

# THE MESSENGER

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## Tricentennial Coming Up!

## **BETWEEN THE LINES**

*One of the core features of healthy religion is that it has an absolute commitment to discovering truth. This introduces the time-worn philosophical area known as epistemology—or, the study of knowledge. (I can never think of this without remembering Woody Allen's quip, "Is knowledge knowable, and if so, how do we know this?")*

*We usually think of the brain as the main instrument at our disposal for discerning truth. Betty Edwards, the author of the popular book, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*, tells of her breakthrough in discovering the complexity of her own brain. She kept experiencing trouble in her classroom. She would be involved in a demonstration of drawing with her class, when all of sudden she would stop talking in the middle of a sentence. She would hear her voice talking, and she would think about getting back to the sentence. But finding the words again would be a terrible chore, and when she finally did get back on track again, she would no longer be in contact with the drawing, which suddenly seemed difficult and confusing. One day she hit upon a powerful insight: she could either talk or draw, but she could not do both at the same time.*

*I am sure that I am not telling anything new to many of you when I mention that modern brain research shows that the human brain has two hemispheres, typically called right and left. They regulate separate functions of the mind, and ne'er the twain shall meet. The left side oversees operations such as logic, linear thinking, mathematics,*

*and rational mental processes; the right hemisphere oversees spatial, imagaic, poetic, intuitive mental processes. The right is dominant in some people, but by far the majority of us rely chiefly on our left hemisphere during most of our waking hours. The right side comes to the fore during sleep.*

*We might factor in here Swedenborg's oft-repeated teaching that the masculine and the feminine have equal roles in the quest for a whole understanding of reality. I wouldn't be the first one to link left-brain thinking with a masculine approach to truth and right-brain thinking with a feminine approach to truth. (I am reminded of Coleridge's remark: "I have known strong minds with imposing, undoubting, Cobbet-like manners, but I have never met a great mind of this sort. And of the former, they are at least as often wrong as right. The truth is, a great mind must be androgynous. Great minds—Swedenborg's, for instance—are never wrong but in consequence of being in the right, but imperfectly.")*

*Church can be a place where the twain can meet. It is beautiful to see musicians and church treasurers, poets and theological logicians, the emotional and the rational, the quiet and the boisterous all coming together to sing praises to the One God from whom we all come.*

*James F. Lawrence*



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### THE MESSENGER

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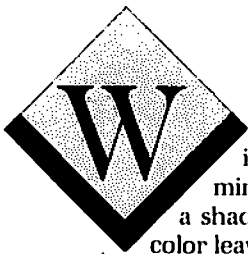
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## Be Part of It!

*Carol Skinner Lawson*



What a scene . . . people of all ages in cheerful summer clothes are mingling with obvious delight on a shady outdoor terrace. A few autumn-color leaves get crunched on the warm flagstones by the gathering. A pleasant conversational buzz hums—it is almost orchestral—as ideas are exchanged. I catch the phrases “whole-person development,” “the brain-mind connection,” “near-death experience,” “transpersonal psychology,” “what Swedenborg says,” and “Swedenborg 101.”

Scholarly academic accents—European, Far-Eastern, and Australian—resonate in the conversational medley. I also hear, “Fantastic!” and other bright exclamation points put out with teen- and college-age vitality. What an enchanting, end-of-the-summer, scene. How

animated the engagement of mind and spirit!

Suddenly, I recognize the event! It is 1988, the last week of August, at a lovely country resort just outside New York City. Scholars, people from church groups, physical and biological scientists, agnostics and inquirers, psychologists, members of professional organizations, and so forth—a fine mix of thoughtful people from throughout the contemporary world, have come together for a world conference. There is a symposium and series of workshops. Sponsors are the Swedenborg Foundation and several public-interest and professional organizations. The common denominator is Emanuel Swedenborg, eighteenth-century scientist and theologian.

All of these people have come together

because of their interest in what Swedenborg has to say to those who grapple with questions of faith and science in the post-modern world. Tonight there will be a final dinner party where one of the scientists will give the results of the scholarly symposium; workshop leaders will respond with how these ideas affect near-death, transpersonal psychology, and other humanistic studies. Tomorrow, the Swedenborg Foundation, at its newly renovated offices and library in New York City, will host an open house where the symposium and workshop participants will say their farewells to each other.

