

The Messenger

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH

April 1978



*feeling newness
everywhere . . .
flowers
pushing up
through dead grass
birds, butterflies
coloring the air.*

*Once again
God
gives us
another chance
with
Spring.*

Editorial

VARIETY — THE SPICE OF LIFE

Dear Friends,

In A.C. 3241 we read, "In the Lord's Kingdom there are innumerable varieties as to goods and truths, and yet one Heaven is constituted of them." And there is infinite variety in all things of heaven and earth not because the influx from the Lord varies — this is perfect and eternal — but because every person receives life from the Lord differently. You can't think of God and mass production in the same thought. Every individual is a very special, unique creation; thus God's Kingdom is comprised of infinite variety. We marvel that every blade of grass and every snowflake is different — how much more marvellous is it that every day over three billion earth people experience hundreds of feelings and ideas and events and not one is an exact duplicate! And yet, at the same time, we are all one family under God. He made us; He sustains us; and we return to Him. We all have so much in common, but we also have to go our own separate ways — which brings both joy and heartache. This is the way life is.

Please remember A.C. 3241 as you read this issue of the *Messenger*. This month we feature several controversial articles, and I fully expect they will evoke considerable response — both supportive and critical — from you, the readers. If you write a "Letter to the Editor", please keep it clear, concise, and to the point.

David Garrett, who has served Convention societies in Wilmington, St. Louis, and El Cerrito, now a Jungian therapist in the Bay area, writes on correspondences and symbolism. He suggests that many people take correspondences too literally; in too wooden a fashion. What is the spiritual reality within and behind the events — and the inner states — that we experience? The implications of his thesis are many and far - reaching.

Ernest Martin, a team member at the Wayfarers' Chapel, writes on marriages and weddings; more specifically — the ethics and morality of pre - marital and post - marital sex.

John Harms, a magazine editor and member of the Washington D.C. society, responds to the Martin article with a more traditional viewpoint regarding sexual morality.

And you, the reader, will have your own point of view. We need to read this material carefully and thoughtfully, listening objectively

to what these writers have to say. Each one comes from the same basic position — all would say that the basis of the Christian life is love to God and genuine concern for fellow human beings. *Nurturing the spiritual welfare of people* — this is at the heart of the Christian gospel. But the ways in which we express this loving concern for people is going to vary from person to person, because (remember A.C. 3241?) we receive and perceive life so differently. As Voltaire said, "Where all think alike, no one thinks very much." But as far back as I can remember, this hasn't been a particular problem for us !

P.Z.

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Paul B. Zacharias, Editor

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The Starting Line ————— by Eric Zacharias

VISITING THE PRESIDENT

We assembled at 9:45 a.m. in the lobby of the Hay - Adams Hotel, Washington, D.C. It was Friday, February 24th, and the leaders of those communions comprising the National Council of Churches had accepted an invitation to meet with President Carter. The next two hours were spent in "a briefing". Our visit with Mr. Carter was to begin at 2 p.m.

The group of people with which I was to participate in this visit was a most interesting one. In it were such persons as Bishop W. Kenneth Goodson of the United Methodist Church and Fr. Severino Vijente of the Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church. I had a most interesting talk with Bishop Dezso Abraham of the Hungarian Reformed Church in America.

The purpose of our visit with the President was to confer with him in three major areas of governmental responsibility — foreign policy, domestic policy and human rights. What a challenge !

Key staff people spoke to us, in turn, about the current position of our administration relating to arms sales to the Middle East, the development of the neutron bomb, the Humphrey - Hawkins Full Employment Bill, the courts and justice in our own country. It was fairly enough to make the head of a small - town Kansas man spin out of control.

We formulated questions for the President. The orchestration of the events that were to follow now became more apparent. Our questions were telephoned to the White House and a variety of arrangements, including the time to be given to the photographers, were made. Now — it was time for lunch — and my appetite was something less than prodigious. At precisely 1:40 p.m. we would leave the hotel for the short walk to the West Wing of the White House.

The time came. After a final security check, we entered the White House grounds and were ushered into a spacious waiting room.

Waiting, I began to wonder. What is it really like to meet the President of our country? Were our expectations too high? I began, too, to sort out my first impressions of the leadership within the National Council of Churches.

I had thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity to share with the leaders of the church in this country the concerns that are at the very center of contemporary life. There was within this

group no solid consensus as to the nature of the solutions needed to bring healing to a troubled society. It was felt, I sensed, that we were a "faith community" seeking, through a growing relationship with the Lord and by working more closely together, to serve as channels for the Holy Spirit. Surely, this in itself, is enough to give us cause to be partners with our fellow Christians in so great a mission.

Then came the request — "Will you please come this way?" We were seated, a side door opened — and the President stepped into the room.

The President of the NCC, William Thompson, presented Mr. Carter with a Bible, then outlined briefly the composition of the NCC and its uses. He stated that the NCC endorsed the actions of Mr. Carter in such areas as human rights but that there were also certain areas of continuing concern — among them, the rise in military spending. Mr. Carter responded by saying that it was his aim to work for peace in the world and that it was his desire that all Christian bodies seek to revitalize the spirit of Christ in our society. Further, he stated, it was his feeling that the government through its various agencies has been more active than have the churches in such areas as civil rights. We must work together more effectively toward our common goals, he concluded.

Following a prayer, the President departed.

A few reflective thoughts.

1. I found the leaders of those communions with which I had opportunity to talk to be warm, sensitive, perceptive persons. They too, were searchers — seeking to serve the Lord as they understood the commission given them.

2. The forces that shape the policies of our government are extremely complex causing increasing difficulty in educating our citizens to the nature of those issues that must be resolved.

3. Openness in government and its accessibility to our people is to be prized. It is very difficult to achieve. The obstacles are many.

The weekend of February 24th was concluded with a service of worship in Baltimore. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to our congregation there for the warm welcome extended to Bill Etue and myself. The hospitality was most gracious, the discussions most stimulating and the joy of fellowship complete.

IF CORRESPONDENCES ARE TAKEN AS SYMBOLS, NOT SIGNS

*David J. Garrett
El Cerrito, Cal.*

In asking me to write on the fascinating topic of Swedenborg's notion of correspondence and Carl Jung's view of symbol, the editor opened to view a field too large to encompass in a brief article. Instead, I have tried to show how correspondences work if taken as symbols. It is hoped this will stimulate thought and reading and, who knows, perhaps articles on this topic for the MESSENGER by other writers.

* * *

Symbols are barely given their due in today's public arena. Jimmy Carter took his inaugural walk down Pennsylvania Avenue and was heralded in the press as a president with an eye to the symbolic. The walk was less a symbol than a sign, that is, a gesture whose content was already known to Mr. Carter and could be counted on as recognizable by the general public. Its meaning as a sign was known as are the meanings of traffic light colors and the yellow strip down the center of a highway. Such reporting and the misconception behind it are more common than not and demonstrate the confusion of symbol with sign.

The same problem exists with what Swedenborg called correspondences. Are correspondences signs or symbols?

When Swedenborg speaks of the correspondence between heaven and earth — that is, earthly things reflect heaven's mysteries — he is symbolic in a way similar to the American Indian who regards the earth as sacred and the home of the Great Spirit. The symbolic attitude to life that earth or nature is the habitation of the gods as well as of men is found in ancient and primitive religion, and is at the root of the great world religions. Moses' seeing God in a burning bush is generally regarded as the beginning of Judaism. The disciples meeting their Divine Master after death, a spirit in earthly clothes, on the road to Emmaus, in the upper room, and ascending to heaven is considered the genesis of Christianity. We see the symbolic attitude in St. Francis treating birds and animals as brothers and sisters, equally God's creatures with man, reflecting the nature of God. In his book "Hymn To The Universe", Teilhard De Chardin, the Jesuit geologist, spoke of an experience in the Gobi

Desert. Lacking the eucharistic elements, he offered up the earth as the sacramental bread and wine, regarding the earth as the matrix of spirit and as the cosmic body and blood of Christ. In the Middle Ages, there were philosopher - alchemists who sought to free the philosopher's stone from the prima materia in their retorts.

