the community taking part.

The Kingdom of Heaven is the Kingdom of Uses, is it not?
(from the *Urbana Citizen*)



AUTUMN LEAVES grace the entrance of a 97-year-old sanctuary that is shared by members of the Swedenborgian Church of the New Jerusalem and the Jerusalem Second Baptist Church. New Jerusalem Church treasurer Dan Nielsen and Dr. Dorothea Harvey (pictured at left) exchange greetings with Baptist pastor Rev. Ronald Cooper and his assistant, the Rev. J. W. Ladd (far right).

CHRISTMAS IS . . .

HE IS HERE

How can we see the Christ Child?
 He was born so long ago, so far away
 For us this day to know.
 How can we tell the Christ Child
 That we love Him very much?
 That we want Him *here*
 And near enough to touch.
 There came the little Christ Child
 To show us all
 That goodness starts
 In children's hearts,
 And must grow tall.
 Each baby has the Christ Child
 Within its tiny soul;
 And when a baby smiles
 We see Christ's love unfold.
 So we can know the Christ Child
 In children everywhere;
 And we can tell *them* of our love,
 And show them how we care.
 And what we say to children
 The Christ Child, too, will hear —
 And what we say,
 If true and loving,
 Keeps the Christ Child near.

—GWYNNE DRESSER MACK.

Preparing For Christmas

"A voice cries in the wilderness:
 Prepare a way for the LORD,
 make His paths straight."

Mark 1:3

And so in this Christmas season
 each of us must also prepare a way
 for the LORD in our own lives.
 How can we do this? By making our
 paths straight, that is, by patterning
 our daily living according to the
 "straight way" which is the
 LORD'S WORD. This is the path
 which the LORD walks on, but it is
 only we ourselves who can make our
 own paths straight so that our paths
 become His paths. Then and only
 then can the LORD come into our
 lives. And He will enter through the
 stables of our minds.

Trevor Woofenden

THE VISIT

He came once in the flesh that He might
 come forever in the spirit. He was born once in
 the city of David, that He might be born in
 every man who will receive Him. If He has been
 born in us, even though He can find no room
 in us but a manger, and no swaddling clothes
 but the few and tender spiritual truths we have
 learned in childhood, we can have our
 Christmas. We can join our voices with the
 angels in singing, "Glory to God in the
 highest!" We can welcome Him to such homes
 as we have in our hearts. They are poor homes,
 it is true . . . but He will come wherever there is
 a place to lay His Divine Head.

Chauncey Giles

HE CAME

HE CAME, yes He came, so long ago:

Shepherds heard the angels song;
 Wise men saw His star;
 Herod trembled on his throne
 At His appearing.

Not midst splendour came the King to be,
 But in lowliest, simple circumstance,
 Unheeded by the world at large.

He was born to be King of other sort,
 Ruler of realm invisible but real;
 His throne your heart and mine:
 Not of this world His kingdom, but heavenly.
 Rightly we celebrate His ancient coming
 On our redemption bent. But our greatest joy
 will be

When we sense His living Presence
 In the deeds of men to - day.

His coming always is —
 At the door of the soul He knocks.
 Open the door ye waiting ones,
 Be He your welcome guest,
 With place at table set.

Transforming is His Presence — giving life
 indeed.

He appears in glowing hearts and love - lit
 minds,

In our hearts' compassion, in gracious
 kindly deeds,

In love unselfish, undemanding, giving,
 always giving.

We are His witnesses when our lives He rules.
 Even so, Lord Jesus, in us appear.

by the Rev. Charles A. Hall

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

BETHELEHEM The names of towns have meanings, like Newcastle which is where there was a "new castle". The town where Jesus was born was also made of two words in the Hebrew language: *Beth* "house" and *lehem* "bread". So He was born in the "house of bread". Perhaps you remember that in the Gospel, Jesus says He is the "bread of life". He meant that He came on earth to feed us with love and joy in our lives. So you see what it means when He came to us at the "house of bread".