Today, three hundred years after his birth, many people are finding Swedenborg's work relevant. Thus, the theme for the Swedenborg Foundation's Tricentennial program, which will culminate in the 1988 world conference described in the imagery above, is *The Vision Continues*. The Foundation's program includes a number of events taking place throughout 1988, as well as the production of new information materials to support these events. These are:

- **The 1988 World Conference** in the New York City area, a program in which scientists and scholars will speak and lead interested participants. The conference will emphasize holistic thought and bridge-building between various disciplines. Several organizations will be invited to sponsor workshops on related studies.
- **A Swedenborg Film Festival** to be held in this country and abroad at universities, public libraries, medical centers, hospices, and nature centers, etc., throughout the 1988 year. The film viewings will often be followed by discussion periods. Sponsors will be the universities, public libraries, and other centers where the Swedenborg Foundation films will be shown, made possible by small grants from local New Church societies and groups. Information on the Film Festival has already been sent out to New Church groups in the U.S. and abroad.
- A new motion picture, **Swedenborg, Scientist**, is in the research phase and planned for release at the 1988 World Conference.
- A travelling museum exhibit, **Swedenborg, Scientist**, will be shown at approximately six major science and air museums throughout 1988.
- New pamphlets on **Swedenborg, Scientist** and on the work of the

Swedenborg Foundation, are now being written. These will be suitable as handouts for the Film Festival, at the science and air museum exhibits in the U.S., and at other Swedenborg Tricentennial celebrations being planned by other groups throughout the world.

- A comprehensive **Swedenborg Pictorial Anthology**, edited by Dr. Robin Larson, is now in press. There will be an opportunity shortly for New Church people to place pre-publication orders. This large, beautiful work of museum quality, containing over 100 illustrations, will grace anyone's reading table or library.

In forming the above program, John R. Seekamp, president of the Swedenborg Foundation, has contacted all Swedenborgian organizations, worldwide, and obtained suggestions for the Tricentennial from many people. These church groups have been encouraged to join the Foundation in using the theme *The Vision Continues* together with the symbol designed by Paul Maring, *Messenger* Art Director, as shown above. Although strictly a publishing house and not connected officially to any New Church organizations, the Foundation will, nevertheless, do everything possible to support—with copies of the Tricentennial symbol, the Foundation films, a special tricentennial press release heading, and the new pamphlets about the Swedenborg Tricentennial events being sponsored by New Church groups throughout the world.

President Seekamp will be making further announcements as plans progress. ◇

*Carol Skinner Lawson is chairman for the Tricentennial Committee of the Swedenborg Foundation.*

# Women Among Clergy: Broadening Implications

Susan Turley-Moore

*"Wherever the Gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her." (Mark 14:9)*



A striking article, "On Silencing Our Finest," written by the Rev. Will Campbell, a Baptist preacher for 44 years in Mississippi, appears in the September 16, 1985 issue of *Christianity and Crisis*. Mr. Campbell opens his article with this historical account of the execution of Maeyken Wens, a female Anabaptist:

(She) had been arrested for proclaiming the Gospel of Christ as she understood it from her personal reading of the Scriptures, and from study and discussion of it with others of her sisters and brothers. She withstood the inquisition of ecclesiastics and the bodily torture of those in civil authority. When she would not recant after six months of imprisonment, and would not promise to cease her spreading of the Word, she was sentenced to death. Included in the sentence read by the court was the instruction to the executioner that her tongue should be screwed fast to the roof of her mouth, so that she might not testify along the way to the place of the burning. The day after her execution her teenage son, Adriaen, sifted through the cooled ashes and found the screw with which her tongue had been stilled. Three other women and a man died that day for the same offense.

Four hundred and eleven years later, June 13, 1985, many thousands of Maeyken's spiritual relatives gathered in the convention in Kansas City and resolved that women should not be ordained as ministers.

current ecclesiastical decisions, Campbell goes on to report that,

Though there is considerable opposition to the resolution on the ordination of women passed by 59 percent of those voting a year ago, [in the Southern Baptist Convention] the effort to rescind it did not make it to this year's agenda. To preserve the spirit of alleged harmony, women are still adjudged unqualified to be ministers because they discovered sin first. One might think that since they have been at it longer they would be more competent in identifying and casting it out. But logic has never carried much weight when mischief and foolishness reign . . .