Correspondences are handled as signs when Biblical images and words are given a known meaning, e.g. water is doctrine, bread is love, wine is spiritual truth. The meaning of objects and language becomes fixed. Unlike symbols, whose meanings are never wholly known and which are perceived by a circumambulating motion, signs can be pinned down by linear reasoning. While symbols are open, evocative of many nuances, signs are closed and plain in their interpretation. The traffic officer or judge has no problem with the clarity of a yield sign or merging traffic road notation. But ask them the symbolic meaning of a cloud, chalice, or stone and they're stumped!

If the distinction between symbols and signs is not made, working with correspondences is most confusing. The confusion arises when we move from an "as if" way of seeing things (symbol) to a "this is the way it is" attitude (sign). When the religious poet wrote, "The earth is the Lord's footstool," he did not mean you can see God's foot resting on the ground! The poetic phrase evokes many images, some of which are: the earth is God's ground of being, God uses earth as a container of created life, God's dwelling place in matter is terra firma, the spirit aspect of God is anchored in the matter aspect, earth is the ground from which God springs and establishes a kingdom, and so on. When we say the correspondence of love is bread, we mean love is *like* bread. It feeds, fills, nourishes as love does. It is *as if* bread is love. The "as if" is crucial. When the "as if" is left out, what is true symbolically is made a concrete truth. As a result, truth is distorted and may even be made to look ridiculous. You cannot see God's foot on the ground, but you can say "the earth is God's footstool!"

We may never go so far as to consciously commit such concretistic fallacies, but some of our perceptions and statements come very close to doing that when symbol is confused with

sign, and may go so far as to do that unwittingly. For example, correspondences have been called the key to the Scriptures, and dictionaries of correspondences have been compiled, as though the final word on the Bible's meaning has been pinpointed. When correspondences are used this way, they are clearly signs and we run the danger of committing the concretistic fallacy.

Another case in point is Swedenborg's exegesis of the Old and New Testaments. Did he mean in the *Arcana Coelestia*, *Apocalypse Explained*, and *Apocalypse Revealed* that it is "as if" Genesis, Exodus, and the Book of Revelation intend something approximating what he wrote? Or did he mean he was writing what the Biblical books' final understanding is? If the correspondences of Genesis, Exodus, and Revelation are symbolic, they cannot be nailed down. Nor can one take Swedenborg's commentary literally but as suggestive. This requires that every person wrestle with the mystery that the symbol conveys. On the other hand, if correspondences are signs, we may use Swedenborg's statements to tell us what the inner meaning of Scripture is. At first glance, one may think the distinction made between correspondence as symbol and as sign is not that significant and there is no reason why a person cannot use correspondences both ways. Of course, one can do both if he chooses, but then one's discrimination is fuzzy and the depth and power of the symbol is missed.

The striking thing about correspondence used as symbol is that it opens up sacred texts rather than fixes their significance. One finds many levels of meaning and always discovers more. To have a symbol lead is to follow it into the unfathomable and let it yield the unexpected. The purpose is not, as with a sign, to make the meaning unalterably fixed and clear. A symbol cannot be used to prove that my perception, or your perception, or my church's perception of something is the correct one. To use correspondences symbolically in order to be right or correct is to miss the point of symbolization. The symbol reveals itself only when there is a "hands off" attitude towards its meaning coming out a preconceived way. To want the right meaning of a sign is entirely appropriate. We need to know that a skull and cross bones on a medicine bottle means danger. But to impose concretistic strictures on a symbol violates it and turns it off, and us off, to what it can say.

Depth psychology shows that whereas the sign is a construct of the conscious mind, the symbol arises spontaneously from the inner world and mediates the unknown depth to one's finite, limited knowing. As a Jungian psychologist points out: "The form of representation peculiar to the unconscious is not that of the conscious mind. It neither attempts nor is able to seize hold of and define its objects in a series of discursive explanations, and reduce them to clarity by logical analysis. The way of the unconscious is different. Symbols gather round the thing to be explained, understood, interpreted. The act of becoming conscious consists in the concentric grouping of symbols around the object, all circumscribing and describing the unknown from many sides. Each symbol lays bare another essential side of the object to be grasped, points to another facet of meaning. Only the canon of these symbols congregating about the center in question, the coherent symbol group, can lead to an understanding of what the symbols point to and of what they are trying to express."⁽¹⁾

Another Jungian writer describes a function of the symbol as to release energy. "The symbol maintains psychic life in a constant flux and carries it onward towards its destined goal."⁽²⁾ It keeps the psyche flowing and thus active and alive. Signs, on the other hand, inform, but once their meaning is known become redundant. They cannot maintain a flow of revivifying images. Consider the possibility of correspondences renewing the psyche when used as symbols. Along the same line, the symbol removes blockages which result from the repetitiousness of signs and transforms energy so that fresh ways of approaching a situation are made available. The symbol acts as a corrective to one-sidedness and brings the hidden sides into view so that wholeness and healing are possible. One may reflect on the potential, here, for reconciling differences within oneself, between persons, and between sides that appear dead-locked in intractable opposition. The symbol, "through its deeper meaning . . . makes a new impression on the psychic process, i.e. to open up a new path and hence produce a new concentration of energy."⁽³⁾ Put yet another way, the symbol brings together opposites and as opposing sides interpenetrate and dialogue, a third way of synthesis opens up. The symbol enables the opposites in life to integrate and leads to a new creative task that neither side can

accomplish alone. Were correspondences approached as symbols in working through the blockages, differences, and creativity loss of the Church, a way out of the dilemma would be afforded. By remaining at the level of signs, we are certain to reach the same recurring impasses.

The distinction between correspondence as symbol and correspondence as sign raises many questions for long and careful reflection. For this writer, some questions are: how are we to relate to the images of heaven and hell? death and future life? the Second Coming? the Last Judgement? the New Age?

As symbols, heaven and hell describe inner processes in the here and now. As signs, heaven and hell tend to be construed as fixed situations applying to a post - mortem existence. Death and future life, seen symbolically, refer to the cyclic death and rebirth within the personality. As signs, death and future life indicate the termination of earthly consciousness and life in another dimension. The Second Coming, as symbol, suggests a rediscovery of the Divine at a deeper, more conscious level within oneself and in the world. As sign, it denotes a particular event in history. Similarly, the Last Judgement is coming to terms with inner darkness (symbol) or is a cataclysmic shift in the geography of another world (sign). And the New Age, taken as symbol, is man's finding wholeness by a conscious relation to the inner world or, as sign, is his devotion to a particular body of teaching.

One might be led to think that correspondence as symbol is preferable to

correspondence as sign and takes precedence over it. To think so is to misconstrue the meanings of sign and symbol. Each has quite separate and necessary functions. For religious values and ideas there is a problem when symbol is confused with sign. To take a religious value or idea which is symbolic and treat it as a sign deprives it of the full range of meaning. To take a sign, such as a street sign to such and such a place, and make it a symbol, is bound to obscure the location of the place. Sign and symbol are appropriate for their respective functions.

In conclusion, one may ponder the effect of taking the teachings of Swedenborg as symbol. Have we been prone to take the teachings as sign or, more elaborately, as blue prints for heaven? If we relate to Swedenborg's statements as symbolic statements, it does not render them less efficacious. On the contrary, they would hold stores of meaning for wholeness far more vast than taking them as signs. It is true, we would have to be willing to be less concerned with certainty and more interested in depth; less tied to down - the - street verities and more open to the mysteries of creation.

Dare we ask: may this have been the impulse behind Swedenborg's experience that moved him to write as he did?

(1) *The Origins And History Of Consciousness*, Erich Neumann, (Pantheon Books, 1954), p. 7

(2) *Complex, Archetype, Symbol*, Jolande Jacobi, (Princeton Univ. Press, 1959), p. 98

(3) *Ibid*, p. 100

From "In Praise of Mysticism" —

Recently I came across these words: "Ultimately religion is not a matter of creeds and dogmas, or of marshalled arguments or well-defined statements — but of angels and visions and hopes and dreams and mangers and crosses, of Mount Sinai and the Mount of Olives, of burning bushes and barren wildernesses, and all the places where the mystery of God broods upon life and draws it beyond the confines of sight and sense, beyond and through the commonplace into the holy of holies."