MANGER We all know that a manger means a place where animals feed. What does it mean that the Lord was laid in one? Of course, it shows us that He came to live among us just as we must live; not as a king in a palace, but just as ordinary not - very - rich people sometimes had to start. So He is with us to help us in our lives, whatever we have to face. But you will see, too, that it carries on the idea of Bethlehem, "the house of bread". We have to look for Him where we expect just ordinary "feeding" to go on. How often we come to the Bible expecting just to be fed with ordinary stories and commandments we have to learn and so on. So much "dry as dust" knowledge. Have you noticed that the food animals eat out of mangers is often rather dry and dusty? Imagine what it means to find a living child in a manger instead! That can happen to us when we realise that the stories Jesus teaches show us how to be *alive with love* to help others around us.

SWADDLING CLOTHS These were strips of cloth wrapped round a new - born baby to keep him warm; just as mothers now get warm little vests and woollen suits to keep their babies warm. To welcome a new life in a baby, you must have warmth and care. And it is the same if we want Jesus to begin to come into our lives. We must have something ready to receive Him — warm and loving thoughts and care for everyone around us. Then we have the "swaddling cloths" for Him.

GOLD This was one of the gifts the wise men brought because it stands for love. We say that a loving person has a "heart of gold". Gold is not changed by what happens to it. Iron will rust and silver will tarnish, but the warm golden gold is never changed. It is like the steadfast love we must bring as our gift to the Lord Jesus.

FRANKINCENSE The wise men's second gift is a gum that oozes out of the bark of a tree and

hardens. If you look at pine trees, you will see if the bark is cut that the same thing happens. The frankincense gum has a pure sweet smell, and it was burned at worship to remind men that pure clean thoughts must fill our minds.

MYRRH This is another gum, like frankincense, from the bark of small trees. It was used to cleanse and purify cuts and sores as we do with antiseptics now. It reminds us that we must cleanse our life from all selfish and hateful things if we are to come to Jesus. So, if we are wise, we have our three gifts to offer: gold of love, frankincense of pure thoughts, and myrrh of a clean honest life.

From the British Conference *Lifeline*

CHRISTMAS BEING HERE

Time was when Santa came late to our house. The children were nestled all snug in their beds before the turkey was stuffed, limp stockings filled with strange bulges and a glittering tree grew in the living room corner, rooted in piles of presents suddenly arrived from the North Pole. Hardly had we settled off to sleep, it seemed, before the children woke up and tiptoed noisily down to see the miracle of Christmas.

Every year the younger members of the family shared more in the secrets and the shopping and the making. Behind closed doors they too created and wrapped presents. The customs they loved became vital rituals in our celebration, and those without meaning passed away.

Now Christmas brings "children" who are no longer children "home" to a home where they have never lived. We gather as a family far away from all our family, to start new traditions to share with new friends.

What does it all mean? What have gifts and festivity to do with a little baby born in a stable long long ago? The first presents, of course, were those of the Magi. We choose this time of year to show our love in many ways to those who are significant in our lives. In our family our best gift to each other is being here. With our rituals we celebrate together the gift of God — love coming to life on earth and being here.

In all the busyness we make for ourselves because there is so much we want to do for and say to each other, we need to remember the Prince of Peace. Let there be peace in the candlelight and remembrance of love being here.

Perry S. Martin

*Remembering the stable where for once in our lives
Everything became a You and nothing was an It. — W. H. Auden*



CHRISTMAS IN PRISON

The following is a prison letter, written shortly after Christmas in 1944, by Ewald Von Kleist from a Nazi prison where he faced death for his resistance to Hitler. The letter is addressed to his family.

December 27, 1944

"Once again the Christmas festival lies behind us. On Christmas Eve I had a curious experience. I looked forward to that evening, the Christmas tree, and the heaping of the gifts with such eager suspense as I had known only as a child. I believe I had hardly ever before been as happy over the presents as I was this time. The thoughts that wandered to my beloved ones were, of course, very yearning thoughts. But no sadness assailed me. I read the Christmas story and all the songs that you sing in Schmenzin. It became such a lovely quiet evening.