Mr. Campbell continues, "All of us might also hear some words of Kenneth Chafin, a Baptist seminary professor known neither for toadying to special interest, nor to knee-jerk liberalism. These words should be heard in Nashville, Rome, Canterbury, and the rest. . . .

The best students I have at Southern Seminary are women. They've got better minds and better backgrounds. They are better at preparing sermons than anyone else I have in the class. And yet the most ill-prepared, uncommitted, limited man I have has a better chance for ministry in our denomination [Southern Baptist] than some of the most brilliant people I teach. Until the pulpits of this land begin to deal with that, we are wasting not just half of our gifts, we are wasting probably 60 percent of our gifts.

The General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches, like many of the major mainline churches, has forged ahead with the feminization of our clergy. Currently, we have eight active women members of the clergy out of approximately 45 active clergy-persons worldwide. For several years running, at least half of the students training for ministry at our seminary in suburban Boston have been women. So on the external

level, we have taken the historical step to include women in the ordained ministry. But we can and must go further.

### **The Feminine Principle in Church Life**

If we are to honor and build upon the basic Swedenborgian concept that the feminine and masculine principles are equally important complementary functions, then we need to examine what those implications are for the various aspects of church life.

For instance, our image of God is probably as basic to church life as any other single element. God is our ultimate source of love, truth, comfort and renewal. As the source of all goodness and truth, God is also the source and containant of femininity and masculinity. Realizing this we might wish to look at how we create our images of God, for if we are to value and worship God in as great



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of God's attributes, as reflected  
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a totality as possible, we must choose our images consciously.

God as "Father" only will not do for many of us anymore. God as Father only excludes some of God's most precious attributes. We have plenty of biblical passages to draw upon in including feminine images for God. In Isaiah 42:12, Moses implies that Yahweh conceived and bore the people of Israel and that Yahweh should be the one to nurse Israel at the breast. Again in Isaiah 49:15, Yahweh compares her love for Israel to the love a nursing mother has for her baby.

We find in Hosea 11:1,3-4 that Yahweh teaches Ephraim to walk and feed the Israelites. In Isaiah 66:12, we are told that Yahweh will comfort us like a mother. Furthermore, Yahweh does the customary "women's work" of putting food and water on the table, in many passages. In Exodus 16:11-16, Yahweh provides meat and bread; in Number 11:13-32, Yahweh sends quail in the wilderness; in Deuteronomy 32:13-14, Yahweh feeds the people honey, oil, butter, milk, wheat and wine. In other references, Yahweh is like a seamstress, keeping the people clothed, or is like a midwife (Psalm 22)

delivering the reader to the mother.

Our lack of inclusiveness of God's attributes, as reflected in our liturgy, comes across strongly to newcomers. How can we overcome the resistance to linguistic revision of our hymnal to include feminine imagery of God? Churches of many demoninations have begun referring to God at times as Higher Being, Ultimate One, Principal Parent, Divine Redeemer and Sustainer, Source of All Good and Truth, as well as referring to God as our Mother and Father.

It should not be difficult to talk of God in maternal imagery and feminine metaphor. After all, woman was also created in the image and likeness of God. Given this, the question echoes against the walls of our empty sanctuaries: "When will the name of God as our divine Mother be heard as Holy, rather than labeled as female narcissism, sinful or anti-biblical?" It remains to be seen whether our church will begin to seriously discuss the issues and implications of God, Our Mother Who Art In Heaven, Hallowed Be Her Name. Perhaps when Divine Mother is spoken to from the sanctuary, new witnesses will arrive to hear the revelation.

Another place to move ahead in our implementation of inclusiveness is in the education at our seminary. While our student body may be heavily female, the curriculum has much room for improvement in this area. We need classes in feminist theology, philosophy, ethics, and church history, to name just a few of the application. Women in the Bible participated in the covenant process, served as examples of devout faith, and were loved by Jesus.

Our seminary is where we train our future ministers for leadership positions in our churches. An interesting study was published last year in *Psychology Today* which documented the differing leadership styles of men and women. While allowing that the study was making a generalization that could be countered in specific instances, nevertheless they endeavored to show that women managers in the corporate world are showing great promise as managers of personalities, considerably superior to their male colleagues, and suggest that this bodes well for the eventual rise of women on many corporate ladders. Just so, let us be aware that women pastors often have different skills and styles of leadership than men pastors. This can be a strength for particular parishes.

