

# The Messenger

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH

March 1978

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## Easter Lilies

As I sat thinking of the first Easter Morn  
Suddenly the message began to dawn.  
Easter Lilies a lesson, left for us on the earth,  
Like the Lily, we'll have another birth.  
Our Easter Morn is not far away,  
So let us prepare for that glad day,  
And catch all the dew drops, the kind thoughts from  
above,  
In our own little cups, that we call love.  
And liberally sprinkle them as we go on our way,  
So the world may be filled with kindness each day.

And then as we raise our eyes to the sky  
For the Gardener's blessing, as he passes by  
Dropping the dew drops on fertile soil,  
Filling the lamps with Heavenly oil,  
So that we all may know and understand  
We shall live again in a fairer land,  
Among Easter Lilies for evermore,  
As Jesus says, "Come, I am the door."

Edith M. Cass  
Kitchener, Ont.



## EDITORIAL COMMENTS

The 1978 Swedenborgian Convention Registration Form is found on page 69 of this *Messenger*, and this same Form will be carried in every issue through May. You will note that a \$15.00 Registration Fee is required of all Convention goers over the age of 18. This Fee goes toward the cost of the Saturday night banquet; evening receptions; rental of a public address system; hiring buses for local transportation; etc. If Registrations are postmarked later than June 1, 1978, the fee jumps to \$25.00. The reason for this is simple—we are trying to encourage early registrations. We are bringing Convention visitors from Toronto airport, 65 miles away; we must know in advance how many local buses to hire; the housing situation requires early information (will we need two or three College dormitories?). The local Planning Committee would really appreciate having all Convention Registrations in by the end of May.

\* \* \*

Several readers have objected to the National Council of Churches statement in the January *Messenger*, though for quite different reasons. We don't always agree with all of the actions taken by the N.C.C. (though this editor feels the N.C.C. is "on target" about 90% of the time), but that really isn't the point. We are a member body of the National Council of Churches, and as such we need to be informed of its actions and policies. If we disagree with its positions, then we should raise our voice, speaking clearly and specifically to the issue(s) at hand. The voices of those who support the work of the N.C.C. also need to be heard. We feel the National Council of Churches is making a significant contribution in furthering the Christian movement in the world today; it has strengthened the cause of justice, racial equality and peace in America and abroad — and so long as we are editor of the *Messenger*, N.C.C. news and views will be carried in these pages.

\* \* \*

By the time you receive this *Messenger* Easter will be rapidly approaching. During Lent we reflect on the Lord's sacrifice on the cross . . . and we ponder over the events of Holy Week . . . and we wonder what we would have done had we been there. Awe - ful thoughts and feelings

arise from the depths of our being as we contemplate the glory of the Lord's life, His death, and the incredible wonder of the Resurrection. Let us be aware of the Risen, Glorified Lord ever before us, beckoning us forward. He is always there, if we have eyes that see.

P.Z.

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## THE MESSENGER

March 1978

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Paul B. Zacharias, Editor

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# The Starting Line ————— by Eric Zacharias

One of the more frequently voiced criticisms of Convention is that we appear to have no goals. The suggestion has been heard that we initiate a five year plan — that we, as a Church, marshal our energies and our resources to accomplish or realize some well - defined goal in this one united effort. We sense within us the need to move forward, to give visibility to the Church of a New Age, and through this experience be drawn more closely together in a sharing, supportive oneness.

This longing for a goal or goals surfaced once again during the recent Ministers' and Wives Institute held at Swedenborg House at DeLand, Florida. One suggestion was that we select a theme each year — and that a program of activity and study be provided for all of our congregations, groups, and the isolated. This would enable us, as a Church, to focus our thinking, our prayers, and our concern upon a number of specific areas. Is there not merit in this?

A number of possibilities come quickly to mind. The year 1979, for example, has already been chosen by the National Council of Churches as "The International Year of the Child." We could adopt this for ourselves. Great strides have been made in recent years toward a better understanding of growth and developmental processes. In the *Arcana* we find a powerful and beautiful drama of human growth patterns. I envision a symposium in the *Messenger* given to this vital area of need. Surely, there are ways by which we can become involved and committed to serving the critical needs of the child who is friendless or hungry or abused. Programs, study materials, etc., could be provided and Convention mini - courses offered to help all of us, the young and the not so young, grow in awareness and sensitivity of those precious forces at work within every person.

Even now, as I write, future possibilities come into view. Could we not work toward the selection of a theme that would help to draw all Swedenborgian organizations throughout the world more closely together? We might name this, "The Year of the Grand Man." Too grandiose? I doubt it.

It is good that we see this need for goals. Could it also be that in expressing this need before the Lord, He would point us to the rich

man who, from heaven, asked that someone be sent back to earth to inform his brothers of their fate if they failed in their repentance? "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." (Luke 20: 29)

We, too, have the Word and we have available to us truth drawn from it. We have been spoken to in a purposeful and encouraging manner. The Psalmist wrote, "Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing." Surely, we can accept this as a goal of first priority. The Lord has also set a goal for himself. "... for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." The teachings of the Church expand this thought. "The Church on earth was instituted in order that there might be a communication of the world, that is, of mankind with heaven, that is, through heaven with the Lord, for without a Church there would be no communication, and mankind would perish." A.C. 10500

Here, and in many other passages from the Word and the writings, we are given a framework within which we must set our goals and priorities. Think about this.

I request that *Messenger* readers who feel so motivated write to me or to the Editor of the *Messenger* expressing their thoughts on the subject: "Goals for our Church."

Mrs. Zacharias and I wish for all of our readers the blessings of this Easter Season. May we all be drawn on Easter Morn to the sepulchre of His resurrection within us.

The Rev. Christopher Hasler of the British New Church Conference, has prepared a series of thirty lessons titled, *Heaven and Hell* that will be found useful by groups and individuals. The study material is available at a cost of 20p for each booklet.

Order from:

North of England New - Church House,  
34 John Dalton Street,  
Manchester, M2 6LE,  
England.

# HOW DOES REVELATION WORK?

by Steve Koke  
Rough and Ready, Cal.

When Swedenborg wrote that he had been instructed by the Lord, he made one of the most portentous statements one can find in his theological writings. Whatever else this announcement does, it shakes up the reader's expectations, and all his previous feelings about revelation and how to respond to it come falling out of the closet. One way or another those feelings color one's approach to Swedenborg thereafter, and they therefore make it necessary to ask about Swedenborg's intentions. What, really, did he want us to do with an assertion like that? The answer doesn't seem to come right away.

To illustrate, we have behind us, in the form of centuries of Christian tradition, the concept that whatever God says must be dutifully believed, for it can only be absolutely true and absolutely binding. Yet there is the very obvious fact that it is silly to believe an idea because its author said that he received it from God (even if the author is otherwise respectable); and Swedenborg himself insisted that faith can be developed only through struggle, questioning and experience.

So, let's say, we have to evaluate his ideas first. But here we come across another problem. There seems to be just too much in Swedenborg's system to confront and weigh. How many of us are realistically in a position to do it? Furthermore, the first claim that his work is a new revelation occurs in the beginning of the *Arcana*, the earliest of his theological works. Others occur in the first pages of other works. It looks very much as if he wanted to decisively influence our opinion of his ideas from the very beginning, before we had a chance to look at them. And if the attempt worked, it would tend to cut off the rational process and encourage the reader's preconceptions to take over. It would seem to be more reasonable to put such a claim at the end of his books where it would be less prejudicial and could be better evaluated.

These questions come up if Swedenborg's revelatory claims are understood very naturally as straightforward assertions of fact only. Then they have to be evaluated on whatever evidence there is for them, just as one would try to evaluate a claim to a piece of property. But

although Swedenborg certainly believed his own claims, it is difficult to break out of this circle of questions unless he had something else in mind as well.

Here I want to offer a personal theory. Swedenborg's claim to be a revelator has at least two other functions:

First, it is his way of disclaiming credit for what he wrote, rather than only an attempt to claim for it a high status. What he believed to be a divine effort to communicate religious reality would otherwise have been credited entirely to him. This thought could have contaminated his ego in his subsequent writing. A public declaration at the very beginning may therefore have been forced.

The second function is more subtle and has more to do with the way revelation works. To start with, imagine a man listening in an intimate conversation to someone he loves; he is listening with great concentration to what the other has to say. He is not predisposed to believe everything he hears, but he is open to all of its ramifications and possible meanings at a deep level. Now imagine a conversation in which someone who is only an acquaintance is listening to the same words. The level of reception is shallower, less attentive and meaningful, though probably still sympathetic.