"I begin now to grasp the truth and blessing contained in the admonition that we should not feel troubled without cause. I also have been too greatly concerned for the morrow. Even though I think that my heart was relatively not much bound to earthly things, there was still too much of this and too little trust in God. One should do one's duty in earthly affairs, but with greater trust in God leave the future in his hands. With this one will be much happier — and a better individual. Would that all who read this may take it to heart and pass it on. For we are here not in order to keep for ourselves the truths that we have recognized. And we can hand them on with success only when we live in accordance with them.

Enjoy whatever God allots to thee,
What thou has not, in gladness learn to
spare.

Each station has its own tranquility,
Each station has its load to bear.

Mother impressed this stanza on my memory. It contains one of the most important truths . . .

Let us each keep the wonder of Christmas in our hearts and share its joy with others. Let us determine to follow Christ faithfully. Let us grasp ever more firmly Christ's purpose for us. In doing so the light of Christmas will continue to shine through us.

from *Dying We Live*,
Wm. Collins Ltd., 1956

"O holy Child of Bethlehem!
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in;
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!"

Phillips Brooks

The Cycle of Life

There is no room for Him here. That is a fact. But the other fact is that God comes into the world, nevertheless. He is born in a manger. He belongs to the outcast, the downtrodden, the humble. He is destined to be a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief — wounded for our transgressions, by whose stripes we are healed. He belongs to everything in the heart of man that is still capable of contrition and mercy.

And for that reason, He baffles us. The touches of wonder with which the Christmas story is surrounded are an indispensable part of it. I once heard Dr. Julius Moldenhawer tell of how, when he was a child, he knew so little that he believed the Christmas story, just as St. Luke tells it. Then came a time when he knew so much — after studying higher criticism, comparative religion, and philosophy — that he could not believe the miraculous setting of the story. But now, once again, he knows so little that he believes the story just as St. Luke tells it.

from *The Grandeur and Misery of Man*
by David Roberts

URBANA COLLEGE con't.

of Oak Hall, and the generosity of J. Young Scammon are among highlights of the work.

A native of Holyoke, Massachusetts, Higgins is a graduate of St. Anslem's College and Niagara Falls University with a doctorate from Kent State University. He also served as Coordinator of the Bicentennial Commission for Western Massachusetts.

Paperback copies of the history may be ordered at a pre - publication price of \$3.00 (including postage) from the Development Office, Urbana College.

The price after publication will be \$3.95. Hardbound editions, costing \$10.00 each, will also be available.

BE A SWEDENBORGIAN NEW AGE PIONEER (SNAP)

- How?** Participate in a brand new project sponsored by the Board of Education, made possible by the use of 160 acres of wilderness land among the redwoods in the Santa Cruz Mountains in California, made available by Dr. Esther Perry.
- Why?** This is an opportunity for creative church work. Picking up on the interest in land use, ecology and homesteading in this New Age, you will be a part of the planning process for the potential this land holds for our church.
- Program:** The first step will be to clear the camp site of poison oak and to make possible an access road by cleaning undergrowth. Then we are prepared for an ongoing study of terrain and potential use.
- Leadership:** Co - Directors Rev. Eric Allison and Miss Ruth Martin will head the staff.
- Dates:** August 19, 1978 thru September 2, 1978.
- Cost:** We Pay You. Funds are available on a first come, first serve basis for round trip bus fare, tent and board, plus \$50 per week.

Further information can be had by contacting Nancy Perry, Executive Secretary of the Board of Education, Central Office, 48 Sargent St., Newton, Mass. 02158.