We also must be sensitive that our subtle and largely unconscious attitudes do not lead us to exclude people of color from positions of leadership. As a very heavily white church,

we might see this as one of our weaknesses, for we embody such a small part of God's family. Our principle of inclusiveness should cleave to including that which makes us stronger, more healthy, more representative of the spirit of God. Let this principle be our only standard.

### **Inclusiveness to Ideas and Worship Forms**

Our move toward greater inclusiveness is a strength that we can expand. For instance, the Swedenborgian Church offers a theological witness to the New Age movement. These various seekers of spiritual growth



**It is out of such universalizing themes that New Age seeker often communicate genuine appreciation for Swedenborgian theology.**



generally emphasize the individual's journey towards wholeness of personality, subsequently leading toward a spiritual awareness of universal unity. Swedenborgian theology supports this New Age challenge with the biblical understanding of God as divine balance of love and wisdom, as well as with its doctrine of correspondences, connecting nature with spirit.

In addition, Swedenborgian theology clarifies the Christian concept of love toward the neighbor as love toward the universal human race as one family united in God. The universality of identity emphasizes the value of interdependency as co-creators in God's world, rather than a nationalistic pride, which emphasizes distrust and fear of our connectedness with other nations.

It is out of such universalizing themes that New Age seekers often communicate genuine appreciation for Swedenborgian theology. Even more, the claim that they now have a deeper understanding of the mission

of Christ often attracts them to attending a Swedenborgian worship service.

Unfortunately, our inclusiveness does not extend to the form of the worship service. The young people who come are put off by an expression of worship that shows no signs of being touched by the spiritual revolution taking place for the past twenty years. On the other hand, many church members are truly seeking personal growth experiences from a biblical understanding, and they wish to pursue these within the context of the traditional forms, which have weathered the test of time and have proven themselves to be bearers of stability.

Why cannot our local societies have room for both? Can we not find the common ground for inclusiveness? I trust in the universality of human experience, and that it can guide us toward new abilities to communicate with those different than us. We are currently walking a tightrope, attempting a tenuous balancing act between the forces for tradition and those for innovation. The resulting compromise is often akin to ice-milk: it doesn't really satisfy those who want great taste or fewer calories.

Despite these differences and tensions, however, there exist unifying forces within both people who seek tradition and those who seek innovation. People of all backgrounds are concerned with the quality of their family life, with emotional and spiritual growth, with health, peace, economic security, and with their relationship to God. Holding to this, we will find our way. ◇

*The Rev. Susan Turley-Moore is a pastoral psychotherapist who has held pastorates in Los Angeles, and Portland, Maine.*





## God Talk

*Paul Zacharias*

This is a series of impressions, feelings and convictions I have about God. Over the past 30 or 40 years I have changed many of my ideas about God; probably it's the same way with you.

My basic unchanging premise is that: God IS perfect Love, Wisdom, Power, Justice and Beauty. God is the One Source of all life. The entire creation nestles in the palm of his hands. God is simply God.

Of course, we can never fully understand or know God, because we are finite limited creatures—we see through a glass darkly—like the blind men who were trying to describe an elephant—each one saw only part of the whole.

Because God was misunderstood and unknown he came into our midst in the person of Jesus Christ. At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus, who was and is Emanuel, God with us. Everything we need or want to know about God is to be found in the Risen Lord Jesus Christ.

I'd like now to share with you, very briefly, nine ideas about God. Something to think about.

1. God speaks to us, and makes himself known to us, in countless ways: mostly in the Bible, but also through other people, poetry, music, art, nature—if we have eyes and ears to receive him. In every truth, every act of love, every form of beauty, is God speaking to us.

2. Here, at this very moment, is the entire world, all of creation, as God sees it right now. To God, everything, the past, present and future is present simultaneously. This means, logically, that we, you and I, will always exist in the mind of God.

3. Strictly speaking, only God can love God. We choose whether we are going to be open channels or closed channels—that part is up to us. But the love we have for God and other people is actually God's love in us which we decide to use or mis-use. We have no absolute life, or love, of our own.