Swedenborg believed that words alone were not able to carry the whole burden of communication. The power of religious ideas is heavily dependent on the depths to which one allows them to descend in his soul. And those depths are in turn opened up by evoking the divine. One has to be willing to experience this evocation; an open mind, a hunger for personal growth, and a willingness to approach a God for Whom one has some love, are necessary.

Swedenborg evokes these depths by announcing that the material that follows is from the Lord. The deepening effect he wants is very similar to the effect that the opening invocation at a worship service is supposed to have. Jesus' words, "Truly, I say to you," or, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear," try to establish the same seriousness of mood before any teachings are given.



Without an evocation of the depths we remain only intellectual acquaintances of Swedenborg, like the acquaintance in the example. The material he presents is heard and maybe even accepted, but it remains a philosophy which becomes just another intellectual possession. The problem for us is that it is very hard to turn off our habit of remaining in our heads and processing everything from there. The head cannot turn itself down very well. Consequently, the desire to meditate deeply on spiritual truth and bring one's journey into a temple needs to be aroused directly and given a chance to take over.

But to enter this deeper state is not to be pre-disposed to believe everything Swedenborg says. When one enters a temple with reverence, he isn't committed to think that the priest is doing a good job. In fact, one's openness to deep movements and illumination makes him more aware of moments when nothing is happening. If one does enter with a feeling of being duty-bound or pressured to believe, the depths are cut off. He can then go on without experiencing anything. Oddly enough, to enter the temple with too much commitment is possible, and it gets one thrown out.

Swedenborg therefore wrote not so much for the philosopher or the scholar as for the spiritual seeker. The seeker is already somewhat religious and is concerned about himself. He wants to discover more. Consequently, he is willing to cooperate with an invocation for the sake of what may come of it.

An implication of all this is that Swedenborg may have organized his ideas and logic to fit a particular inner process. The seeker is taken through a series of attempts to evoke the depths. What often appears to be theological argument aimed at the reasoning mind seems to me in at least some places to be less straight-forward logic or case-building than an attempt to poke and probe at our mental resistances so that repressed knowledge and new experiences can break through under their own power. Or he will stir buried intuitions, potent images and the childlike perception and commonsense that he felt was the key to wisdom.

For example, the words, "It is evident that . . ." and, "Anyone can find evidences in favor of the divine whenever . . ." seem to tell us that here is a full-fledged argument that a logician should be able to appreciate. But if we look for one we often find what looks like an argument with some missing premises, or some obvious counterargument is left unconsidered.

The intent of these expressions is not to introduce a logical proof, nor to compete with other philosophies on a purely intellectual basis. As a Philosophy student, I became very aware of how easily the intellect lends itself to an unending game of intellectual chess in which neither side can quite be checkmated. It is always possible to make a reply, and logical proofs may be possible only in mathematics. Consequently, logic is most useful elsewhere in making connections between ideas and in painting larger and larger conceptual pictures so that perception or experience can finally connect them decisively with reality. Swedenborg uses argument in this way to *evoke* an already innate sense of reality, a way of looking at the world, a natural shift in the quality of consciousness. His concept of evidence is apparently the evidence of a deeper sense which we rarely use or typically overlay with too much intellectual sophistication.

Deep within, in the inner temple, we often already know what we are being told. In its most basic forms, revelation often turns out to be less a message about previously unknown things than a revelation of how much we really have known all along. I remember being impressed in my first studies of Swedenborg's teachings by how strangely familiar they seemed. Their familiarity was much like one's sense of the utter familiarity of a scene in a dream; yet one is dreaming it for the first time.

This throws much light on a classic problem that all revelatory theologies face: To fully evaluate a revelation, one must either share in the revelatory experience (and be one's own Swedenborg) or accept the testimony of the revelator on indirect evidence only. In the absence of first-hand experience, especially if it is experience of another world, only indirect evidence would be available. Indirect evidence consists of external circumstances which support a revelator's claims (for example, Swedenborg's general honesty and sincerity, the consistency of his thinking, etc.). But it can verify his experiences only by making them look more *likely* to be true from outside; it can't resolve issues that come up inside the revelator's experiences (Swedenborg may still have systematically misinterpreted his experiences, and/or they may have come from sources a bit lower than the divine, etc.). Consequently, indirect evidence can never be quite strong enough to justify a full commitment, the essence of real faith. And of course sharing the revelator's experiences seems out of the question.

But in Swedenborg's approach to the reader there is an ingenious solution: We can have a slightly different experience which has logically the same content if we can get into our depths and use his teachings as a guide. And what we often find there is what the depths have always known but have not released to the conscious mind. Swedenborg knew that to be told certain kinds of things, after the right preparation, is to remember.

Swedenborg's revelation also works in another way. It makes us see things and patterns that have always been part of our spiritual surroundings, and hence our states of mind, but which are systematically left unnoticed.

A type of puzzle that often appears on the puzzle page of the Sunday paper illustrates this process very well. One example goes like this: A somewhat diagrammatic drawing shows a farm scene in winter with a barn, a house, and a large tree in the yard. One is asked to find the hat in the picture. But a search of all the items in the picture fails to turn up a hat. In frustration one may then go to the answer page and find out that the hat is in the tree. But the tree has been checked already. Nevertheless, a hat, clearly outlined by some of the bare branches of the tree, suddenly bursts into consciousness as if one were seeing with new eyes. Thereafter, it is virtually impossible to look at the tree without seeing the hat.

This minor transformation of consciousness is very similar to what Swedenborg often accomplishes by taking his readers through a process of interior noticing. In the example, the

picture is like our perception of reality. The request to find the hat is like the religious man's desire to find the divine. The frustrating search through all the items of the picture represents the fact that our experience of reality is so thoroughly defined by the categories of ordinary consciousness that the presence of the divine becomes a mystery. We always have it before our eyes, but our ability to notice it is systematically blocked. The answer page is the teachings of revelation — which do not describe a remote reality but redirect our consciousness of the reality we have. They must be *put to work* to produce a personal revelatory experience, a different kind of seeing.

Without confronting the depths (the inner request to find the hidden divine in experience) one may go right to the answer page first, think he is learning the final truth, stay there — and miss the point altogether. Swedenborg tells us what to look for, and in the process he must describe it. But he doesn't provide it himself. The truth is the experience, not the description.

Swedenborg may put his readers through other processes as well. But the point in all of this is that his main purposes were not intellectual but demonstrative; and they begin by introducing the reader to his religious depths where a guided and reverent search for the divine and for self - understanding can take place. What Swedenborg meant by rationality in religion then becomes an interesting point. It is more than logic or the force of beautifully structured explanations. It must lead to the articulation of experience, and that must mean our experience.

## MITE BOX 1978 NEWS

**Margaret Sampson**  
New York, N.Y.



This year's Mite Box has been allocated to the use of the Rev. Joseph Agbadje when he returns to his native Nigeria. He was born in Owo in 1928 and had an enjoyable boyhood with many friends. He was the smallest and

youngest attending the Primary School and couldn't keep up with the others in their outdoor activities. His friends laughed at him — but not in class! He never gave them a chance. He always rated either first, second or third at the top of his class. He entered into other activities as well and played the flute in the school band.

His nine years of schooling there compare with our elementary schools and are divided into "Section One," the "Infant," for three years, and "Section Two," or "Senior Pry," with classes known as "Standards, One to Six." Their Secondary Schools compare with our High Schools and cover five years. Joseph did not continue with these classes but took the equivalent in evening courses and also became a probationary teacher under the Teacher Training Center. His years of service in this

capacity have been unbroken up to the present except for the years in which he took college courses.

During his early years his mother was a very important influence in his life. He first heard of Emanuel Swedenborg from her when she left the Anglican Church and became one of the original founders of the New Church in Owo in 1936. He was at first undecided as to which church he would accept, but he learned as much doctrine as he could and was ahead of his classmates in his knowledge of religion, both Christian and Muslim. At one point he worked for two years outside New Church influences and came into contact with other religions. He soon observed the differences between their doctrines and ours and became convinced that the New Church was the one for him.

Returning to Owo for a holiday he found that the New Church there was in need of a teacher. The minister in Owo, the Rev. Mogundipe, approached him and asked him to take the job. At first he hesitated but his mother persuaded him and he became first Headmaster of the newly opened New Church Primary School.

Some time later he came to the attention of the British New Church ministers who recognized his extraordinary abilities and recommended him for further training in the ministry. In 1959 he enrolled in the New Church College in England, and took evening courses as well in the West Essex Technical College. He also attended London University for a ten month period. Altogether he was studying in England for three years, then returned to Owo and was active in the New Church as an ordained minister. He finished his training at St. John and Mary's Teacher Training Center and was named a qualified teacher.