A Visit To The Spiritual World con't.

found that this man not only knew all that was in that book, but was its author as well. Did we want to meet him! What living Swedenborgian (or a dead one!) would not give almost anything for that privilege! We didn't recognize him at first. Would you know Swedenborg without a wig and looking many years younger than our usual pictures of him? But we knew, indeed, from almost his first word, that it was Emanuel Swedenborg "in the flesh," if I may dare to use that expression. He welcomed us warmly and graciously to our new home, assuring us that it was true that we had passed the conscious border between the two worlds. Helpfully and patiently he answered our eager questions, and talked at length about some of the experiences that lay ahead of us. None of us will ever forget his warm, simple, and yet profound, spirit!

After he had left us, we continued to talk about many of the things that he had reminded us of: how we were only on the threshold of the Spiritual World; how, in this "World of Spirits" in which we now found ourselves, we would gradually discover who we really are as a person and what is truly in our hearts and

minds; and how by the age - old proverb, "Birds of a feather flock together," we would be led to our permanent destiny and abode. It sounded easy enough as Swedenborg spoke to us, but none of us had thought to ask him just how one sets about discovering one's life - loves and interests and loyalties. Nevertheless we felt that we should begin to do this.

We had already noticed two interesting changes taking place in us. First, a greater ease in communicating. With a word or two now, we could say what formerly would have taken many sentences. Secondly, what before was private was now becoming public property (and this was sometimes embarrassing). The thought occurred to us that if we would be more open, if we shared with one another our yearnings and longings and strivings, we might see who we really are in the depths of our being. We tried doing this, and soon the very walls of the room were covered, as it were, with a material like newsprint with the revealings of our deeper selves. At least we had taken the first little step!

I wish I could tell you more about our experiences, but I am afraid that you will have
(con't next page)

THE 1977 ANNUAL APPEAL

In a statement familiar to us all the Lord says, "I am the vine, you are the branches." Envision, if you will, a giant tree — its great branches supporting one another. The branches farthest out seemingly risking all where there is little support.

This tree may be likened to the Church with all its branches being the variety of activities and programs that give it form and dimension and substance. Through these programs our lives touch one another and together we respond to the power that flows from the Lord.

It is time, once again, to give thought to the support of our national program.

Each member of Convention will receive a personal appeal letter in November - December with a response envelope enclosed. We would encourage you to read the appeal letter carefully and then select the particular activity of Convention you wish to support. A generous check to give substance to your chosen activity is earnestly solicited.

The goal again this year is \$25,000.00. If each Convention member gave ten dollars we could easily make our assigned goal. Twenty dollars per couple amounts to maybe one less meal in a restaurant; a really small price for support of our Swedenborgian heritage.

Please read your appeal letter carefully and remember, we are waiting for your response at the central office.

to find out for yourselves in your turn. We spent our days as though time did not so much as exist. We walked about the beautiful grounds, ate when we were hungry, and talked and fellowshiped and shared our deepest feelings and thoughts, and grew so close to one another. But one further experience I can and must tell you about, a Communion Worship far surpassing in beauty and power those that we know here on earth. The mood induced was one of thankfulness for the Resurrection and for Life Beyond Life. The Twenty - third Psalm became a Psalm of Communion: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me . . . Thou preparest a table before me . . . My cup runneth over . . . Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." We were present at the tomb of Lazarus where our Lord Jesus proclaimed himself Resurrection and Life, and when he asserted his mastery over death by commanding Lazarus to come forth alive from the grave. Easter and our Lord's own Resurrection became for us Communion as we witnessed death put to flight for all time and the Lord of Life sharing himself still more fully with his disciples in his

Risen and Living Presence. As one by one we came to the Holy Table to partake of the sacred elements, we bore witness to our resurrection and to the room prepared for us all in the heavenly mansions by affirming appropriate verses of Scripture. Our closing benediction (was this a presentiment?) was the Mizpah Prayer, which we all said together, "The Lord watch between thee and me, when we are absent one from another."