This is the main function or purpose of religion — to make us more aware of this deeper dimension of life. And the important thing is not that we understand all the mysteries, but that we learn to trust Him, the Lord, who is within and beyond all creation. Realizing that God knows everything. He made all things and He understands all secrets, and

He is using all of this to bring us into His presence. The important thing is not that we resolve all mysteries, but that we have a deep, abiding, confident sense of the sheer Divine goodness that sustains your life and mine. P.Z.

S. N. A. P.

What? A wilderness, pioneering project in the Santa Cruz mountains in California. For all ages.

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IN RESPONSE to David Garrett's article on correspondences, symbols, and signs

Robert Kirven
Newton, Mass.

A couple of years after David Garrett, then my pastor, led me to begin studies toward ordination, I encountered Paul Tillich's distinction between sign and symbol: a sign *points* to a reality, but a symbol *participates* in the reality which it symbolizes. I thought then that "symbol" was a good modern expression of Swedenborg's "correspondence," and Bjorn Johansson published my thoughts in *The Messenger*. So self-consistency, if not old times' sake, urges my agreement with what I read as David's central point.

Further, I must agree because of what Swedenborg wrote. Regarding the suggestion that the correspondences in Genesis are symbolic, and so "cannot be nailed down," I read in AC 6232⁽³⁾: "One thing in the natural world corresponds to thousands and thousands in the spiritual world; and therefore the more interior they are, the more indefinite they are."

In AC 64 (which makes a similar point) and 9280⁽³⁾, we learn that the spiritual sense — toward which correspondences can lead us — is what the angels around us perceive when we read the Word with reverence. We can perceive it, too, through a knowledge of correspondences; but our deepest and truest knowledge of correspondences comes when we read the Lord's Holy Word reverently, and with prayerful hope for guidance and power for our lives, and let our mind wander from the literal sense to wherever the Lord leads us. The spiritual ideas that we perceive then go beyond words, and if we speak of them to others, they are changed by correspondence into natural ideas (AC 10604⁽²⁾).

I have no trouble equating the influx of love and wisdom, that comes when the Word is read in this way, with the Jungian terminology of "renewing the psyche." A study of Swedenborg's unfolding of the literal sense prepares us for — and guides us toward — the experience of that influx; and the process does indeed work much better if we regard the correspondences he cites as "symbols," rather than as "signs."

And yes, signs do have their place. AC 1038^(e) and 4255⁽⁵⁾ speak of the rainbow after the Flood, and of Baptism, as signs — clear, certain indications. Further, each word in the Word signifies (functions as a sign toward) something spiritual, just as the things signified by the words represent and correspond (AC 3482); and Swedenborg also uses "significative" as the most general term in the series which includes representatives and correspondences (e.g., AC 2899), but this use of "sign" is irrelevant to Jung's usage.

Why didn't Swedenborg speak more of "symbols," if that is what he was talking about? The classical Latin word, and its Greek root, have essentially the meaning that Jung employs. But in Swedenborg's time, it had become a synonym for "symbolic faith," or "creed" (see AC 2329⁽⁵⁾, 4721^(e), and esp. AR 962⁽⁵⁾). A creed in those days was regarded as something a person could recite as a clear and unequivocal *sign* of orthodoxy — so "symbol," as "creed," held for him almost exactly the opposite meaning that it has for Jung, Tillich, and most twentieth-century writers!

IN THE MAY ISSUE —

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MARRIAGES AND WEDDINGS

*Ernest O. Martin
Palos Verdes, Cal.*

In the 1970's an increasing number of couples, perhaps more than half, are choosing to live together before the public legalization of their marriage. Many of these couples consider themselves already married. The decision to celebrate their marriage through a wedding ceremony in a church is usually accompanied by the procurement of a marriage license from the state. The minister is asked to perform a dual function: to invoke the Lord's blessing upon the couple as they commit themselves to one another, and to act as the agent of the state in a legal binding of the couple.

We often confuse these two functions of the clergyman, the religious and the civil. Couples may be wed legally by a justice of the peace in a ceremony that is completely void of any religious tone or connotation. Other couples may commit themselves to a marriage relationship and ask the Lord's blessing upon the union without securing a state license. They may decide to apply for a license later on and be wed through a civil ceremony or a religious rite.

Many of our states recognize common - law marriages. When a couple has been living together as husband and wife for a number of years, the states consider that they are legally married, although no license has been issued and no ceremony has taken place. In California couples who have been living together for an unspecified length of time can obtain legal recognition of their marriage by having a clergyman or justice of the peace sign a certificate. No blood test or license is required. California law also grants property rights to a couple living as husband and wife even when no ceremony has taken place or license or certificate issued.

As an institution dedicated to the fostering of high ideals in human relationships, the church is very much concerned with marriage ideals and practices. Church men and women ask: "Is it morally right or wrong for a couple to live together and/or engage in sexual relations before they are legally married?" This is an interesting question for it assumes that the morality or immorality of a relationship or activity depends upon a civil ceremony and the

sanction of the state. It would seem that as religious persons we should look to a higher authority than the state to determine what is moral and immoral, good and evil, noble and sinful. Jesus said: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things which are God's."

Swedenborg said that the spiritual life is to be achieved through an active life in the world and not through withdrawal and renunciation. However, as a minister who is concerned primarily with the quality of human relationships, especially in marriage, I think it is essential not to equate a spiritual relationship with a particular legal action. Some may ask: "Shouldn't there be an orderly relationship or harmony between what is internal and what is external?" Certainly there should be, and Emanuel Swedenborg describes the correspondence between these two realms of life. Our outer lives and activities give expression to what is in our hearts and minds. Jesus said, "Every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree is incapable of producing bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot produce good fruit . . . So you may know men by their fruit."

The quality of a relationship between a man and a woman living together is demonstrated by their daily activities. Qualities of love, respect, concern, compassion, empathy, and consideration have meaning only when they are embodied in deeds.

The question may then be raised: If a couple love one another and have made a commitment to live as husband and wife, shouldn't we expect them to give expression to this decision through a public ceremony when the blessing of the church can sanctify their relationship? This has been the custom, and most couples choose to follow it. But let us not confuse a genuine marriage relationship with the particular formalities that we engage in to celebrate that relationship. Swedenborg wrote that "it is the internal union, which is of the souls, which really constitutes marriage. The ceremonies which follow are its formalities."

Swedenborg's book, *Marital Love*, was published 200 years ago, but it is as up - to - date as the latest textbook in sociology. In the preface to his translation of the book, William F. Wunsch wrote that the work "does not treat of theology, but chiefly of morals . . . Formal relationship, institution, contract, legal status, vows are not under Swedenborg's eye so much as inward state or spiritual intent. The inner conditions may be more hopeful than the external relationship suggests, and, on the other hand, in wedlock one may find anything but marital love."

To help us clarify our thinking, I suggest that we use the word "marriage" to refer to the internal bond or union that exists between a man and a woman who have made a commitment to join their lives. The word "wedding" can refer to the public ceremonies that are engaged in to celebrate the marriage relationship. If a couple are living together in what they consider a marriage relationship, let us not label them immoral because they have not had a public celebration of their union. A ceremony, with all its festivities, does not make a marriage. It only heralds it.

Swedenborg wrote: "Regarded in itself true marital love is a union of the souls, conjunction of the minds, and an effort after conjunction in bosom and so in the body. The states of this love are innocence, peace, tranquility, inmost friendship, full trust, and a mutual desire of mind and heart to do each other every good; and growing out of all these, blessedness, satisfaction, joy, pleasure, and in the eternal fruition of these, heavenly happiness."

Custom has a great hold on us and most people don't consider themselves really married unless they have followed the traditional routine: wedding invitations, blood tests, marriage license, rehearsal dinner, party for groom, wedding ceremony in a church with flowers, rings, music, and professional photographer, followed by a reception. These formalities have meaning and significance only as they help a couple to proclaim to the world that they have committed themselves to one another in marriage.

In his book of 686 pages, Swedenborg devoted a chapter of 18 pages to the subject of "betrothals, weddings, and the attendant ceremonies." He discussed the accepted customs of his day, not from any claim to divine authority, but "chiefly from reasoned understanding." Life styles are continually changing and couples now have more freedom and flexibility in planning their lives. Tradition, custom, ritual, and ceremony are essential, but rather than being slaves to particular forms of 18th century Sweden or even the norms of 20th century America, we need to open ourselves to new ways of celebrating life.