Always intent on continuing his education, he became most eager to attend Urbana and receive a degree in the United States. His friends in Owo offered to take care of his wife and family while he was away, and his travel and living expenses and his tuition at Urbana have been provided from various sources. Last June he graduated from Urbana with a B.A. degree. Means have been found for him to attend Wright State University in Ohio where he is now studying for his Master's.

All this will be a great help to him when he returns home and in a subsequent article we hope to hear about the New Church in Nigeria, its history, growth and activities, and what the Rev. Joseph Agbadje's plans are for his ministry there.

Send your contributions to Doris Tafel, treasurer of the Alliance of New Church Women. Her address is: Mrs. Robert W. Tafel, 115 Treaty Road, Drexel Hill, Pa. 19026.



## SWEDENBORGIAN NEW AGE PIONEERS

**S.N.A.P.  
1978**

At this point S.N.A.P. is open to those of all ages. However, if there are twenty or more applicants from one age group then we may limit participation to people of that particular age group to create the greatest continuity for the participants of this experiential type of program.

There are two basic areas of focus in the S.N.A.P. program, the natural and the spiritual.

The natural consists of the actual physical work of clearing the land of poison oak, examining the land for potential future uses, and the daily work associated with camping in the woods.

The spiritual aspect of the program consists of numerous experiences that are designed to facilitate the spiritual growth of individuals and the group. Some of the major areas of exploration are prayer, meditation, spiritual healing, experimental worship, correspondences, life in the New Age, and numerous other experiences. So, if you have a pioneering spirit for life in the woods and new spiritual adventures join us on our journey toward the New Age.

Please send all inquiries to Nancy Perry, Convention Office, 48 Sargent St., Newton, Mass. 02158.

Eric Allison

## A NEW CHURCH FOR A NEW AGE

Gordon Jacobs Birmingham, England

*Ed Boyd New Westminster, B.C.*

Open 24 hours a day, your New Age Church is well and favourably launched!

Your electronic missionaries have come to my door, gained entrance, and are happily harboured permanently within. I refer, of course, to the wonderful cassettes you have made available at nominal cost. I am indebted to you for this service because, although I rarely attend church, I am sympathetic to your cause.

I have faith that your New Age Church will add other forwardlooking activities to its ministry, such as studying other teachings, and incorporating their truths. A Spirit of Oneness is already dominant in many contemporary, Truth - oriented organizations; love, "the universal panacea," will be the catalyst of unification.

Despair not O Brave New Church! Empty pulpits and empty pews will be filled! There is more earnest seeking than ever before — outside the church — and as you reach out with new ideas, innovations, indeed, a new consciousness, we will return!

Actually, we've been with you, in spirit, all the time. But got weary of hearing too much about "sin" and "sinner". (Those who wish to be unburdened, free of any guilt complex, have found freedom in other teachings. One of these has Christ, too, and has millions of adherents! If you would grow and prosper, study these inspired, dedicated teachings; learn from them, benefit from their *positive* approach!)

You already have the right approach in the cassettes I mentioned. I truly cherish mine: sermons "*Make up your mind*" and "*Eternity Now*," by Rev. Richard H. Tafel Sr.; a further dimension of joy is added by the Philadelphia Choir. The other cassette features Rev. George Dole and his sermons: "*Use the Word*" and "*Heaven*." The Lord's Prayer is included on the first "Word" cassette; it's always at - ready and I listen to it often with a heart full of gratitude.

The New Church will not be concerned with condemnation. It will not stress, over and over again, that we have "fallen short of the glory of God." It will reveal God's Glory in us and all about us, closer than breathing and nearer than hands or feet. The idea that we are separated from God is a misconception of the first magnitude! The New Age Church must grasp and uphold this paramount fact! A "future tense" consciousness must be replaced by an "Eternal Now" consciousness! I wish you well. The Eternal Christ will not permit you to fail.

Two centuries ago, Emanuel Swedenborg announced to the world that a glorious revitalised Christianity was in the process of coming into being. His message incorporated new teaching which enabled people to see and experience much more deeply Divine Love and Divine Wisdom in the Bible message. He looked forward to the day when Christians everywhere, although varying in their beliefs and ritual, would look primarily to the one Lord and the inspiration of the Bible and so would unite.

Since his day, human thought has moved more and more towards Swedenborg's vision and we are currently seeing the blossoming of the Church Unity he foresaw.

In his writings, there is so much that can bring enlightenment to Christians everywhere, and the New Church is founded specifically on his teachings and exists to bring these to all who seek such a message. Central to its faith is that God was manifested in the flesh in our Lord Jesus Christ. As the Father, He is the creator and preserver of all things, as the Son He redeems and saves mankind, and as the Holy Spirit He operates in us all with Divine Power.

The New Church presents remarkable new ideas regarding the Bible. It is shown that as outward nature is the embodiment of Divine ideas, and man was created in the image and likeness of God, so there is a correspondence of all things in man's spiritual nature with all things of the physical universe. When applied to Scripture, this reveals a wonderful inner teaching otherwise unsuspected. A coherent continuous spiritual sense running through the Bible is demonstrated, capable of elevating the mind to great spiritual heights.

This teaching was developed and elaborated by Swedenborg from his consciousness of the spiritual world, to which he had unusual access as a result of the opening of his inner faculties to an extraordinary degree. These experiences enabled him to write in great detail of the spiritual world to which we pass after leaving the natural world. As well as helping the bereaved, such knowledge greatly aids our development in the present world if we apply it to our lives, fitting us better for life eternal in the world to come.

The age in which we live is greatly in need of a comprehensive rational faith which can measure up to present - day materialism. Many find such a faith in New Church Christianity, all based firmly on the plain teachings of the Bible and covering every aspect of the Lord's relationship with man and of human behaviour.

# INSTITUTE FOR MINISTERS AND SPOUSES

January 1978

**Perry Martin**  
Palos Verdes, Cal.



Swedenborg House, DeLand, Florida

In DeLand, Florida, a dirt road runs between the orange groves, past Swedenborg House, past Lake Louise, and with a jog, eventually into open land and woods. That road was walked by ministers and their mates, in little groups of twos and threes and fours, seeking amid the balmy southern air and the sweet smell of oranges, to stretch our bodies as well as our minds. Communion with God, the world, and each other happened on that road and in the rooms where we met — all together or in smaller groups.

We came to Swedenborg House from many places, North, East and West. We brought with us our feelings of failure and success, optimism and fears, loneliness, frustration, and the stirring of desire for new directions and deeper fulfillment. We brought questions and misunderstandings, and the anticipation of real sharing with those we have known long and well.

A group of such variety does not flow easily or quickly into finding its course. We needed first to wrestle with our questions and lack of understanding. With every struggle came new light and deeper trust in each other and in the process of opening ourselves to the presence of the Lord.

Some felt a need to face the question of where we are as a church and where we are going. Some wanted to know more about what is happening at the Swedenborg School of Religion. Some wanted to share their successes and encourage others to make new efforts to reach out of our church walls. Some needed to work through the problems of changing mores, standards, and values as we move into the new age. Some were seeking support of colleagues and friends in their search for a life of greater usefulness and fulfillment.

We worked. We took risks. We played games, getting in touch with the child within.

One day we spent in excursions to St. Augustine, Disney World or discovery of Floridian nature at a state park. We ate abundantly of delicious food graciously prepared and served by our hosts and hostesses at Swedenborg House. Hazel and Ernest Frederick labored unstintingly to make our stay pleasant. We laughed a great deal and cried some. We had time to decide how we wanted to spend our days together.

Our program was unstructured except as we structured it for ourselves. A steering committee was available to respond to the needs of the group. We had the freedom to take responsibility for our own needs and wants. We formed task groups and we shared our concerns. In an atmosphere of growing trust we dared to encounter our differences. We learned to trust the process of airing our discouragement and working through the darkness into light and hope.

As the days passed, we met each other face to face, trusting one another with our vulnerability and differentness. When our small group discovered a member had a problem with another person, that other person was asked to come into the group. With the support of the group the two found new understanding.

Our final Communion service celebrated our coming together in love for each other and for God. We were nourished by His Word and the Divine Love and Wisdom that are always available to us in abundance.

Thus in our days together we became a church. We experienced the regenerating power of a loving society. As we separated we knew a little more about the way toward the new age of which we as a church wish to speak.



Our genial hosts: Skuli Thorhallsson, Hazel and Ernest Frederick, Ester Skoogfors, Herb and Marty Young.



## **BE A SWEDENBORGLIAN 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.

## **SLIDE AND CASSETTE SHOWS AVAILABLE**

### ***THE CITY OF JERUSALEM***

drawings by Louise Woofenden, narrated by Bill Woofenden — sponsored by the Sunday School Assoc.