Shortly after this mountain - top experience we were brought rudely back to earth. We were informed gently but firmly that we could not remain in this world where we had begun to feel so much at home and which had grown so dear to us. We had been "resuscitated," restored to the life that we had formerly known. Back again we went through that death tunnel, but the noise we heard this time was that of our departing cars. There was left us only a fleeting glimpse of our Drayton Manor, and but a precious memory of our strange and wonderful experiences there. But this we have, which no one can take away from us: death has no fears for us now — we have already experienced it. With longing hearts we look forward one day to retracing our steps and to finding ourselves once again in our beautiful Drayton Manor.

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
(date) (time)
by _____ 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.

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*.

THE STARTING LINE con't.

Was this not the work to which our Lord was totally committed? He took upon Himself our human nature and with this He confronted the externalism, the sham, and the pretense of His day. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess."

The Message of this Holy Season must surely be given its finest expression in the love and peace which radiates from the light of His life which has transformed human experience and drawn it warmly to its Creator. This is our Christmas hope for you. And may all the world pause to listen to the heavenly chorus, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

OFFICE MANAGER for the SWEDENBORG FOUNDATION

Position soon available as supervisor and administrator of the office.

Challenging employment which requires knowledge of accounting and involves negotiations with printers and publishers.

A sympathetic attitude towards the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg is a prerequisite.

The position offers attractive working conditions, salary, and benefits. The applicant must be of mature age with office experience.

Those who are interested please send a resume which includes a biographical sketch with the background of experience to:

Mr. Forster B. Freeman
Swedenborg Foundation
139 East 23rd Street
New York, N.Y. 10010

HAVE FUN!

This is a Fun Page for the young and the not - so - young. I was tempted to call it a "George Page", because this is the sort of thing George Dole and George McCurdy enjoy doing in their spare (!) time. But don't just let George do it! Jump in and have fun.

CODE - O - GRAM. If you can crack this code, you will find a message. Clues: Z = B and C = E. (If you have are having trouble, look below for another clue. But see if you can solve it with just these two clues.)

— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —
U F Y R K G E F R W U M P I Q Y P C U P M S E F R Z W

— — — — — — — —
F G Q F Y L B Q!

MINUS ONE. Drop one letter for the word on the top line to form a new word on the second line. Keep dropping one letter until you have a one - letter word. You do not have to change the order of the letters.

away

began

heard

hands

house

— — — — —

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— — — — —

— — — — —

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WORDS IN SYNAGOGUE. Jesus read from the scrolls of Jewish Scriptures in the SYNAGOGUE. See how many 3 - letter words you can discover in "Synagogue". Remember: no proper names or abbreviations or plurals. We discovered 25 words. (q = S, F = H)

"SWEDENBORGIAN" ANAGRAMS. A clergyman, doodling at a dull conference, found he could rearrange the letters of "episcopal" to spell "Pepsi Cola". His neighbour, not to be outdone, switched "Presbyterian" to "best in prayer".

Any suggestions for "Swedenborgian"? In 35 seconds I came up with "grain 'n weed, sob", but I'm sure you can do better than that. Or, looking at our Church Records column this month, it might be said that no one has been "born / wed in ages". Send in your "Swedenborgian" anagrams and we'll print them in the *Messenger*.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FAMILY DOINGS AT CHRISTMAS TIME

Welcome the new year with shouts of joy and praise. On New Year's Day, take time, as a family, to reflect on the past year . . . and to share dreams and hopes for the coming year.

Make candles.

Get wicks, colors, and scents, and spend an evening making candles to give to your friends and neighbours.

Guess the smells of Christmas

Blindfold other members of the family and see if they can name the spices, scents, and incenses of the season.

Borrow Christmas recipes.

Make other people's traditional foods and try to catch their Christmas flavor.

Bring your special treat to them.

See a performance or listen to a recording of *The Nutcracker Suite* or Handel's *Messiah*.

A Word Puzzle For All Ages

How to play: First read the list of words then look at the puzzle. The words are in all directions — vertically, horizontally, diagonally. Circle each word as you find it, and strike it off the list. The letters are often used more than once.