4. What is the place of sin and evil in all of this? Evil is our rejection of and rebellion against God's love, and sin is consciously acting out our evil intentions, which gradually leads into our falling into the shadows and eventual dis-grace (falling from grace). Hell is the reaping of evil we have sown, and ultimately, not being able to love anything or anyone. Wouldn't that be hell! That is the bad news. The good news is that always, as long as we live, God's forgiveness restores what was dead, if this is what we really want.

5. God's intention, his plan, is that we should become beings of light, both here and hereafter; and all the way along the journey, God and we work out our destiny together. Ours is a working partnership.

6. Our present life in this world is our training, our preparation for eternity, and everything that happens to us, if we make the best possible use of it, is conducive for our eternal spiritual welfare and growth. This is the way God has made things. This earth is the place where we must learn to love.

7. God has charge of all creation, and he knows what he is doing. This conviction offers us some peace of mind. A man once complained to Abe Lincoln about the workings of Providence, whereupon the President said, "The Almighty has his own purposes." Precisely, and his purposes are not always our purposes. In various ways God is telling us: "I'm in charge: relax, and enjoy the trip."

8. God always gives us the opportunity to begin a new ball game. He is constantly making all things new. Every day, every year is a fresh new page in our book of life . . . and we write our own story.

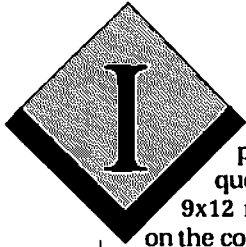
9. Most of all, God wants to complete, fulfill, and make whole everything and everyone. At a deep level all of creation strives toward perfection, and we, you and I, are needed in this eternal Divine task.

A few thoughts about God. Something to think about. ♦

*Paul Zacharias is a writer, seeker and minister in Ontario, Canada.*

# Yes, Virginia, There Is A Hell

Edwin Gould Capon



Is Hell a real place? Are most people going to Hell? These two questions appear on the cover of a 9x12 magazine I received recently. Also on the cover is the request: "For your eternal welfare please read this book." Inside there is a vivid portrayal of a Hell a majority of Christians may have believed in 150 years ago, or back in the Middle Ages. I suspect a majority of Christians in our day would find its view ludicrous, if not revolting. Does Hell have any place in Christian thinking today? Is it something a Christian must believe in?

It would be pointless of course to try to answer this question if we have no prior belief that human life continues after death of the physical body, unless we choose to think of Hell as a state or condition we can achieve or enter into while in this life. Such a view may have merit and may be part of a larger picture of what Hell is. But this booklet is about Hell as a place and condition awaiting the unsaved in an after life, which is the traditional and basic Christian view of it.

That there is an afterlife is a fundamental tenet of Christian faith. It may not be capable of philosophic or scientific proof—or for that matter, disproof—but revelation teaches it, our faith in a loving God seems to require it, and there are those who believe they have had glimpses of it in what are now called near-death experiences. Added to this is the prolonged experience of that life-after-life world of Emanuel Swedenborg, whose experience we count valid. So some of us feel we know there is a life-after-death, and others of us feel simply that we are justified in believing in one. But does this mean that we must also believe that that afterlife includes a place or condition called Hell?

An older view of what awaits us when we die pictured a place of reward for the saved called Heaven and a place of punishment for the evil called Hell. The punishments of Hell were made to be as painful and horrible as the human mind could imagine. Furthermore, one of the joys of Heaven would be the

opportunity for the blessed to witness the torture of the damned. For example, St. Thomas Aquinas wrote "That the saints may enjoy their beatitude and the grace of God more abundantly, they are permitted to see the punishment of the damned in Hell," a far different view than that of some who say that those in Heaven can never be completely happy while others remain in Hell.

I said a minute ago I was speaking of an older view of Heaven and Hell. Actually this booklet is clear evidence that some Christians still hold to this view. Page three warns in words and a lurid picture of the lake of fire that awaits the unbelievers after death. Those who believe that every word of Scripture is literally true are struck with such a picture.



**It is very difficult for anyone with his or her eyes open to deny the existence of Hell.**



But those who can separate eternal truth from the outlook of an earlier day are convinced that such a loving God as was revealed in the face of Jesus Christ could never permit such cruelty.