From the perspective of the church is it morally and spiritually acceptable for a man and a woman to live together and engage in sexual relations before they are legally married or receive the blessing of the church in a wedding ceremony? In the light of what I have already said, it is apparent that there can be no simple yes or no answer. Another question is more to the point: Should a couple live together as husband and wife before they have made a deep commitment to one another and have pledged their mutual love and respect? Obviously these words "deep", "commitment", "love", and "respect" are spiritual qualities that cannot be measured with any accuracy or judged in the lives of other people. My position is that the commitment we make to one another in the sexual relationship is not something to be entered into lightly, casually, or promiscuously, but is to be reserved for a relationship of genuine intimacy in which both partners love and respect one another deeply.

The quality of love varies with each couple. Swedenborg wrote: "Only those who live the Church's life from the Lord can be in true marital love, because this love is celestial, spiritual, holy, pure, and clean above every other love with the angels of heaven and men of the church. No human or angelic love can ever become utterly pure, thus neither can marital love; but the intention which is of the will is what is primarily regarded by the Lord. Therefore as far as a man has the intention and perseveres in it, so far he is introduced into and gradually advances in the purity and holiness of marital love."

ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW

John Harms
Washington, D.C.

To a lay reader of Swedenborg, Rev. Martin seems to oversimplify the case to support this plea: "If a couple are living together in what they consider a marriage relationship, let us not label them immoral because they have not had a public celebration of their union."

This oversimplification is both its greatest weakness and its greatest danger. The weakness is that his position can't really stand the test of close reading of Swedenborg's *Marital Love*. The danger is that it may be seized upon as a license for premarital living together.

Rev. Martin makes much of custom and changing morality, and seems to put down the legalizing of marriage. These are the basis for his suggestion for a new look at premarital sexual relations. Perhaps there is a need for a new look by the theologians, but this attempt seems to fall short.

Certainly, William Wunsch in his "Translator's Preface" to *Marital Love* emphasizes that Christian religious practice must be applied "in the framework of the society of the time, or of the law of the time, or of current ceremony and custom."

But the chapter on "Betrothals and Weddings" appears in no way to provide the kind of support Rev. Martin hopes for on his suggestion for leniency. He hasn't answered, nor do I believe he can, the religious question which has nothing whatever to do with custom, changing morality, or public legalizing of marriage in the terms he tends to cast them.

What we are dealing with in *Marital Love*, it seems to me, is an unchanging process, a religious - life system set in motion by Providence — a system which not only cannot be changed by man or woman but which clearly exists to offer mankind still another choice in the life of religion, the process of regeneration. This, it would appear, is the framework for morality in any age. Can we really separate morality from the religious connection?

Let's read the appropriate passages in their context — the point is made in the following quotations from *Marital Love*:

"305 (1x) *During betrothal it is not allowable to be united bodily.* For thus the order inscribed upon marital love perishes. There are three regions in human minds, the highest of which is called celestial, the middle spiritual, and the lowest natural. Into this lowest the human being is born, but into the higher, which is called spiritual, he ascends by a life according to the truths of religion, and into the highest by the marriage of love and wisdom.

"In the lowest region, called natural, reside all evil lusts and lasciviousness; but there are none of these in the higher region, called spiritual, for into this region a man is led by the Lord on re - birth. And in the highest region, called celestial, marital chastity is in its proper love; a man is raised into this region by the love of uses, and as the most eminent uses attach to marriage, by true marital love.

"It can be seen from this summary view that marital love must be raised from the first beginnings of its warmth out of the lowest region into the higher order to become chaste, whereupon it may be let down chaste through the middle and lowest region into the body. When this is done, the lowest region is purified of its unchastities by the descending chaste. Hence, the final expression of that love becomes chaste too.

"Now, if the gradual order of this love is precipitated by bodily union before that time, it follows that the man acts from the lowest region which by birth is unchaste . . ."

If you accept the idea that there is a certain "order" of things, as Swedenborgians do, then this quote seems to be saying as a *general principle* that premarital living - together disturbs the order of things.

The next passage in the "Betrothal and Weddings" chapter seems similarly implacable in observing orderly life.

“306 (x) *On the completion of the period of betrothal, the wedding should take place.* There are ceremonies which are only formal, and ceremonies which are also essential. Among the latter are weddings.

“The following reasons establish the fact that weddings are among the essentials, to be solemnly observed and formally celebrated. 1. Nuptials put an end to the previous state inaugurated by betrothal, which was chiefly a state of the spirit, and make the beginning of the succeeding state to be inaugurated through marriage, which is a state of the spirit and of the body at the same time. For then the spirit enters the body and acts there. Therefore on the wedding day they put off the state and also the name of bridegroom and bride, and put on the state and the name of partners and bed-fellows.

“2. The wedding is the introduction and entrance to the new state, in which the young woman becomes a wife, and the young man a husband, and the two one flesh. This they become when their love unites them in its final expression

“3. The wedding begins the complete separation of love for the sex from marital love, which is effected when in full opportunity for conjunction there is exclusive devotion of the love of the one to the love of the other.

“4. The wedding seems to constitute only a point between those two stated, and so to be a formality only, which can be omitted; but still there is also this essential in it, that the new state beforementioned is then to be entered under covenant, and that consent is to be declared in the presence of witnesses and consecrated by a priest, besides other things which establish it.

“Weddings are also celebrated in heaven, because there are essentials in the nuptials and not until after them does lawful marriage take place.”

So, it appears, while there is some latitude for recognizing changing custom in these passages, there is no justification for changing the concepts of weddings and marriages. The “confusion” we are supposed to be plagued with between the civil and religious functions of the clergy would appear to be mostly in the eye of the beholder.

Much can and will be said about this lively issue. It is indeed a question of the day, and the New Church needs to address it in a serious and sober way, exploring all the ramifications of the subject at hand.

A few other things ought to be said here. For example, it doesn’t make pre-marital sex right or holy to say that half the couples in America are doing it. To imply that this has become custom and thus need not be labeled immoral is an easy conclusion not yet widely shared; or at the very least, is controversial.

And even if that were to “become custom”, are we really to believe it is the sort of practice that fits the natural — spiritual — celestial order as reported by Emanuel Swedenborg? Do we change our interpretation of Swedenborg in lock-step with major changes (or aberrations) in “society, law, or current custom” — or do we stick with the more difficult challenge of trying to keep “custom” within the bounds of religion as we understand it?

It is one thing to tell such couples that the Lord will forgive should they choose this life-style. It is quite another thing to issue what many might construe a blanket pardon based on an oversimplified interpretation of Wunsch’s translation of Swedenborg’s inspired revelation of Holy Writ.

The more charitable and loving course would seem for all of us to reread *Marital Love*, believe in it in true context — and guide God’s children accordingly.

Otherwise, it seems a surrender to the current great invasion of immorality sweeping across the land which some of us think can be turned aside. Much better for Christians, especially Swedenborgians, to fight immorality wherever it exists on the battlefield, than to surrender for fear we may lose some of our young “soldiers”.

THE RIVALS

Freedom and Faith went wooing for a soul;
And Freedom said: “I love the open ways,
Who weds with me shall come and go at will.”

“Who weds with me,” said Faith, “shall wear a yoke;

Linked in his consciousness to Cosmic Law,
Moving between high confidence and awe,
Knowing himself one with all human folk,
With all that is, yet shall this thought evoke

Temple and citadel from dust and straw;
He shall be builder, and shall find no flaw
In dreaming dreams, yet measuring his stroke.”

And the soul answered Freedom, “Freer still
Than he who has no path, is he who stays
Upon the track that runs from goal to goal.”