G	L	A	D	H	L	T	H	U	D
S	A	N	D	S	A	A	H	E	R
B	A	N	G	E	L	N	D	E	U
B	O	A	R	C	A	N	D	Y	M
B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M	L
R	A	D	M	A	N	T	E	L	S
I	U	I	E	U	M	M	A	L	O
C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	N
K	U	T	A	A	S	E	E	S	G
S	L	Y	F	L	S	E	D	R	S

CHILDREN

December 25

Santa _____

Jesus was born in _____

Christmas sweets

end of arm

reindeer land on roof with a

_____ like a fox

sheep sound

happy

ADULT

Christmas stamps

for Christmas stockings

Christmas goodies

saw and _____

fireplaces were made with _____

fife 'n _____

carols

one who fixes radiators

R. C. service

stout

spiritual being

certain

orchestra

SUPER HARD

softly

that's all

_____ of Spain

rustic

existere

_____ of time

_____ K. (novel)

with apple in mouth

meaning of Paul

If you find all the words, send your completed form to the editor and receive a New Church book for a prize.

"A NEW CHURCH FOR A NEW AGE"

History of the Edmonton New Church Society

Our Society in Edmonton is comparatively young. A series of providential coincidences in 1940 brought together the nucleus around which the Society was formed.

John W. Peters (now residing in Urbana) was living here at that time, as were Maj. F. H. Norbury and John Jeffery, all unknown to one another. Major Norbury had made a habit of putting New Church literature in the Public Library regularly in the hope of contacting other people of our faith. John Jeffery had come across some of these books and was so interested that he wrote to the publishers in the U.S.A. His letter was forwarded to Rev. Leslie Marshall of the Board of Missions who in turn contacted Rev. Peters of Rosthern, Saskatchewan, the nearest missionary minister to Edmonton and a visit was arranged. In the meantime Mr. John Peters had not been idle. Through newspaper ads and a list of interested people given him by Rev. P. Peters through Rev. Marshall he had gathered together a group of 15 people all unknown to one another who met in the home of Maj. Norbury. At this time they arranged for future meetings and for financial support if a minister could be found for them. At this time Rev. P. Peters and Mr. Jeffery also went on a tour to visit other New Church people in northern and southern Alberta.

Rev. P. Peters wrote Rev. Leonard Tafel, then President of Convention, that the Alberta area seemed very promising and it was decided that he should move there and serve that area. He moved his family in August, 1940 to Edmonton, and it became the home base for his missionary work which included all of Alberta and parts of Saskatchewan and Manitoba. An interesting little story can be told here. When Rev. Peters and family pulled up to his brother John's home on their first day in Edmonton, they were met by a very excited John. He had just delivered his wife Nancy of their second son. The baby had arrived too quickly for a doctor or ambulance. A very auspicious beginning for the new Society!

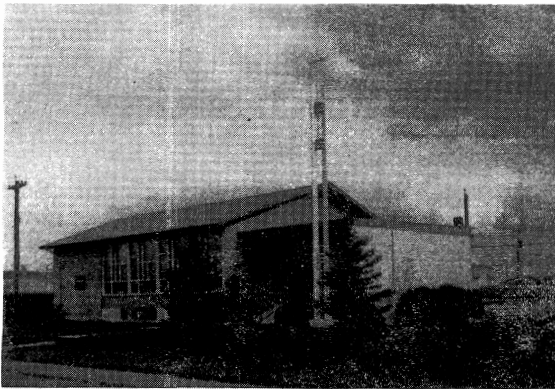
As a beginning our group had to be content with one service per month as Rev. Peters had

other groups to serve as well as this one. We met for services in the Norbury home and held weekly study meetings at the homes of various members. We averaged 25 at services and 10 at study meetings, a few interested outsiders having joined us. While he was in Edmonton, Mr. John Peters, at his own expense, placed Swedenborgian quotes and ads in the local newspaper regularly, and this brought in some of our early members. We missed him greatly when he left for new duties in England. A Sunday School was started in 1948 with three students and has flourished ever since.