Because our God is so loving, some modern Christians have insisted that there is no Hell, but perhaps only a kind of short-term purgatory for the evil. I remember a story that used to be told when the Unitarian and Universalist Churches were still separate. The question was asked, "What is the difference between the Unitarians and the Universalists?" The Unitarians believe that we are too good to be damned; the Universalists believe that God is too good to damn us. A Swedenborgian might have added, "We believe that people damn themselves."

What our question really boils down to is this: Are there in fact evil men and women? In Jesus' terminology: Are there goats as well as sheep? If there are, there are hells here, hells such persons will take with them when they die. Consider these three descriptions of Hell and see whether they are not equally applicable here and in an afterlife.

The Trappist monk, Thomas Merton, says that "Hell is where no one has anything in common with anybody else except the fact that they all hate one another and cannot get away from one another and from them-



**"Hell is where no one has anything in common with anybody else except the fact that they all hate one another and cannot get away from one another and from themselves."**



selves." Are there not people in such a Hell here? Will they not take it with them when they die?

John Macquarrie of Union Theological Seminary in his *Principles of Christian Theology* writes that "hell may be taken as loss of being and the lower limit. Loss of being . . . includes every declination from a genuine personal existence and every divergence from the fulfillment of authentic potentialities for being. Thus hell . . . can stand for a present phenomenon and can in varying degrees be experienced here and now . . . Hell is not some external or arbitrary punishment that gets assigned for sin, but is simply the working out of sin itself, as it destroys the distinctively personal being of the sinner." Perhaps he had read the Confessions of St. Augustine who wrote, "For Thou hast commanded it and so it is, that every inordinate affection should be its own punishment."

Swedenborg's description, almost definition, of Hell is quite precise. ". . . the loves of self and of the world with man make Hell, so that a man may know whether Hell or Heaven is in him; for in man himself is either Hell or Heaven. The kingdom of God is within man . . . and therefore so is Hell . . . After death . . . the life of Hell is with those who have loved themselves and the world above

all things."

It is the firm belief of this Church that there is a Hell, or perhaps better said, that there are Hells both in this life and the next and that we create our own Hells by what we prize, by what we strive for and by what we do. If we suffer as a result, it is we who have brought the suffering upon ourselves. And such will be the case in the next world also. God has given each of us the freedom to acquire the life of Heaven or the life of Hell here. And He is ever ready to help us in the achievement of the former. The deciding factor is us.

Personally I think it is very difficult for anyone with his or her eyes open to deny the existence of Hell. For many Christians, however, the idea that anyone will remain in Hell forever is very difficult to accept. It is certainly not required that we do so. Swedenborg says that "The Lord desires without exception to raise all to himself in Heaven." Many Swedenborgians would like to think that over a period of time a Hellish character may be changed into a Heavenly character by growth in Hell. But that does not seem to me to be Swedenborg's view. The critical question is: how essential is true freedom to genuine personhood?

Heaven and Hell are real. You and I do have a choice to make. It is not, however, a choice between future reward or future punishment. It is a choice as to the kind of person we shall become. It is a choice between becoming fully human, loving men and women and letting our true nature become eroded by egocentricity or by materialism. There are many kinds of Scrooge who miss the true meaning of life. And it is not as easy for them to change as Charles Dickens makes out. Hell's grip can be immensely strong, especially for those who look not to God. ♦

*Rev. Edwin G. Capon is senior minister at the San Francisco Swedenborgian Church*

# Hindmarsh and Hindsight

Adrienne Frank

**The early “receivers” of the writings were often vilified, excommunicated and thought to be mad.**

*(The following article is an adaption of an oral presentation given by the author at the Fryeburg New Church Assembly family camp on the Saco River in western Maine. The material was gleaned from a key source book for Swedenborgian Church history: Rise and Progress of the New Jerusalem Church in England, America and Other Parts, Particularly in Reference to its External Manifestation, by Robert Hindmarsh. They were not known for short and punchy titles in those early days of the nineteenth century. To borrow a copy or to inquire into how to purchase a copy of these reminiscences of Hindmarsh, the virtual founder of the organized Swedenborgian movement, write to: Swedenborg Library, 79 Newbury St., Boston, Mass., 02116.)*

Although a member of the New Church (Church of the New Jerusalem) organization known as General Convention in America and Canada for some 40 years, I had little knowledge of its history. I was moved to correct this lack after reading two collateral works on Swedenborg's teachings by the Reverend John Clowes. These were *Commentary on the Gospel According to Mark* and *Mediums*. The latter is a misleading title in no way to be associated with the spiritualist movement's use of the term “mediums.” It is, rather, used to connote the Bible, His Divine Humanity, prayer, preaching, science etc.