Arthur Unknown

THE NEW CHURCH IN WEST AFRICA

*Joseph Agbaje
Urbana, Ohio*

HISTORY:

The New Church was established in Owo in 1936. The Rev. Africanus Mensah was the first minister. A teeming number of adherents (700) opened the first Primary School on August 5, 1937. Though the period between 1941 and 1942 was a time of great tribulation, the church quickly spread from the Western to the Eastern parts of Nigeria. Today its jurisdiction extends over four states in that country and even beyond to Ghana, a sister country on the coast of West Africa.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH:

The church comprises six districts in Nigeria and one in Ghana. Owo is the headquarters and Fajuyi Road Society (Owo) is the mother church. It is numerically strong enough to be a district on its own. Owo has a population of about 80,000, lying in the eastern border of the Yoruba Kingdom. It is a typical example of a New Church society in Nigeria.

Each of the six districts of the church in Nigeria has an ordained minister as its Superintendent. There are full time or part time leaders serving the various societies in all the districts. The men are called deacon, senior leader, leader or assistant leader according to their training and experience. The General Superintendent and Bishop is at the head of the organization.

The ministers supervise the societies in their respective districts and administer the sacraments. The conduct of worship services is shared among the church workers and the visiting or resident minister. Our strength in the seven districts is as follows: 33 societies, 9,028 members, 37 leaders.

CHURCH ACTIVITIES:

Society level: Sunday worship is twice, morning and evening all year round, conducted in the local vernacular with native airs vibrating the air. The attendance averages from 30 in small societies to 2,000 at Fajuyi Road, Owo.

Festival and adult burial services are occasions of jollity and pageantry. Fajuyi Road Church is our conspicuous pro cathedral. There, choir practices are held twice a week and are attended by young people 8 years to 35 years, and older. Prayer meeting is held every morning at 5 a.m. Friday is for doctrinal instructions and confirmation classes. Sunday 8:00 a.m. is for the men's class. Sixty to one hundred and twenty adults attend these instructional classes every week.

Each society subdivides itself into bands or clubs. This reduces the possibility of some members being inactive. A band has a membership of 120 and some not less than 5 to make it viable and equally enjoyable. They meet fortnightly for entertainment, self help and most specifically for supporting the church.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT

There are two, junior and senior. The Junior has among its members, a scouting group. They are either in the primary or high school. The seniors are men and women employed in various walks of life, and some of them are rising to important posts in the community today. The Bishop is organizing a group for the juveniles.

THE WOMEN'S LEAGUE:

Each society in a district has a band of the women's league. They are pace setters for men in their indomitable zeal for the betterment of the Lord's work. The money they raise is often shared between the care for orphans and the augmentation of their church workers' stipends. It is recently proposed that a district conference of the women's league be inaugurated.

THE DISTRICT BOARD:

The District Board meeting is held quarterly and in rotation among the societies in the district. The main objective is the welfare of the society and the promotion of justice to the individual within the lines of the doctrine and

the conference constitution. Below are the main duties:

1. Vigilance over church policy and conference resolutions.
2. Caters for the good of the ministers and leaders.
3. Handles the affairs of the Women's Leagues and other associations.
4. Advises on fund raising and disbursements.
5. Promotes internal investments for the translation of church literature, and marketing the products through the New Church Book-store.
6. Supports church expansion or out-reach program.
7. Sponsors Educational Endeavours:
 - (a) Primary and High Schools
 - (b) The New Church College accepts leaders sponsored by the district board.
 - (c) Finances youth seminars at the New Church College.

There are 14 primary schools and 2 high schools in Owo founded by the society. The Federal Government runs them but they bear our name, and we have the right to organize our doctrinal instruction to our children who attend the schools. As a matter of fact, our District Board was instrumental in the opening of the Obalatan Community School at Ilupeju, Ekiti.

MY PLANS AND DUTIES:

In the first place, I commit my ways to the Lord and ask that I be guided aright. Without any doubt, the education that I am now receiving in America will enable me to fit into the following positions:

1. Working intimately with the members, leaders, ministers and the Bishop for the advancement of the church in West Africa.
2. Coordinating our church affairs as the District Superintendent at Owo.
3. Upgrading the New Church College in Owo so that our ministers can have the opportunity to higher education through it.
4. Performing National Graduate Service as may be directed by the Federal Ministry of Education.
5. Work with the ecumenical group of churches in Ondo State.
6. Establish an Experimental New Church Media Center to meet the doctrinal instructional needs of Nigerian New Church students, primary through college, with out-

reach programs on tape, slide and movie.

7. Promote the idea of an evaluation team to advise the Nigerian New Church Conference on self-evaluation in a rapidly changing society.

I am happy that I have this opportunity to tell our readers something about Nigeria again. I feel indebted to you all. Neither my future plans nor my words can adequately express my appreciation of the support and care that I have received since my arrival in this country. I will convey to my people in Nigeria, men and women of the church, your outstanding benevolence. Surely, there is a lot that my people can emulate from the Convention, the Women's Alliance, and Auxiliary bodies.

This year's Mite Box will assist Rev. Agbaje's New Church program in West Africa. Send Mite Box contributions to the Women's Alliance Treasurer,

Mrs. Robert W. Tafel
115 Treaty Road,
Drexel Hill, Pa. 19026

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE XIV — Augmentation Fund Committee

Shall be amended by the following sentence — "Committee members who have served for two consecutive three year terms shall not be eligible for immediate re-election."

ARTICLE XVII — Board of Education

Shall be amended by adding the following sentence — "Board members who have served for two consecutive three year terms shall not be eligible for immediate re-election."

Philip Alden, Chairman
Committee on Amendments

Homework For Convention

On the next page you will find two more entries in our *Messenger - Daily Bread* essay contest. Two entries were printed last month, and more essay contributions will be featured in upcoming issues of the *Messenger*.

We are printing these essays for a definite reason, namely — to promote and stimulate your thinking on our Convention theme —

"Being Alive in the New Age".

What does this mean to you?

THE NEW CHURCH IN THE NEW AGE

Clayton Priestnal
New York, N. Y.

The world is battered and broken; the human spirit wavers between hope and despair; man's tranquility is shattered by war; greed and wilful waste deplete the earth's resources; materialism is rotting the fibres of society; permissiveness is perverting marriage and human relationships. These defects mark the temper of our age; they are symptoms of a sick social order.

Does the church make the age or the age, the church? Let sage and simpleton debate the question. If we could listen to the wisdom of angels we would learn that without the spiritual truths given to the world through the doctrines of the New Jerusalem there will be no "new age". Until the Lord's truth leads men to an altruistic life, the old decadent epoch will remain.

In this age of agony, man through science has achieved wonderous things, but how much has his technology taught him about human conduct? With confidence and precision he has sent space vehicles to the moon and astronauts have explored its surface; man-made satellites have been projected far beyond the gravitational pull of the earth to orbit distant planets. Success in these ventures has been made possible by painstaking study and close attention paid to thousands upon thousands of minute details. Is not the human mind far more complex than the machines of science? If so, the knowledge and the use of multitudinous truths are needed to lift the spirit of man to high elevations of motivation and conduct.

In its endeavor to meet the needs of the age the Christian church rarely goes beyond expressing generalities, vague and faulty ones at best. Faith in immortality is affirmed but the nature of the spiritual realm remains a mystery; the Word of God is pronounced holy but exactly why is not explained to a degree satisfying to the rational mind; love is given preeminence without carefully defining what love is; little or no distinction is made between civil, moral and spiritual good. Unfortunately generalities are of limited help in solving the problems of the individual in a complex society.

The New Church possesses the detailed theology required before man can truly know himself and perceive his God-given destiny, thus it is in a position to provide needed means of regeneration. To impart spiritual truths and to encourage their use is the mission of the New

Church in the decades and centuries which lie ahead.

Perhaps some future generation of mortals making life's long pilgrimage will be perceptive enough to recognize and appreciate the truths revealed in the Lord's Second Coming. When this takes place a far happier age than ours will rise in splendor like a morning star.

Betty Drummond
Kitchener, Ont.

The New Age is the Second Coming of our Lord. It is the beginning of wholeness.

Everywhere there are signs that people are becoming aware of their potential as children of God. Our understanding of our spiritual dimensions is expanding. We seek a deeper inner reality in meditation, dream study, psychic exploration. Disenchanted with old theologies, the young seek almost desperately for new forms of religion.

In the writings of Swedenborg the New Church has a treasury of insights to offer the world.