From the start Mr. Jeffery, an enthusiastic man, had urged a building fund to provide us with a meeting place, himself starting it with a gift of war bonds, to which contributions of the study circle were added. We had grown to the extent that we were really too large a group for a private home, now meeting at the home of Rev. Peters. Then a favourable site in a new suburb became available — our building fund proved sufficient to acquire the land.

Unfortunately the many journeys on missionary trips to other parts of Western Canada, especially in winter, had serious ill effects on Rev. Peters' health, and he was given a more beneficial climate in which to work, in Gulfport, Miss. To carry on the work here the Board of Missions appointed Mr. Erwin Reddekopp as a leader. He had been a member of Mr. Peters' Sunnyslope, Alberta, congregation and had been coached by him. In spite of his failing health, Rev. Peters would not leave until Mr. Reddekopp arrived to take over as he felt so strongly that Edmonton had a great potential and should not be left un-shepherded.

Rev. E. Reddekopp was ordained and given the sole duty of ministering to the Edmonton Society. The Board of Missions of General Convention undertook to finance a building and the activity of Minister, President and construction experts resulted in the present edifice. The community rallied round the effort, and we now had 50 members and a Sunday School of 135, Scout and Girl Guide troops and other activities under the able direction of President Vincent Almond.



Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, Alberta

Rev. E. Reddekopp was with us for 11 years, and this was a building period. The edifice went up and a lake property was donated to us by Paul Tremblay. Paulhaven was established as a permanent home for our Children's Summer Camp. This too has grown through the years, and every summer now hosts about 60 children from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

When Rev. E. Reddekopp left for the Detroit pastorate, John Jeffery filled in as a lay leader until the arrival of Rev. Henry Reddekopp who was with us for about two years. He then went back to Saskatoon to minister to the many groups in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Once again John Jeffery stepped in and took over the duties of lay leader until the arrival of Rev. Harvey Tafel in August, 1967. He was with us for 5 years and during this period many of the young people who had gone through our Sunday School were married and started homes and families of their own, and our "young marrieds" were quite active. The study group was re-activated and thrived.

When Rev. H. Tafel left us in 1972 to take up his new duties at the Wayfarers Chapel, Rev. John Jeffery, by now an ordained Lay Minister, again assumed pastoral leadership. Since he was no longer in good health, it was decided to form a Lay Council to share the duties of a minister as it became increasingly evident that we could no longer expect to get a full-time minister.

We started with a Lay Council of three men: Rev. Jeffery, Vince Almond and Paul Tremblay. Vince's death in 1974 was a sad blow to our Society. To fill the void left by his loss Mr. Hank Korsten and Mr. John Bennett joined the Lay Council. Because these later

members, lacked ministerial experience they felt the need of training, and Mrs. Gertrude Tremblay set up a prospective training course, submitting it to the S.S.R. with an appeal for help in instructing our men. They co-operated with us in a most helpful manner and the Ministerial Training Program was under way. Paul Tremblay has since become a Lay Minister and Mr. H. Korsten has also joined the ranks of Lay Ministers.

Over the years we have lost many of our members through deaths, drop-outs and our "mobile society". Many have transferred to other cities and countries. We have only 3 members left of the original group, Mr. John Jeffery, Mrs. P. Peters and Mrs. Jean Gilchrist. To look on the bright side we also have acquired new members, and our membership stays steady at about 50 with a Sunday School of 25 children.

"This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

Compiled by Jean Gilchrist.

FROM CHURCH RECORDS

BAPTISMS

FARNHAM — Katherine Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. David Farnham of West Bridgewater, Mass., born May 17, 1977, was baptized at Pearl St. Methodist Church on October 16, 1977, the Rev. Roberta Halliwell officiating.

SURVEE — William Paul Richard Survee was baptized in City Hospital, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan on Oct. 28, 1977, the Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiating.