In England Clowes was among the first “receivers” — a word used to denote those who appreciated and enthusiastically embraced Swedenborg's writings. Swedenborg wrote in Latin and Clowes became acquainted with those works at a friend's house shortly after the death of Swedenborg, which as you know, occurred in 1772. The Reverend John Clowes was the much respected and beloved Rector of St. John's Church (Episcopal of Church of England) in Manchester for over 50 years. I was intrigued that he was brought up on heresy charges by the bishops of the church. But the charges were dismissed by the Archbishop, and he continued to translate the writings from

Latin into English, while serving his parish and doing missionary work as time permitted. He was also instrumental in founding the Manchester Printing Society in 1782 for purposes of disseminating Swedenborg's theological works.

I was so grateful for these aforementioned books that I wanted to know more about Clowes. Fortunately, we have Hindmarsh's long out-of-print book in our New York Society's library, and I thought I might find some biographical material there, but was disappointed to find little about his personal life. However, he emerged as a leading figure as one of the Non-Separatists, when a group led primarily by Hindmarsh decided a separate Swedenborgian organization was necessary.

The early “receivers” of the writings were often vilified excommunicated and thought to be mad. Nevertheless, a few earnest men, who first met to read and discuss this New Truth from heaven, believed that Swedenborg's work was indeed divinely inspired and that these doctrines expressed and explained the true sense of the Word. They believed then, as I do now, that no external organization could include all of the Lord's New Church on earth. They felt they were not proclaiming a new religion or sect, but rather a new dispensation of Christianity.

Swedenborg's work actually attracted little attention until 1783, when several of these gentlemen placed an advertisement inquiring whether there were any like-minded appreciative persons out there. How many responses do you think they got? Five! Prior to this there had been translations into English of a few of the *Arcana* volumes and several other of Swedenborg's books. Clowes was among the most prodigious in this work. By 1827 translations were already available in French, German and Swedish. About this time, John Lewis, a London bookseller, helped by advertising the writings in glowing terms.

Now a little background on Robert Hindmarsh, the historian to whom we are

indebted for the subject book. On January 1, 1782 he visited his father, a Methodist clergyman, who informed him that a Quaker, Mr. Keen, had some of Swedenborg's writings. Upon borrowing them, Hindmarsh immediately recognized them as of heavenly origin and thereafter devoted his life to missionary efforts on their behalf—a period of some 40 or more years.

Interestingly, he experienced not only the apathy that is also prevalent today, but also ridicule from his associates, who thought Swedenborg's works those of a mad man or at least of a dreamer. One, a Calvinist preacher, said that nothing would please him more than to see Swedenborg's writings set afire and he, Hindmarsh, on top of the pile.

In 1783 Hindmarsh invited the three or four interested individuals in London to meet at his home on Sunday mornings. He had Swedenborg's complete works in Latin. These gentlemen decided they could not in good conscience conceal these treasures from the world. So they called a public meeting for December 5, 1783. There were six present on that evening who drank tea together congratulating each other on their good fortune in having found the writings. How recently have you sat down drinking tea with a group of your favorite New Church friends doing the same.?

About this time a Mr. Glen was returning from his plantation in South America, and the ship's captain presented him with a copy of *Heaven and Hell*. He learned of the group which was meeting in London and enthusiastically joined them. In 1784 he emigrated to the United States but stayed only a short time before moving on again to South America. However, after this departure, a box of the writings which had been sent by Mr. Hindmarsh arrived in Philadelphia and were sold at auction. The books fell into the hands of a group of converts, who soon were meeting at the home of Francis Bailey, a printer and close friend of Benjamin Franklin.