We are because God is — this concept of God as the creator, sustainer, and the source of all life, when truly understood, gives a feeling of wholeness. Each individual person is blessed with the indwelling presence of the Lord.

How much more inspiring a doctrine is this than the spectre of original sin!

The Bible made truly 'Holy' by the understanding of deeper spiritual meanings instead of literal dogmatism that makes a mockery of the very intellect God gave us.

The insight into life after life which abolishes forever the picture of a wrathful God judging people and condemning them to a lake of hell-fire.

The New Church must help people to understand that we judge ourselves *daily* by our actions and the motivations of our hearts.

Finally, when we begin to extend truly unselfish love to all mankind as our Lord demonstrated in his every action, then we will not have to ask if we are living in the New Age — we will know.

The challenge of the New Age to the New Church is to make known the Second Coming of our Lord and to provide a rich environment for the spiritual growth of those who are earnestly seeking wholeness.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Urbana College Scholarships

Urbana College President Ronald D. Patzer announced recently that the college has established a Wickersham Scholarship fund, in memory of the late Rebecca Johnson Wickersham, an Urbana native who donated over half of her estate to the college.

The fund will provide over one hundred \$500 scholarships each year to high school seniors from ten central - Ohio counties who have demonstrated continued improvement during their high school careers.

These scholarships are actually worth \$2,000, Patzer noted, as they are renewable for up to four years provided the student maintain a specified grade point average.

The daughter of Lewis Johnson, a prominent attorney in Urbana in the early 1900's, Rebecca Johnson Wickersham attended Urbana University in 1908.

Modern Version of Lord's Prayer Approved by Anglicans

The Church of England has approved a new version of the Lord's Prayer that puts the prayer in the modern vernacular. The changes are part of the process of revising the Book of Common Prayer, essentially unchanged since 1662.

The new version, also used by the Episcopal Church in the United States, follows:

"Our Father in Heaven, hallowed by Your name, Your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Do not bring us to the time of trial, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are Yours now and forever.

Amen."

A CHALLENGE FROM CONVENTION'S PRESIDENT

Increasingly, as a Church, we feel the need to spread the message of the New Church beyond our boundaries. In our meetings, Retreats and Summer Camps, we get excited about our Church, the vision and experience we have of renewal, the potential that is present in every

person who is seeking to know the Lord in a more personal and loving way and to live a more wholesome, complete life.

We want to share this with others. Thus, the General Council and the Planning and Development Committee place a challenge before us.

Call your people together. Do some dreaming. Some serious thinking. Within your group there are people of talent, of dedication, of vision. You are familiar with your community, your neighborhood. Bring your enthusiasm! Share your ideas! "What might we do to reach out beyond ourselves to make our Church a more useful instrument in the Lord's hands?"

Give yourselves some time. Let your ideas take form. Let a program evolve . . . grow.

Think through the details of your program. How can its parts be implemented? What do you hope to accomplish? What will it cost?

Now — you are ready to send your proposal to Roger Paulson at the Central Office, 48 Sargent St., Newton, Mass. 02158. The General Council, at its June meeting and/or its mid - winter meeting in January 1979, will study your project and, upon acceptance, will provide matching funds to help you carry it out. If, for instance, your program has a price tag of \$1,000.00, the General Council will defray one - half of this cost.

Begin now! Let's move forward toward a stronger, growing, more useful Church.

Eric Zacharias
President.

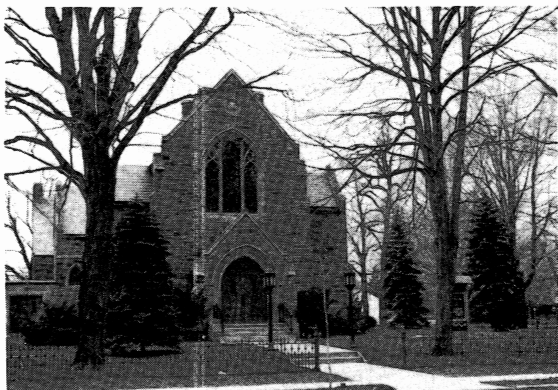
CONVENTION CALENDAR

C.A.M., Newton	April 12 — 13
P. and D., Newton	April 13 — 15
S.S.R. Bd./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
Dept. of Publications, Philadelphia	Sept. 28 — 29

1978 CONVENTION HOST CHURCH

145 YEARS IN KITCHENER, ONTARIO

*Fran McIntosh
Kitchener, Ont.*



**Church of the Good Shepherd
Kitchener, Ont.**

When people ask which church I attend I usually reply "The Church of the Good Shepherd — that pretty, gray stone church on the corner of Queen and Margaret." Occasionally, if I sense a deeper interest, I'll answer "The New Church — we base our beliefs on the writings of Swedenborg." That answer is always good for an hour's discussion at least! But I rarely think of my church as the culmination of the lives and efforts of its members over the past 145 years. And that is how I'm thinking of it today.

Any student of history will tell you that a country without a memory of its history is like a man with amnesia — unable to make accurate judgements without past standards to go by. Delving into the dusty archives of church history can be more than an interesting exercise!

The Kitchener Society goes back to a book bindery in 1833, where Christian Enslin gathered a few friends to read the works of Swedenborg. Enslin was one of the early members of a wave of German artisans who arrived in Berlin (Kitchener) in the 1830's and gave the town a new industrial face to replace the rural outlook of the area's Mennonite founders. Six days a week the newcomers made clocks and buttons, bound books and wove textiles, and on the seventh, met in Enslin's ORCHARD or his book bindery to read the works of Swedenborg. Names still prominent on the rolls of this church and this community

are heard from the past — Ahrens, Rothaermel, Benton, Ruby, Knechtel, Hachborn, Doering, Hendry.

By 1842 they felt the need for a more permanent home, and united with three other congregations to build the "Free Church", a small frame church, built on the site of our present City Hall, the Oxlea Building. The building was used as a school after the congregation built separate churches. "Waste not, want not" has always been a highly regarded motto in this area!

A New Church missionary, Rev. John Harbin arrived in 1843 and became pastor the year later. He was trained as a surgeon in the British Army and often assisted the area's first doctor, Dr. John Scott. A friendship developed and Dr. Scott became a church member. The Rev. Mr. Harbin was an ancestor of the Ruby family, still active in the Church of the Good Shepherd.

By 1847 the Free Church was crowded. Another site in the heart of downtown Kitchener was chosen, and a frame church constructed at the cost of \$400. It was called the "New Church" to connect it with the prophecy of the second coming. A Sunday School was opened and the congregation affiliated with the General Convention of the New Church of America. In 1851 their revered pastor died, and the congregation was served by a lay leader, Adam Ruby, and missionaries, and after a short series of pastorates, the Rev. F. W. Tuerk was engaged as pastor in 1857. He was to serve the church until his death in 1901 in his 81st year. He guided the congregation through the dreadful years of division which saw the Church split by its left and right wing adherents. Looking back through the minutes of those years you sense the terrible fanaticism and righteous feeling which tore the congregation in two — and are frustrated when, in 1890, the minutes turn into a German script that is incomprehensible to modern readers.

The Rev. Tuerk also served as a missionary, travelling the primitive roads to minister to societies in Port Elgin, Kincardine and Goderich — some 80 miles away on the Lake Huron shore. What a fervor there must have been to spread the teachings of Swedenborg! There were large orders placed for books and tracts, and a complete set of the works of Swedenborg was donated to the Berlin Mechanic's Institute, the early library in this area. Missionaries of the time sometimes walked from town to town in order to stop and sell copies of the writings at homes along the way.

In the 1870's a larger church was built in Berlin, with stone brought in by the farmer members. The first pipe organ in the city was installed in the \$8,000 structure, and the church was named the Church of the New Jerusalem. In his latter years Rev. Tuerk was assisted by Rev. Louis Tafel, who was later called to Philadelphia.

In 1929 the congregation sold their property to Eaton's Department Stores for \$100,000. Immediately after, the depression struck, and Eaton's was not to build until after the Second World War. In the midst of the depression years the Church of the Good Shepherd was built, and dedicated in 1936. At that time the Rev. John Spiers was pastor.