DEATHS

BROWN — Mrs. Alice H. Brown, 90, mother of Dorothy Farnham, Gordon H. Brown, and Alice B. Kendall, and a life long member of the Brockton Society died on May 14, 1977. Funeral services were conducted on May 17, the Rev. Dr. George Dole of the Swedenborg School of Religion officiating.

HATCH — Frank A. Hatch of Fryeburg, Maine, died October 13, 1977. Mr. David L. Rienstra officiated at the resurrection service.

STEVENS — Harold Arthur Stevens, 75, of Hamilton, a friend of the New Church, died on October 2, 1977. The resurrection service was held on October 5, 1977, the Rev. Paul Zacharias of Kitchener officiating.

The Upper Room

THE PREPARED PLACE

Leon LeVan

In the 12th chapter of *Revelation*, we read that the sunclothed "woman" who images the New Church fled from the "dragon" into the wilderness to be nourished in a "place prepared of God."

A "place" in Scripture means a spiritual condition or state of life. That state may be the state of an individual, spirit, angel, or of the church. If we focus on the church, the chapter tells essentially that the Lord's New Church would be nourished in the world's wilderness in a spiritual state until such time as she could emerge to be the Lord's Bride and Wife.

Let us look at the church in its "prepared place." How is it nourished? How is it protected? How is it being prepared?

First we remember that man's ways are not God's ways. Neither are man's thoughts God's thoughts. We should expect our pre-conceived ideas for the church's well-being to be inverted in our minds by an all-seeing and all-knowing Providence. Under Providence the church has received blessings and mercies far different than we understood or desired.

We desired peace; the Lord gave us bitterness. We wished for many; the Lord gave us few. We sought power and influence in the world; the Lord gave us weakness. We struggled for unity; the Lord gave us divisions. We sought conjugal purity on earth; the Lord permitted scandals. We tried to retain our children and youth; they leave us daily.

The conflicts, criticisms, and indignations — the sorrows, sufferings and failures that sadden our minds and crush our hearts are God-given mercies for the church's good. In them the church is tempted. By them the church is tried to bittermost depths. Through them are angels made.

It is no secret in the New Church that spiritual temptations are necessities for the soul. Without spiritual temptations, regeneration would be impossible. We must learn to sustain anguish. We must bear "daily crosses."

We must endure failures, losses, heart-breaks. We must learn to "lay down our lives." We must be "tried as by fire."

Isaiah describes temptation as the "Lord's fire in Zion and His furnace in Jerusalem." Jehovah declares: "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." The seven-times heated "furnace" into which the three faithful Israelites were cast means a state of spiritual temptations.

That which in the *Old Testament* is designated by a "furnace" is (in the *Book of Revelation*) called the "place prepared of God."

Temptations go by many names. The "Egyptian bondage" is temptation. "Forty years in the wilderness" means temptations. Jesus' "forty days in the wilderness" symbolize the Lord's temptation combats. The "valley of the shadow of death" means a state of spiritual temptations.

Jesus did not escape temptations. He endured temptations a thousand fold more terrible than any we shall ever be called on to bear. He was "despised and rejected of men." The church scorned Him. The priests denounced Him. The Romans ridiculed Him. He was mocked, buffeted, spit on, crowned with thorns, crucified. This was His glory. This His victory. This His crown of worthiness to raise a New Church to Himself.

The "place prepared of God" means the state of the New Church temptations — just such temptations as the church has had to bear during all the successive generations of its sacrifices, sufferings, and bitterness since the first beginnings of its history.

Why?

To what end?

That there may be goodness in the church. That there may be truth. That there may be forgiveness among us. That there may be mercy.

As the High Priest carried the twelve tribes of Israel "on his heart", so the Lord has carried us. Our temptations have been the Lord's Mercy.

"Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God . . . led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought; where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; who fed thee in the wilderness with manna . . . that He might humble thee, and that He might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end." (Deut. 8).

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