### ***THE FOUR SUMMER CHURCH CAMPS***

arranged and narrated by Louise Woofenden — sponsored by the Board of Education.

These interesting and informative shows are suitable for use by a society, Association, retreat, or for viewing in your own home. They may be had upon request for \$5.00 to cover the cost of handling and mailing from

Nancy C. Perry  
Central Office  
48 Sargent St.  
Newton, Mass.,  
02158

## ***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



Marion Priestnal, Editor

## LOCAL GROUPS REPORT

We have been writing to the Secretaries of women's groups in our various Societies, asking them to write brief reports of their group's program and objectives for publication in the *Messenger*. The endeavor has met with varying degrees of response — of course!

Some people reply at once, others delay. Some replies are formally composed and typed; others are informal handwritten notes. But the only really disheartening response is the one that never comes. Then our request seems to have dropped into a deep abyss of silence. A brief post-card message, saying "sorry, can't comply — will try later", or **anything** would be preferable to the silence. Does it mean disinterest, apathy? — We are puzzled.

Polly Baxter writes for the **St. Paul's Women's Alliance**:

"Your request for a statement of our purpose and how we meet its challenge gave us the theme of our January Alliance meeting.

"I would say that the consensus of the St. Paul Society Women's Alliance is best summed up this way: We do what needs to be done and enjoy doing it.

"Our meetings are times for spiritual stimulation and renewal for the women of the church as well as a time for fellowship. We are the social arm of the church, providing dinners, receptions and other times for our church.

"We are involved with Church Women United and outreach programs sponsored by the St. Paul Council of Churches. We also have various fund-raisers throughout the year and contribute our services to the general life of the church."

Sincerely,  
Polly Baxter

We think you will find these suggestions and comments from Margery Jester of Greenwood, Indiana, interesting.

"With no local church or pastor and only three or four (members) it is no longer feasible to have a local Alliance group, BUT PERHAPS IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO HAVE A SPECIAL PROGRAM FOR THE ISOLATED — in addition to the Round Robin, because not everyone is able to maintain regular correspondence. The Ohio Association has discontinued separate Alliance meetings at Annual meetings. With declining numbers of men and overlapping activities it was not worth-while to have a 'women only' group; and with the seminar-type meetings everyone takes part . . . Women are so involved in all phases of the church that a separate women's organization should have a well defined program for specific goals . . . as with the Mookis and other special projects."

Ideas for ways to involve and bring together isolated New Church members would be appreciated by the Editor.

MP

## THE LADIES SEWING CIRCLE OF THE BRIDGEWATER CHURCH

has a membership of seventeen, with the following officers:

President — Alice Colby

Vice - President — Helen Richmond

Secretary — Sybil Belknap

Treasurer — Frances Leland

Work Committee — Miriam Houghton and Helen Richmond.

"Meetings are held on the last Thursday of the month, either in the vestry or in members homes. In the morning work is done on "johnnies" and square and rolled bandages, and at Christmas we made Christmas stockings and sent money for fillers for them to the Protestant Guild For The Blind at Watertown.

"Lilies for the chancel were bought at Easter and later sent to shut - ins. At noon, we enjoy our sandwiches which we bring and dessert and beverage are served by the hostess. After lunch there is a devotion period, followed by a business meeting.



"We try to attend the regional Alliance meetings which are held at the various churches in our area and we entertain that group once a year. One of our members took part in the World Day of Prayer. Contributions to the church to help on the fuel bill are made by the Ladies Sewing Circle."

Sybil Belknap

## **WOMEN'S ALLIANCE OF THE SAN FRANCISCO CHURCH**

Adrienne Kopa is the newly elected president of the San Francisco Alliance, and also a new resident in that area. She writes:

We feel that the primary purpose of our group is to gain a deeper understanding of Swedenborg's writings. To this end, we are beginning a discussion group, which will meet once a month, following our regular meeting. As a basis for our discussion, we will use the course prepared by Rev. Brian Kingslake entitled, "The Doctrines of the New Church." We expect to spend the remainder of the year on this introductory material, supplemented by independent reading of various works by and about Swedenborg. We hope also to have occasional guest speakers.

To assist others — both members and guests of the church — in having ready access to Swedenborgian literature, we have arranged for one of the men in the church to construct a book display rack. The rack will be placed in our Parish House, where we hold our coffee hour after the church services. Mrs. Othmar Tobisch will act as librarian, to help people find material of special interest to them.

The coffee hour is hostessed by members of the Women's Alliance, as are the Christmas Eve reception, the annual parish luncheon, and other special events, such as the visit of Dr. Friedemann Horn on Swedenborg's birthday.

Our most recent Fund-raiser was a holiday bake sale and bazaar. We are currently looking into types of handcrafted items to make for this year's bazaar.

We contributed poinsettias to decorate the sanctuary for Christmas and contributed money for Thanksgiving turkeys to St. Anthony's Dining Room in San Francisco.

In upcoming months, we will be considering possible areas of future activity, such as sponsoring a recital to promote interest in the purchase of a new organ for the church, looking into ways to increase our Sunday School membership, and preparing a booklet on the

history of the San Francisco church, which is a famous landmark in the city.

We currently have 20 members.

Sincerely,  
Adrienne Kopa

## **CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD, Kitchener, Canada**

"We of the Kitchener Women's Auxiliary have an active group, meeting the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month — except for July and August, usually with an average attendance of 21. There are 26 active and 7 honorary members. This year we changed to luncheon meetings as most of our members are senior citizens, which has worked very well.

"We have the usual activities; one business meeting a month, one work meeting. Right now we are hooking a rug for our Minister's study. We hold summer and fall rummage sales, a June picnic, a December Christmas party. About 10 members take part in a discussion group from 3 to 4 p.m., after our meetings, led by our minister the Rev. Paul Zacharias. Others do quilting. This past year we have been studying Brian Kingslake's book 'For Heaven's Sake' and have found it very rewarding.

We are looking forward to seeing many of you at 'Convention '78' which will be held in Kitchener, Canada this year.

All the best for 1978!"

Isabelle Chivers, Secretary  
Women's Auxiliary

## **ANOTHER SURVEY**

SURVEYS, Surveys and more surveys — are they a valid way to find out what one's fellowman is thinking and doing? Apparently so, or all the very bright people engaged in doing them for a very high fee, and all the politicians and statesmen who wait breathlessly for the answer must be deluding themselves, and this we do not accept.

It seems very necessary to learn what "the people" really feel, as opposed to what the theorists like to surmise about the lives of others. It is so easy to pick up a false clue as to the trends in American life from those who sit behind a desk somewhere and tell us that we should all be accepting of "the new morality" because everyone is doing it!

We think this report on The New Morality based on an exclusive poll commissioned by TIME Magazine is of value because it unequivocally shows that "the people" have not really bought what the experts decided a few years ago was right and inevitable for them. Of course there

are changes in mores and there is a lessening of disapproval. And of course there is more openness. There is also more confusion, an alarming increase in V.D., and a shocking rise in the number of youthful suicides, ages 17 — 22.

The new "freedom" was supposed to bring greater happiness. We are likely to forget that real freedom means responsibility. The "freedom" we hear about so often now is just an overworked word frequently meaning "ego trip". Perhaps we also forget that everything comes in waves, and waves recede and the tide goes out. It seems already to have turned. What is **your** opinion?

ED.

## THE NEW MORALITY

TIME Magazine, Nov. 21, 1977

"It is often assumed that most Americans have entered a state known as 'The New Morality'. It is a condition in which pleasure is the principle. Yet, new battles keep breaking out.

"After an era of revolution, is a counter-revolution under way? Recent years undeniably have brought major changes to America's social patterns, most notably a greater openness about sex and a greater acceptance of premarital sex, homosexuality and abortion.

"But on all sides there are doubts and misgivings. One theme emerges: the existence of a residual respect for the much-maligned institutions of marriage and family, and the personal commitment implied in those institutions . . . Says Sol Gordon, director of the Institute of Family Research and Education, Syracuse University, 'There is a highly moral trend among college students, influenced by the women's liberation movement. One of young people's primary interests is love — falling in love and getting married.' Donald Johnson, psychologist at the University of Colorado, sees a similar trend. Says he: 'The promiscuity concept is dying out like crazy. People are talking about fidelity.'

"To find what Americans today really think about the very basic but infinitely complex questions of sexual morality, TIME commissioned the firm of Yankelovich, Shelly & White to undertake a special survey. Yankelovich interviewers questioned a group representative of various regions, races, ages and religious groups in proportion to the nationwide figures for those same groups.

"The pollsters asked people to make judgments on a series of actions, deciding whether such actions were morally wrong or not a moral issue. On most issues the answers were stern ones.