The war years saw us with a series of non-New Church pastors and lay leadership. (Well I remember being impressed by Rev. Maddocks in his airforce uniform!) This uneasy period ended in 1943 with the arrival of Rev. David Johnson, who blew the dust from the old Swedenborgian works and put a new accent on living the Swedenborgian teachings. He served the congregation for 20 years, strengthening our ties with Convention during that time.

When you come to Kitchener you will meet us all — Rev. Paul Zacharias, surely no stranger to any of you . . . our President, Stanley Haigh . . . the Superintendent of the Church School, Fran McIntosh . . . President of the Women's Auxiliary, Maude Gerbracht. Perhaps you will judge for yourself how well we are using the building blocks which our predecessors provided.

WRITERS !

Authors are invited to submit manuscripts for possible publication. Convention's Department of Publication is looking for all types of New Church material — pamphlets, children's stories, books — that will speak to the modern generation. For further information write:

Rev. Richard H. Tafel
200 Chestnut Ave.
Narberth, Pa. 19072

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP?

All Convention families receive the MESSENGER free of charge . . . but the annual cost to Convention is approximately \$7.00 per subscription. If you would like to help pay for your MESSENGER, send a contribution to:

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

MANAGER

Printing and Publishing Foundation.

Swedenborg Foundation invites applications for the position of Manager to replace the incumbent who is retiring. Position requires experience in business administration, accounting, working with printing and publishing companies, book distribution agencies, etc. Salary commensurate with background and experience. Personal interviews with qualified applicants will be held after April 15th. Employment about June 1st. Send resumes to:

Search Committee
Swedenborg Foundation, Inc.
139 East 23rd St.
New York, N.Y. 10010

ADVANCE CONVENTION REGISTRATION

Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, 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 \$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 person 18 years or older. Registration fee **MUST** accompany your registration form. The Registration Fee will be \$25.00 per person if postmarked **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

SUMMARY OF GENERAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

General Council met for its mid - winter sessions in DeLand, Florida, January 19 — 21, at Swedenborg House. All but one member of Council were present. In addition, Roger Paulson, Director of the Central Office, the Rev. Richard H. Tafel, Stewart Poole, and the Rev. Dr. Friedemann Horn were present by invitation.

Council received a report that the church in Bellevue, Washington will shortly be sold, and voted that certain outstanding payables be deducted from the amount received from sale of the property.

The Rev. Paul Zacharias, editor of the MESSENGER, asked that consideration be given to putting the periodical on a subscription basis, suggesting that each Society might wish to subscribe for its own members; by so doing, postage would be reduced greatly, in keeping with Canadian postal regulations. It was voted to adopt the recommendation, but more consideration to details is to be scheduled for the June meeting.

Council authorized the purchase of a "Compugraphic", a new composing machine, for the Central Office which will assist and enhance the work being done for many departments of the Church.

The President and the Secretary were empowered to accept a gift of land in California upon assurance that Convention would not be responsible for state and county taxes.

A beautiful needlepoint altar cloth, the work of Paul Giunta, was presented to the Convention for use at its annual sessions. Council voted its appreciation for this valuable gift.

It was voted to establish a three - member Salary and Honorarium Review Committee, to be appointed by the President, which will report annually to General Council prior to presentation of the budget.

It was voted to increase the Recording Secretary's salary to \$4,000 annually.

It was voted to increase the appropriation to Church camps from \$1500 to \$3000, such funds to be restricted to expenses of qualified Convention staff personnel.

After hearing the report of its Planning & Development Committee, General Council voted to accept its recommendations — in particular one specifying that any proposals submitted to General Council in the future should note what person or agency is to be in charge, what means will be taken for accomplishment, and a time schedule for completion. Director of the Central Office is to monitor the proposals' progress. Also approved was a recommendation that matching funds be made available to Societies developing creative outreach programs.

It was voted to approve the purchase of a new dishwasher for Swedenborg House, inasmuch as many Convention members and organizations are now using the facility.

It was voted to augment the pension for Mrs. Eric Reissner, widow of the Pastor of the Berlin, Germany Society.

An increase of mileage allowance to .15 per mile for persons who use their own cars to attend meetings of Convention's Boards and Committees was voted, such allowance not to exceed the cost of air coach fare. This is in line with the latest IRS ruling.

Permission was given the Sunday School Association to use the MESSENGER as a means of appeal to raise funds for completion of the printing of the Dole Notes.

Permission was granted the Wayfarers' Chapel to use the MESSENGER as a means of appeal to raise funds for a new carillon at the Chapel.

General Council also voted to re - confirm and re - emphasize the fact that Convention does not intend to participate financially in the upcoming World Conference to be held in Great Britain in 1980, but it will keep its members informed on all details.

Respectfully submitted,

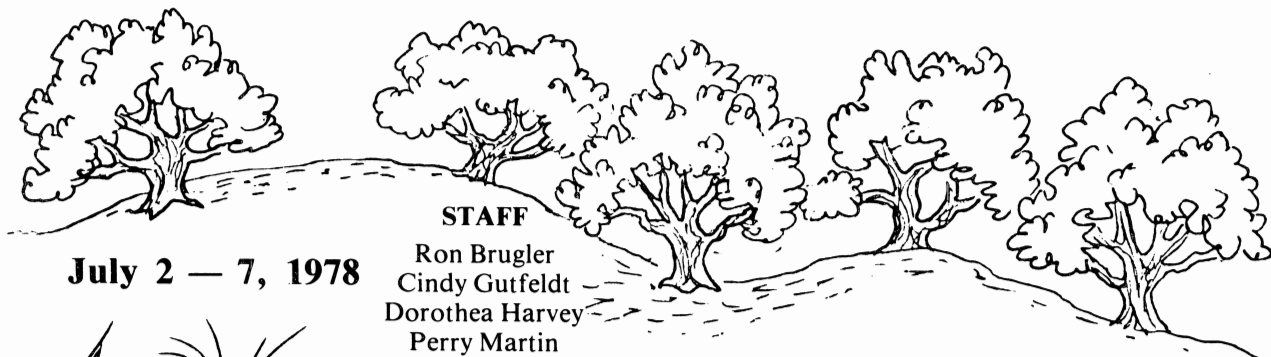
Ethel V. Rice, Recording Sec'ty.

Eric J. Zacharias, President

Adolph T. Liebert, Vice - President

August A. Ebel, Treasurer

POST - CONVENTION CONFERENCE 1978



STAFF

Ron Brugler
Cindy Gutfeldt
Dorothea Harvey
Perry Martin
Lorraine Sando

July 2 — 7, 1978



COMING ALIVE IN THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

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.

The conference will begin with supper on Sunday, July 2, after the close of Convention. We will end after breakfast on Friday, July 7. In order for you and the rest of the group to have a full experience of community, it is necessary to be present for the entire session. The cost is \$100 per person. Accommodations will be in double rooms. Please send \$25 non-refundable registration fee to Nancy Perry, Executive Secretary, Board of Education, 48 Sargent St., Newton, Mass. 02158, before June 1st.

Make checks payable to the Swedenborgian Church.

Name

Address

.....

Will you need transportation from the Convention site to Five Oaks?

THE FRYEBURG ASSEMBLY AUGUST 6 — 27, 1978

"I have heard about the Grand Man ever since I can remember, but I never understood just what it's all about."

"The books of the prophets seem very strange to me. I wish I knew just where they fit into history and what they mean."

"Our church has such beautiful teachings about marriage. If only the young people of the world could hear them!"

If your interest has been aroused by the three comments above, you're in luck, because these themes have been chosen for the 1978 Fryeburg New Church Assembly study program. The Assembly, a family camp for all ages, will have as themes: 1st week: the Grand Man; 2nd week: the New Church concept of marriage; 3rd week: the book of Isaiah. The lecture staff, though not certain at this point, will probably include, among others, the Revs. George Dole, Friedemann Horn, George McCurdy, David Rienstra, F. Robert Tafel, and Bill Woofenden.

Anyone who has ever attended the Assembly can tell you that each year there is challenge, learning and growth. And of course there are the matchless beauty of the mountains and river, the opportunities for recreation and relaxing, the bountiful and delicious food, the sound sleep in the crisp Maine climate, the laughter and fun.