"Is it morally wrong for a married man to be unfaithful to his wife? Yes, said a solid 76%. Is it morally wrong for a married woman to be unfaithful to her husband? Seventy-nine percent condemned it. Is it morally wrong for teenagers to have sex relations? Yes, said 63%. The condemnation rose to a figure of 72% among those aged 35 to 49 . . .

"Though a plurality said they considered homosexuality immoral, 56% said they would vote for legislation guaranteeing the civil rights of homosexuals. From 59% to 70% favor the right of homosexuals to live wherever they want, run for elective office, or serve in the Army, but that majority fades away when it comes to the right of homosexuals to act as teachers (44% for, 48% opposed) or ministers (44% for, 47% opposed.)

"Asked whether it was "morally wrong" to have an abortion, 48% said it was not, while 44% said it was. This pro-abortion majority comes from men, while women still oppose it, 47% to 44%.

"74% supported the view that the Government should crack down more on pornography in movies, books and nightclubs.

"In general it is clear that the traditional moral system had widespread support. The Yankelovich survey asked people whether their own views had become more liberal or more conservative. 76% supported the view that '*permissiveness has led to a lot of things that are wrong with the country these days.*'

"Perhaps the most significant survey, however, is one taken in 1970 by the Kinsey Institute. The Kinsey study of 3,000 people showed between 72% — 80% disapproving of adultery, homosexuality, prostitution and casual sex among adolescents. 'What really surprised us' Colin J. Williams, co-author of the study, told TIME, 'was that there existed such a hard-core bunch of conservatives in the country.' . . .

"What change there has been, (since the Kinsey study) has occurred mainly in white, middle-class urban areas, the areas the media are constantly examining. *They do not reflect the country at large.* A number of experts do see signs that the wildest expressions of sexual "liberation" may be ending. Psychologist Joyce Brothers agrees: 'People found that instant sex was about as satisfying as a sneeze.' Barbara Seaman, author of: *Free And Female*, goes further: 'The backlash is against casual sex because a lot of people were hurt.'

"Columbia University Sociologist Amitai Etzioni agrees: 'No political society has ever survived without its nuclear family intact. We can't go on becoming ever more tolerant, and pulling the nuclear family apart.'

"One unmistakable new element on the scene, however, is President Jimmy Carter. His opposition to Government funding for elective abortions, (for example) a view that has been widely denounced but is supported by a majority in the Yankelovich survey. 'Carter is not the final answer, but at least gives us a glimpse of a direction.' says Dean Francis B. Sayre, Jr., one of the Washington Cathedral (Episcopal). 'In him we have a President of balance and of conscience, and that has an immediate effect.'

"Sociologist Etzioni agrees: 'The President's position on these issues is of enormous importance. It will be the largest single force in American Society.' Says the Reverend William Chapman of Miami's Northwest Baptist Church: 'We've listened to the liberal for 15 years, and what has he produced? A life full of barnyard morality.'

"Lewis Smedes, who teaches theology and ethics at the Fuller Theological Seminary, is an evangelical who takes a more reasoned but nonetheless critical view of the trend of recent years. Says he: 'The new morality is based on personhood and that could open the door to mass egotism.'

"The opposition to hedonism is not limited to conservatives. The Rev. Jesse Jackson, black activist leader says: 'America used to have ethical laws based in Jerusalem. Now they are based in Sodom and Gomorrah, and

civilizations rooted in Sodom and Gomorrah are destined to collapse.'...

"Still, at a time when sex is being widely commercialized, when people's emotional needs are often manipulated and exploited, it is interesting simply to record that a substantial majority of Americans cling to a belief in many of the values of family life that they learned in their own homes."

\* \* \* \* \*

Of course you have read Helen Keller's *MY RELIGION*? It makes an excellent gift for a friend who is perhaps curious about the rather puzzling church to which you belong.

When the book first appeared in the fall of 1928, one reviewer wrote about it as follows:

"Helen Keller's religion is that of Swedenborg, and those who know little of it, or knowing nothing are inclined to mock, will do well to read thoughtfully something of what he meant to the life of Helen Keller. . . . For the weary dwellers in earthbound palaces this tale of a woman's joy and peace in God will bring refreshment."

**End of Alliance Bulletin**

## POST - CONVENTION CONFERENCE 1978

### COMING ALIVE IN THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

July 2 — 7, 1978

For those of you who want to step out in faith into a new spiritual adventure of living your religion. Take that step into the supportive nurturing atmosphere of the 1978 Post - Convention Conference. Here you will explore something new yet very old. Give yourself the opportunity of being immersed in the love of God and fellow pilgrims on the journey. Discover new ways of sharing and caring as you **COME ALIVE IN THE BELOVED COMMUNITY.**

Post - Convention Conference 1978, sponsored by the Board of Education, will take place at Five Oaks, a beautiful conference center overlooking the Grand River Valley and the glen at the mouth of Whiteman's Creek, 30 miles from Kitchener, Ontario. Hiking trails

throughout the valley invite both the adventurous and those who prefer quiet walks by the river. Swim in a 70° pool or canoe in Whiteman's Creek to stretch your body as you expand your spirit. Registration forms will appear in the April *Messenger* or write for details to Nancy Perry, Executive Secretary, Board of Education, 48 Sargent St., Newton, Ma. 02158.

### ADDRESS CHANGES

Rev. Eric Allison  
3114N. 150 E.  
LaPorte, Ind. 46350

Rev. Ivan Franklin  
P. O. Box 50  
APO Seattle, Washington 98778

Mr. and Mrs. Charles McCormick  
3141 Chestnut St.  
Riverside, Calif. 92399

# PEOPLE AND PLACES

Several local groups have taken the initiative in the publishing field. In the Boston New Church, children in the Sunday School wrote a commentary on the twenty - third Psalm. This illustrated book, selling for \$2.00, will be available from the Boston Church office in time for Easter . . . . And in Pretty Prairie, the Adult Class prepared material on the nature of regeneration drawn from the first chapter of Genesis and the *Arcana*. This booklet, designed for use both within and outside of our Church, will shortly be available. For further details, write to the Pretty Prairie New Church, Kansas 67570 . . . . And the Wayfarers' Chapel has just produced a most striking and colorful brochure depicting the purposes and programs of the Chapel.

\* \* \*

A new "outreach" program was launched at a recent meeting of the Boston Church Council. It was decided to try a "cottage meeting" approach, which means that the Pastor will come to any member's home and present a brief talk about the New Church doctrines to friends of that member. The person asking for the cottage meeting will have to do the inviting and entertaining for that evening. The key to success rests with the individual members doing some recruiting and advertising beforehand.

We hope other Societies will consider this plan.

\* \* \*

The December puzzles were altogether too easy for Alice Van Boven, of Redlands, Cal. About a dozen responses came in, but only Alice's was perfect. She also found about 20 words that weren't even on the list! Plus, she enclosed two Swedenborgian anagrams: "We dine on grabs" and "God wins; be near". Thanks to the many readers who released me from the wall's clutches with "rural". The puzzles were very popular; we must do that again sometime.

\* \* \*

A Counselling Center for marriage enrichment and personal growth is well along in its progress under the guidance of Perry Martin at the Wayfarers' Chapel. As a licensed Marriage, Family and Child Counselor, Perry offers six - week series of courses, such as a couples group for marriage enrichment completed last Fall. Perry is the wife of the Rev. Ernest Martin, co - pastor at the Chapel.

\* \* \*

The following poem came from the Pacific Coast Association *Harbinger*.

## TOMORROWS AND TODAY'S

There will always be tomorrows  
When the eve of day has come  
Tomorrows and tomorrows  
To perfect the work begun,  
Knowing when this fades away  
Tho the present held much failure  
Hope holds to Another DAY.  
While the present is our treasure  
This we know will fade and die  
But in brightness of tomorrow  
Clings our hope again to try:  
To try again to perfect make  
Work our mind has visioned done  
Thankful always for tomorrows  
When the battle may be won.  
SEEMING failures, seeming winnings  
All of these shall pass away  
Yet, our hearts shall take new courage  
In tomorrows BRAND NEW DAY,  
Courage that there is no failure  
Just a task not finished yet  
AND Tomorrow may accomplish  
And PERFECT the task we set!

Esther Wolfard  
Spokane, Washington

Esther is 90 years old. Years ago she was a member of a little white Swedenborgian church in Pine City, Washington, where she met and knew Reverend Loyd Edmiston, Henry Peters and John Goddard.

\* \* \*

Urbana College Trustee Dr. Alice Blackmer Skinner has pledged a challenge gift to the college for the construction of a new plaza and vestibule entry to Oak Hall, the second oldest building on the Urbana College Campus.

Under the terms of the gift, the Blackmer family will match all contributions toward the construction, up to a total of \$5,000.

The area will be designated the *Blackmer Memorial Plaza* in memory of the late Reverend Franklin H. Blackmer, Dr. Skinner's father, who served as President of Urbana College from 1926 — 1932. In recent years Rev. Blackmer frequently visited the college campus, to serve as College Archivist and supervise the development of the Swedenborgian collection in the college library.

# COME VISIT US IN KITCHENER - WATERLOO

**Fran McIntosh**  
**Kitchener, Ontario.**

Horse drawn buggies and waving fields of corn, industrial basins and teeming expressways, flourishing universities with students in saris and blue jeans, well - kept homes on quiet crescents, Oktoberfest and Bavarian brew — which is the real Kitchener - Waterloo?

Perhaps I should tell you about our Mennonite heritage — the quilts and the apple schnitz pie, the fraktur art on Bible pages, and the prosperous farms ploughed by teams of beautiful horses. A short trip through St. Jacobs and Elmira takes you through the heart of Mennonite farm country, for shopping at Brox Olde Town Village, and perhaps, on return, lunch at the Stone Crock, where you can drink your fill of apple cider, and indulge in sausages and apple strudel.

Perhaps you'd like to hear about the modern Kitchener - Waterloo and its industrious heritage. Car frames, tires, meat and meat products, shoes and skates, television sets and furniture are a few of the products that roll off local assembly lines. Insurance is a big industry here too — and let's not forget the universities, whose student population keeps retail sales high. Unemployment is comparatively low, and you'll find us a fairly prosperous community.

You'll want to know about the campus on which you'll stay. The University of Waterloo is famous for its cooperative courses, especially in math and engineering options. Students study four months, then work in related fields for four. It takes five years to earn a degree, but graduates with work experience find the search for a job considerably eased. Many co - op courses have students hired on graduation day. From your residence on Conrad Grebel campus the ground rolls away to a small stream, with old trees carefully preserved in wooded areas, and new ones liberally planted. The buildings are mostly of warm red - brown brick in modern styling, dominated by the great cubic bulk of the library — a beautiful picture at night with every window aglow.

I know some of you will want to hear about the shopping. The thousands of students at U of W and Wilfrid Laurier University — just a mile to the east on University Avenue — add a flare to shopping and eating in the area. Westmount Place, a small shopping centre with

some of the most exclusive shops in the area, has been built within walking distance of the residences. Downtown Kitchener has interesting shopping too, especially Goudies, an old fashioned department store, and Market Square (for all that's up to date, and the Famous Farmers' Market too!) Fairview Plaza, too far to consider unless you have a car, but accessible from the Conestoga Parkway if you do, is another place you might consider shopping. And if you're interested in china, Household China is a specialty shop within a mile of the University.

The only thing I regret about Convention is that you can't be here in October. We could go Oktoberfesting. Then the city is full of guests who want to flavor our special festival to the last drop or bite, as the case may be, and a special feeling of "gemutlichkeit" prevades the city. Such good will you've never seen. People wait for hours, in what is usually bitter autumn rainy weather. But it's worth it. In fact, standing in line can be the best part of the fun, for someone is sure to start a rousing German drinking song — and it's not unusual to see the whole line break into an impromptu polka. Once inside the festival tent the polkas are no longer impromptu — they are continuous! Buxom German maids vie to carry the largest number of pitchers of beer to the tables, and fantastically large bouncers in short lederhosen over muscular knees stand by to handle emergencies. And emergencies are very few — for "gemutlichkeit" is a very special essence that makes every man your brother. In come the Shuhplatter dancers, slapping the soles of their feet, and whirling their ladies so that petticoats swish high. And the sausage, and the sauerkraut, and the cabbage rolls, and the barbecued ribs have to be seen to be believed.

As you can tell, I like this community. It has an excellent art gallery, a first class symphony. It's conscious of its environment, and its citizens take worthy causes very seriously. It has lovely churches — and people even attend them on Sunday mornings. We're close to Stratford — and you really ought to see the Shakespearean Festival while you're here. We are 60 miles from the golden beaches of Lake Huron, and an hour from Toronto with its

(Con't. p. 71 )

# ADVANCE CONVENTION REGISTRATION

Conrad Grebel College, Kitchener, Ontario

June 25 - July 2, 1978

Name .....

Address .....

Accompanied by:

Names

Relationship

Age of children

.....

.....

Mode of transportation .....

Arrival ..... Departure .....

(Give date, hour, and COMPLETE flight information — if applicable.)

Most arrivals at Toronto International airport will be met, PROVIDED we have full flight information. In some cases limo service may be required, which will cost \$17.00. Bus and train (Canadian National) service is available to Kitchener. Motorists will be sent information regarding the location of Conrad Grebel College. *We hope you will consider driving to Kitchener for Convention '78.* Excellent roads, free parking during Convention, vacation sight - seeing before and after Convention for those driving.

Registration will be at College Center. Room assignments, keys and assistance with luggage will be available at the Registration Desk.

Any special medical or dietary requirements? .....

July 1 — 2 is a **holiday** weekend in Canada, so book flights early.

## RATES

Room and Board, based on double occupancy, is approximately \$18.00 per person, per day.

Children age 10 and under, \$9.00 per day. (Cots provided, in parents' room.) Young people between 11 and 18, \$12.00 per person, per day. Children under 2, free.

Camper trailers, in limited numbers, may be parked and used on College Parking lot. This reduces your rate by \$5.00 per day.

Registration fee is \$15.00 per persons 18 years or older. Registration fee **MUST** accompany your registration form. The Registration Fee will be \$25.00 per person if received **AFTER JUNE 1st, 1978**. This Registration Fee covers cost of receptions, Saturday banquet, local transportation, audio - visual equipment, etc.

Due to local accommodation and transportation logistical factors, all Convention '78 registrations **MUST** be received in Kitchener by June 1, 1978. Early reservations will be greatly appreciated. Make cheques payable to: "Swedenborgian Convention '78".

Send this application and registration fee to:

Swedenborgian Convention  
Church of the Good Shepherd  
Queen St. N., and Margaret Ave.  
Kitchener, Ontario. N2H 2H7



## NATURE LOVER'S WEEKEND at HARPER'S FERRY

By Bill Etue  
Washington, D.C.

The theme, "NATURE LOVER'S WEEK - END" had been selected months before to describe a planned weekend of fun and fellowship for young adults in the Mid - Atlantic Association. Now with the worst snows in ten years coming on the eve of the January 20 - 22 event the title seemed ironic. Nature was in a bad mood. Nevertheless seven out of the expected eighteen participants braved the weather and arrived by car, train and jeep at Harper's Ferry that Friday evening. The Hilltop House Hotel in Harper's Ferry provided lodging and meals for the group. Hilltop House is a rambling nineteenth century hotel in the Blue Ridge Mountains overlooking the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers, and three states. It was a favorite retreat of Mark Twain and President Woodrow Wilson. Inside rustic sagging timbers, squeaky floors and a stone hearth added to the nostalgic effect. Outside, the snow highlighted the beauty of the region, and gave credence to the bumper - stickers seen everywhere with the slogan "Almost Heaven — West Virginia".

During our Saturday hike through snow covered woods to a nearby mountain top we were to see the reflections of heaven everywhere. Someone mentioned the desire to thumb through a dictionary of correspondences when they returned home.

A few of us did some sightseeing of the restored buildings of the town, and visited craft shops. The heavy snow forced the cancellation of several activities of the weekend including ice skating, horseback riding, and cave exploration. Our "Best Effort" award for the greatest distance travelled was easily won by Pat and Ken Harvie who came over 400 miles from Goshen, Ohio to join the group.

Besides the obvious enjoyments the weekend provided, it was felt that several other benefits were experienced. Had all the expected participants been able to attend, young adults in different churches of the Association who had never before met each other would have had the opportunity to do so. Some of those who did attend were not church members, and had a chance to discuss with Swedenborgians their own age what it was they found of value in the church. It also gave the many people who helped organize the weekend an opportunity to

be useful and exercise responsibility for a church related event. If fond memories linger on, similar events may be held again in the future.