If you read the February *Messenger*, you know that this is to be a special year, as the Flames, the young people's organization of the Assembly, are celebrating their 50th anniversary, and we expect to see "old Flames" from every time and every corner of the country. The study program will be as rewarding as ever, but the fun and frolic will be extra special.

If you have not been regularly receiving the annual Fryeburg bulletin, and think you might like to attend, please write Mrs. George D. McCurdy, 592 Oak Street, Westwood, MA. 02090. Soon the current bulletin, listing rates and other information, will be sent out. We hope to see many new faces, as well as many which we haven't seen in a while. Add yours to the picture!

WE GET LETTERS

FUNCTIONS OF MINISTRY

Dear Paul:

Amid the controversy over the ordination of women we ought to analyze the many and varied functions of the clergy. This is commonly done in industry for each occupation and is known as job analysis.

Without marking the supremacy of any one, four broad categories of clerical functions suggest themselves to a layperson: the priest, anointed to officiate at the altar, celebrating the rites and sacraments; the rabbi scholar and teacher, expounding the gospel in sermon and discussion, bringing the Word to bear on our lives; the counselor confessor and repository of confidences, to whom one may repair in perplexity, doubt and temptation for strength and guidance; the comfortor and compassionate companion, sharing our suffering, sorrows and joys.

In these we see the potential for combining wisdom and love in the service of humanity. Who can judge whether man or woman is preeminently better equipped? What is supremely required of an individual is a sense of calling and the dedication and humility of a true servant of God and man. This is a realizable hope. To expect any individual to possess equal strength in all categories is unrealistic.

Gustave Bischof
Garden City, N.Y.

REPRINTS REQUESTED

Dear Paul:

Just wanted to say again how much I appreciate the excellent job you are doing as editor of the *Messenger*.

I thoroughly enjoyed the article written by Rev. Richard Tafel ("The Swedenborgian Church" — February issue). It answers the questions for many who at the Almont Retreat asked, "How do we explain our Church to strangers?" Perhaps this section could be reprinted for distribution for a nominal price. I think we could certainly use it.

Mary Crenshaw
Detroit, Michigan

LET SOUTH AFRICA FIND ITS OWN SOLUTIONS

Dear Sir:

No, I am not a Swedenborgian, but I do read the *Messenger*, and, if there is no other Canadian with the guts to dissent from your policy statement on Southern Africa, I'd like the opportunity to do so.

Your country and mine were founded by those who didn't, or couldn't, like it where they were. They moved. In the case of your (U.S.A.) history, when you didn't like something, you solved it for yourselves on home ground — your Revolution and Civil War. Our United Empire Loyalists moved. In other words, resolution was made by emigration or confrontation. Let the South Africans find their own solutions.

Where do you get off by proposing economic intervention to influence the resolution of secular differences in someone else's country? . When you've resolved the secular differences between your own peoples to their, and the world's satisfaction, then maybe you should be giving some thought to proposing interventionist acts which lead to the deprivation of livelihood from those willing to work for them . . .

We still love ya !

Brian Simpson
Gray Creek, B.C.

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.

FROM CHURCH RECORDS

BAPTISMS

BEAULIEU, EPP, FROESE — Susan Amanda Beatrice Beaulieu, Lisa Dawn Epp, and Erin Faye Allison Froese were baptized into the Christian faith at Rosthern, Saskatchewan, on February 19, 1978, the Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiating.

MARRIAGES

BERG — BERG — Henry Berg and Alma Berg were married in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan on February 20, 1978, the Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiating.

RICKARD — JANTZI — Philip Lawrence Rickard and Gertrude (Trudy) Jantzi were married in the Church of the Good Shepherd, Kitchener, Ontario, on February 11, 1978, the Rev. Paul B. Zacharias officiating.

TAFEL — MIRACLE — Rev. Richard Tafel Jr. and Linda Miracle, Kemper Road, Ohio, were married on February 18, 1978, the Rev. Norm Haag officiating.

DEATHS

BEALES — Donald A. Beales, 72, a nephew of the late Rev. William Beales, died suddenly at his home in Toronto on February 13, 1978. The resurrection service was held in Toronto on February 16, the Rev. Paul B. Zacharias officiating.

FISHER — Funeral service for William R. Fisher, husband of Esther Rich Fisher, was held on February 21, 1978, at The Church of our Fathers, Forest Lawn, in Cypress, California, the Rev. Andre Diaconoff officiating.

Almont Assembly Information

Dates for the 1978 session of the Almont New Church Assembly have been set for July 23rd to August 6th. The Rev. Edwin G. Capon, the Rev. Dr. George F. Dole, the Rev. David Holm, and the Rev. Walter Orthwein have been selected for the lecture staff so far. Several other staff members are expected.

THE UPPER ROOM

CLOUD IN THE WEST

*Leon LeVan
St. Petersburg, Fla.*

On an occasion described in the 12th chapter of *Luke*, Jesus said to the people: "When ye see a cloud rise out of the west ye say, There cometh a shower; and it is so."

Jesus was speaking for a Future Time even more than for His own; and on this occasion He did so in terms of a western cloud.

We are familiar with the expression, "Behold, He cometh with clouds." We remember the words, "They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory." When Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James, and John, they saw Him "Overshadowed with a cloud." Jehovah showed himself to Moses on Mount Sinai "in fire and clouds."

A "cloud" in Scripture is one of the signs of the Coming of the Lord. This follows from the fact that Scriptural "clouds" signify the letter of the Word, and the Lord as Divine Truth is in that "cloud."

The Holy Shower

As a "cloud" in the Bible is one of the signs of the Coming of the Lord, so the "shower" from that cloud pictures the inflow and increase of Divine Truths descending into the church and the minds of men.

The Lord's Coming (more commonly called the Second Coming) is not a coming in person and flesh, as at the Incarnation. It is His Coming "in spirit and in truth."

Jesus (Himself the Comforter) said He would come as that future truth - giving Spirit. He would lead men into all truth. Jesus said it. He promised it to the future church, and we must believe it.

According to this view, the Second Coming of the Lord is taking place at this very day. It is the New Revelation of Divine Truths from the internals of the Word. Those truths are published in the *Arcana Celestia*, *Apocalypse Revealed*, *True Christian Religion*, and other writings of the "New Jerusalem."

There we behold the Lord as Divine Truth in the Scriptural "cloud;" and the "shower" from that cloud falls into the minds of all who are willing to receive it. "Ye say there cometh a shower" — an inflow and increase of truth from the Divine Word — "and it is so."

South Wind

After presenting the idea of a "cloud rising out of the west" which would bring the God - given "shower" Jesus spoke of a "south wind" to be followed by warmth or "heat".

The "wind from the south" signifies teaching — teaching of those spiritual and celestial truths from the internals of the Word which the "shower" has brought.

It is, of course, known that the south is that region of the natural world which gives the greatest light. But the south gives more than light. It also gives heat, and it was the "heat" that Jesus particularly meant. "When ye see the south wind blow ye say, There will be heat, and it cometh to pass."

As the "shower" from the western cloud signifies the inflow and increase of Divine Truths from the internals of the Word, so the "heat that comes from the south" corresponds to the teachings and preaching of Divine Goods from the Lord.

In the New Church we know that the "shower" from the "cloud in the west" has already come. The doctrines of the "New Jerusalem" are the "shower of that cloud."

The Second Coming

The Lord is making His Second Coming "in spirit and in truth" even now; and the doctrines of the New Jerusalem are the very "shower" identified in *Luke's* gospel.

The "cloud" has arisen. The "shower" is descending. The "south wind" is moving through widely - separated regions of the earth — from Europe to Asia to Africa, in both the Old and New Worlds.

It is a gentle wind. It is a moderate wind; but all its moderating currents combine their benevolent influences to form a "wind from the south" blowing gently but persistently through the countries of the world.

Because we so ardently desire the increase of the church — because we feel so immensely the obstacles and frustrations posed by men's natural minds to the goods and truths of the New Jerusalem — we may sometimes feel dismayed if progress is not seen.

Let us be alert to read the "signs of the times." Let us welcome the Lord's precious "shower" and gentle "south wind" as we study and increase in the goods and truths of the New Jerusalem which bring the Second Coming of the Lord to the minds of men today.

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Registration forms should be mailed
no later than June 1st.**