## WE GET LETTERS

### WE NEED MORE EVANGELISM

Dear Rev. Zacharias:

I read with interest the letter from Bessie Behrendt entitled "From Kansas With Love". I would add a hearty AMEN to her views. The Church Universal is growing in love and joy and understanding of truth. And miracles are happening everywhere in the lives and bodies of people who are reading and studying God's Word. The charismatic movement which is interdenominational in scope, is bringing thousands of people to a deeper study of the Word. They stress daily Bible reading, and worship of Jesus as Lord of their lives. Can they help but have heavenly influences around them, when we read in our Doctrines that angels are with those who earnestly read the word? I believe that New Church people need to get back to serious Bible study, for we are taught that "All doctrines to be confirmed by the literal sense of the Word." Are we sufficiently grounded in the word to be able to help those in other churches who love the Lord but do not have our understanding of truth? We have much truth, but we are taught that all truth must be married to good, or Love to Wisdom. Perhaps that is the reason that we are not growing. Our New Church is indeed growing in Africa where they have many ministers and evangelists, and more members than in all the New Church world put together. Do we have even one evangelist? In an African church there are morning, afternoon and evening services — a celebration of love and joy. Our son Ron, who has had a good New Church background and once even considered New Church ministry, has joined a Pentecostal church with his wife, Martha, where he finds more joy than he found in our New Church fellowship. He still believes in our New Church doctrines, and I'm sure he can help others to understand their Bible better. My brother, Ariel Edmiston, teaches in a Methodist Sunday School. He finds that Methodists are quite open to New Church teaching. I gave one minister of Mason Methodist Church the *True Christian Religion*. His wife told me that her grandmother was a Swedenborgian. They seemed glad to learn of our teachings.



The church that Ron belongs to believes in the New Church doctrine of the Oneness of God in Jesus, as do many Pentecostal and other charismatic churches. I believe that they sorely need loving New Church people who are grounded in the Bible to help them in Bible interpretation.

I appreciate the *Messenger* very much. It gets better all the time! I look forward to reading it each month.

Sincerely,  
Ednah E. Richard  
Tacoma, Wash.

## CLEARING THE AIR

Dear Paul:

The article in the December *Messenger*, "A Visit to the Spiritual World", is very interesting; but even more interesting is the reaction to it!

Two New - Church members, independently, have indicated to me that they believe the "visit" literally took place — that 28 people simultaneously transferred their awareness and functioning to the World of Spirits for a week - end of time, then returned en masse to their materialistic activities. A Christian Scientist, who reads the *Messenger* because her husband was Swedenborgian, wrote to me urgently for an explanation of that article.

Having devoted years to the study of psychic phenomena, I would be sympathetic to any claims for having spent — wide awake — some time in the World of Spirits, individually or even with another person. But it does not seem logical that a group, under no duress or abnormal conditions, could suddenly switch consciousness in unison to the World of Spirits even for a few hours, much less two days.

It never occurred to me that this write - up was anything but a report of the program planned and presented, for a week - end retreat, by entirely material means: a carefully executed *dramatization* of what we in the New Church believe would in general happen — or *how* things would happen — following transition.

If I am right, I feel that the article should have indicated at the end that the experience was a skillful dramatization — and should have given great credit to those who produced such a stimulating and effective program.

Gwynne Dresser Mack  
Pittsfield, N.H.

*(To the best of our knowledge, Gwynne Mack has correctly understood and explained the sequence of events as described in the December Messenger article entitled, "A Visit to the Spiritual World". Perhaps we should have added a note of explanation at the time; we assumed that readers would look upon this article as an imaginative account of a spiritual reality. The contents of the article are true, regardless of the external happenings. However it has come to our attention that a number of readers were distraught by this feature — one family asked to be dropped from the Messenger mailing list — and for these misunderstandings we can only express our profound regret. Ed.)*

P.S. "I know exactly where the League Box is supposed to be, because I was one of those planning and arranging for it. (Incidentally, the Box is not primarily a "message" receptacle but especially a container of souvenirs and memorabilia from the League's earlier days. It was not assembled at the start of ANCL, but at its 50th anniversary celebration in 1938 — to be opened at the 100th anniversary.)

"It was arranged to store the Box in the safe - deposit vault of the New Church Theological School. The keys (for the box) were entrusted to the incoming president of ANCL, to be transferred to each new president with a ceremony intended to keep alive the knowledge of this Box.

"Please let me know when or if you locate it. We who prepared it (representing some 500 Leaguers in those days) had a wonderful 50th anniversary celebration and took very seriously our effort to connect with a "Century Celebration."

Gwynne Dresser Mack  
a former ANCL secretary, Convention's  
Field Secretary for the young people,  
and chairman for ANCL's Half - Century  
celebration.

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## COME VISIT US . . . p. 68

Ontario Science Centre, and the O'Keefe. We're looking forward to building a new theatre and convention centre right across the road from the Church of the Good Shepherd, and we like to keep a few old things, like the Doon Pioneer Village and the Mackenzie King home, Woodside, so that everyone can enjoy the past along with the future.

I hope you enjoy my city too, and that "gemutlichkeit" may be the second theme of Convention this summer.

## OPPOSED TO THE N.C.C.

To the Editor:

After reading the article "Recent National Council of Churches' Decisions" in the January issue of the *Messenger* I question whether the New Church should be affiliated with such a political organization. To my mind the National Council of Churches could be summed up in one or two words — pathetic or insidious — or perhaps even both.

Now this outfit as I see it evidently is trying to mold political thinking of Protestant Churchmen in America. Do independent-thinking Swedenborgians subscribe to this latest list of edicts being imposed on them? I hardly think so. At the very least it would be definitely in order for Convention to realign its thinking about membership in the National Council of Churches, come June.

It is a plus to the readers that the *Messenger* printed this report, thereby letting Swedenborgians know what devious actions the National Council of Churches is up to.

Sincerely,  
Bernhard Toombs  
Wilmington, Mass.

## SAVE YOUR STAMPS

Dear Paul:

I have been pleased with the response from Church people to the suggestion that they send me stamps which they formerly forwarded to Leslie Marshall. I have already been able to send a small check to the Board of Missions.

However I do have a couple of suggestions, which might be mentioned in the *Messenger*.

1. If it is just as convenient to the sender, stamps *cut* from the envelope are much preferred to those *torn* off.

2. There is a market for old postcards — particularly dated prior to 1915, both new (unused) and used. Actually they are often more valuable than the stamps which are usually a common 1 or 2 cent variety.

Cordially,  
Philip M. Alden  
Box 54  
Swarthmore, Pa.

## WHY HAVE MEN IN THE CONGREGATION?

Dear Paul:

A big point is being made in some quarters that we should not have women in the ministry because the minister *represents* the Lord, the Bridegroom and Husband of the Church, presumably MALE. Personally I agree with Swedenborg that the New Church is not a representative church (TCR 670, DLW 233, AC 4489, AR 392, etc.). But if I did believe in the need for "representatives" I should try to be consistent and go the whole hog, and say that the congregation must be FEMALE because it "represents" the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. If a man (male) applied to join the congregation, I should have to say, "Sorry, brother, it's against the New - Church Doctrines; we cannot admit you. We shall be glad to have your help around the premises — there are many jobs to be done that require the masculine touch. We could accept you perhaps as an *Associate*. But, good heavens! Not as a member! A minister, yes, in the pulpit; but not a part of the Congregation in the pew! Only women can sit in the church."

I should also have to insist that the minister should refrain from reading the prayers from the liturgy. Prayers are addressed by the congregation to the Lord, and are therefore a woman's prerogative. The minister's wife could pray on behalf of the people, but surely NOT the minister! He can read the Word, preach, instruct and admonish, but not pray! That's woman's work.

You will gather from my tone of voice that I am being satirical. The above argument is a *reductio ad absurdum*. Obviously any person, man or woman, can "represent" the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. By the same token, any person, male or female, can "represent" the Lord, the Husband of the Church. But why speak of representation at all when dealing with worship? There are uses which can be performed equally well by any person suitably qualified, irrespective of sex. Must we bring sex into everything?

Brian Kingslake  
Bath, England.

(Readers will be happy to learn that Brian Kingslake is currently writing a sequel to his popular book, "For Heaven's Sake". Ed.)

# WHAT SWEDENBORG CAN TEACH US:

**By the Rev. Chester E. Pond,  
Congregational Minister of Philadelphia**

Beloved reader, if you really desire to get rational and spiritual ideas of God, of the Church, and of men and things in general, then lay aside all prejudice, if you have any, and read Swedenborg.

If you honestly desire to develop a symmetrical and well rounded Christian character, then lay aside every jot and tittle of your sectarianism, if you have any, and with a childlike spirit of teachableness read carefully the works of Swedenborg.

If you care to look right into your own heart, and see how weak and how very small you are, then read Swedenborg.

If you wish to see what great and boundless possibilities lie before you, read Swedenborg.

If you would like to know to what a terrible hell you are tending so long as you follow the dictates of your own selfhood, then humble yourself and read Swedenborg.

If you wish to get a true glimpse of ineffable wisdom and of the "exceeding and eternal weight of glory" that awaits all those who are "pure in heart" then open your own heart to the Lord at once and read Swedenborg.

If you wish to learn what it is to die and how you ought to live to meet a happy death, then be honest in the study of Swedenborg.

If you desire to get some true, adequate conception of how much it means to love God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself, then with the humility of a little child, study the writings of Swedenborg.

If you honestly desire to become a better man or a better woman than you are now, no matter how high your present standing before the Lord or before men, then study the heavenly writings of Swedenborg.

If you would like to have your own personal pride and self conceit all torn by the roots and cast to the four winds, then humble yourself, lay aside all ideas of your present great attainments, either in ecclesiastical learning or in any other kind of learning and become a humble student of Swedenborg.

If you are not actually afraid to go to the very bottom of your own heart in search of personal sins, and if you really possess the moral bravery to traverse your own soul through and through,

as with a lighted candle, in search of your very last secret fault, then read carefully and prayerfully the heart searching writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

Again if you cannot now believe what I say about Swedenborg is true, then give up and forsake every known sin, open your heart to the Lord and read for yourself.

Finally beloved reader, if you are already a sincere lover of the Lord and wish to learn just how to feed your inner life of pure Divine Truth, and wish to know just how to feast your inmost soul on pure Divine Love, and if you desire to become well acquainted with deep things of God, and if you really wish to know just what it means to be an actual partaker of the Lord's Divine nature and of His own holiness and if you wish to learn just how to dwell continually in the secret place of the Most High, and how to abide for ever under the shadow of the Almighty, then study diligently the deep spiritual meaning of the Word of God as now set forth and explained by the Lord himself through the writings of His servant Emanuel Swedenborg!

Dear Rev. Zacharias:

I found the above in the form of an old newspaper clipping pasted on the flyleaf of a copy of "True Christian Religion", published by the American Swedenborg Printing and Publishing Society, New York, in 1858. This book was left by my grandmother for my father.

My grandmother has dates on the margins of different pages, showing she read the entire book (fine print) every year from 1880 to 1887, then 1889 and 1891.

Sincerely,  
Eva Grage  
Niles, Illinois

## CONVENTION APPEAL

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## CONVENTION CALENDAR

Planning and Development, Boston area	April 12 - 15
C.A.M., Newton	April 17 - 18
Ex. Com., Urbana Trustees, Urbana	April 19
S.S.S. Bd. of Managers, Exec. Com., Newton	April 20, 9 a.m.
S.S.R. Bd. of Managers, Newton	April 21 - 22
Urbana Trustees, Urbana	June 1 - 3
1978 CONVENTION Kitchener, Ont.	June 28 - July 2
Post Convention Conference	July 2 - 8

## FROM CHURCH RECORDS

### BAPTISM

**FLORES** — Mrs. Kam Flores was baptized into the Christian faith in the Riverside Church on January 1, 1978, the Rev. John Spiers officiating.

### DEATHS

**KRAHN** — David Krahn of Hanley, Saskatchewan, suddenly passed into eternal life in St. Paul's Hospital, Saskatoon, on Tuesday, January 10, 1978, at the age of 76. The resurrection service was held from the United Church in Hanley on January 14, with the Rev. J. A. Brown and the Rev. Henry W. Reddekopp officiating.

**MACK** — Gordon Charles Mack, of Akron, Ohio, died on December 16, 1977, at the age of 81. Son of the late Rev. Dr. & Mrs. Charles Mack, and brother of David Mack. Mr. Mack had been associated with New Church Societies in LaPorte, New York, and Cleveland. He is survived by his wife and a sister, Cornelia.

**MARINO** — Mrs. Clara W. Burnham Marino, 88, life long active Swedenborgian, World War I nurse, resident many years in California and later in Denver where she died January 5, 1978. A niece, Rev. Kate S. Knapp officiated. She is survived by one sister, Margaret N. Burnham of Beverley, Mass.

**SIEBERT** — Stephen Siebert, 34, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ray Siebert, and a member of the Pretty Prairie, Kansas, Society, died January 5, 1978. The resurrection service was held on January 7, the Rev. Eric Zacharias officiating.

**SIEBERT** — Mrs. Ted (Mildred) Siebert passed into the higher life on January 11, 1978, at the age of 77. A long time member of the Pawnee Rock, Kansas, Society, Mrs. Siebert was buried in the Pawnee Rock Cemetery on January 14, the Rev. Galen Unruh officiating.

**WOOFENDEN** — Virgil Woofenden, Southfield, Michigan, formerly of Detroit, a charter member of the Miami Church and until a few years ago very active in it, died on December 4, 1977. The Rev. George Fleischer officiated at the resurrection service.



Golden Wedding Celebration  
1927 — 1977

The Rev. and Mrs. Yonezo Doi  
Tokyo, Japan

## CRAFT EXHIBIT AT CONVENTION

All Convention goers are urged to bring their hand - made crafts and art - work to exhibit and/or sell at the 1978 Convention. An opportunity for the many talented people in Convention to display their wares . . . and another way to show that we are "Alive in the New Age." Ceramics, paintings, wood carving, leather work, sewing and knitting finery . . . let's make this the biggest and best Craft Exhibit ever!

Those people planning to display their handiwork at Convention '78 should write to Mrs. Pat Zacharias, 215 Union Blvd., Kitchener, Ont. N2M 2S7. Please write early, so we'll know whether to reserve one or two rooms for the many exhibits.

## THE UPPER ROOM

### THE SECRET PLACE

Leon LeVan

St. Petersburg, Fla.

The 91st Psalm begins with the words, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." The "shadow of the Almighty" means protection for our souls. Everyone should know the sixteen verses of that Psalm by heart. It can be memorized in one week. It can be repeated inwardly several times a day. When sleep eludes or evil thoughts molest, it can be a rampart for the Lord. Like the Lord's Prayer, it communicates with heaven. It is a psalm of protection. The powers of hell cannot over-run it.

But even if we know the protective power of the 91st Psalm, we do not always see its deeper meanings. What exactly is that "secret place of the most High" of which it is said we abide there "under the shadow of the Almighty?" Why can it protect us? How do we enter it? How can we dwell in it? Can it be identified in such plain terms that we may enter and be helped whenever we need or desire?

#### "YE IN ME AND I IN YOU"

The "secret place of the most High" is a state of life in which we are together with the Lord. Evil cannot occupy it. Degrading thoughts cannot infiltrate it. Infernal intents and purposes cannot make it their habitation. It is holy. God Himself dwells there. It is the highest or inmost receptacle of the Divine in and above our souls. It is described in New Church writings as the "inmost dwelling place of God with man." From that dwelling place which God has established for Himself in man's inmost, He descends as heavenly good and truth into all the lower areas of our lives.

You and I enter the "secret place of the most High" every time we raise our thoughts to the Lord.

The "secret place" is internal. It is high. It is God's dwelling - place in man. "Ye in Me, and I in you." When we say "The New Church is an internal church," we mean the Lord and Heaven are with us inwardly; and we think, will, and act from them in our outer lives. Our

values are raised from their enslavements to "Mammon" to the loves and values of heaven, which is the Kingdom of God.

#### "ENTER INTO THY CLOSET"

Jesus dwelled pre - eminently in the "secret place of the most High." When He was "one with the Father," He was in the "secret place." You may be certain Jesus knew the 91st Psalm by heart. He said that the Father "seeth in secret." The reason the Disciples and others knew so little about the Lord's internal life is because Jesus' real life was in the "secret place." But Jesus gave that "secret place" a new name to make it more tangible and understandable to the Disciples. He called it a "closet." He said: "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut the door, pray to the Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." (Matt. 6:6) We "enter into the closet and shut the door" whenever we pray or talk inwardly with God."

But there is yet a third symbol for the "secret place of the most High" and this the most comprehensible. Jesus was in it. The Disciples were in it. The Holy Supper was there. The "tongues of fire" came there. Jesus entered when the "door was shut" on the day of His Resurrection. It was the Upper Room.

#### "UPPER ROOM" IN MAN

Instantly that upper room takes meaning for you and me, because each of us has an "upper room" in our spiritual structure. Your "upper room" is your internal, heavenly life. You enter the "upper room" (and Jesus comes to you "the door being shut") when you withdraw your attachments from the mundane world and raise your thoughts and affections to the Lord and heaven.

The New Church teaches: "Man was born for heaven." By those words we affirm a higher life than the external world, a higher principle than nature. Whether we say the "secret place of the most High," or the "closet with the shut door," or the "upper room" where Jesus comes, it is the same. It is our inmost spiritual state of life, our state of secret prayer, our secret place with the Divine.

"Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee."

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