In 1787 there arose the first difference of opinion among the disciples of Swedenborg. In England Robert Hindmarsh felt that a Church separate from the old from the old Christian church should be established, not only because of the animosity of the clergy, but also because he felt that introduction into the New Church is solely through the spiritual correspondent—baptism—in the New Church. That conjunction with the Lord and consociation with the angels in the New Heavens are effected through the Holy Supper taken in the New Church. The first worship service was held on July 31, 1787 and

James Hindmarsh, father of Robert, who had by this time been converted, was chose by lot to officiate and to administer the sacraments to seven people. Five people were baptized. In November of that year this New Church body took possession of a rental chapel in Great East Cheap, London, and the opening service took place on January 17, 1788. The New Jerusalem had appeared on earth!

However, there was an amicable schism. Reverend Clowes remained as one of the chief leaders of the Non-Separatists group maintaining that the writings were not divine and on a par with the Bible. They held the position for non-sectarianism and catholicity, while Hindmarsh and his followers stood at the opposite pole for greater distinctiveness both in doctrine and practice. In 1807 steps were taken to bridge this gap when the Separatists affirmed baptism, education and separation from the old church and passed a resolution to that effect, but pleaded for friendly relations and co-operation with the Non-Separatists. This seems to have carried over to the present day with respect to the relationships between the General Convention and the General Church (Bryn Athyn) organizational bodies.

Fortunately, it seems to me at least, there is also room in the New Church for persons who have become disenchanted with all church organizations. Such people who choose to remain unaffiliated can obtain the writings in many languages through such nonprofit publishing organizations as the Swedenborg Foundation in New York City, Swedenborg Society, London and others throughout the world. Of course to read, study and even understand these Doctrines is not enough. They must be applied to our lives. For after all, are they not the means whereby the Lord Himself teaches those of us who have the desire or need thereof? ◇

*Adrienne Frank, a longtime member of the New York Society, resides in Westport, Connecticut.*

**John Clowes was brought up on heresy charges by the bishops of the church, but the charges were dismissed by the Archbishop, and he continued to translate the writings from Latin into English.**





Phyllis Bosley, Editor

**Don't Forget!  
Make Someone Happy—  
Bring or Send Your  
Mite Box Money!**

**Peter: Part II**

*Jennifer Clements*

*(In the April issue, part 1 of this two-part series appeared in this space. Jennifer Clements of the San Francisco Society has been an AIDS Hospice volunteer since last fall. She graciously agreed to edit portions of her journal so that others may share in part her experience in this important ministry.)*

**Sunday, December 14**

Peter sleeps all the time except when he wakes and calls out for help. When I am at home and the phone rings, I think it must be the news that he has died. I have been seeing him now for almost a month as an AIDS Hospice volunteer and I wonder how much longer he can survive.

**Monday, December 15, 1987**

More sad cries. I think he is grieving for his own death.

**Thursday, December 19**

Sometimes a wave of frustration and helplessness rolls over Peter and he cries out. Peter prefers wearing no clothes since he is always hot. He just has a white sheet pulled up between his legs. His emaciated body reminds me of the paintings of Christ just taken from the cross. A huge and ugly sore and his lifeless legs confirm the image.

**Friday, December 19**

Lots more hallucinating. When I arrive, he says, "I need your advice. I'm in a primo parking space. Shall I move a half inch forward or an inch backward"? He's trying terribly hard to understand. He points to a watch and says that tiny things are so very complicated.

**Monday, December 22**

The sore on Peter's back is huge and angry purple, really appalling. His legs look like Auschwitz. His breathing stops for long periods. He's not eating. His blood pressure is low.

**Wednesday, December 24**

Peter squeezed my hand and that was very moving, my best Christmas present. He seems more calm. Grace, his mother, is afraid Peter will die tomorrow and make all future Christmases into reminders of his death.

**Sunday, December 28**

Peter is more awake today than I have seen him for a week. He makes silly gestures. Very deliberately, he sticks his thumbs in one ear and then the other and wiggles his fingers. Maybe he is trying to make us laugh.

**Monday, December 29**

"Will we ever know?" Peter keeps saying.

**Tuesday, December 30**

Somebody persuades Peter to take a mouthful of water. He lies still for a moment and then with a terrible effort, he spits it out.

**January 1**

Peter opens his eyes which are closed most of the time now and gives me a long look. We are all ready for his death.

### **January 2**

Grace tells me she went into Peter's room this morning and asked him what he was seeing. Peter said, "It's just beautiful." We think he can't possibly speak and then he does. We think he must certainly die but he lives on.

### **January 4**

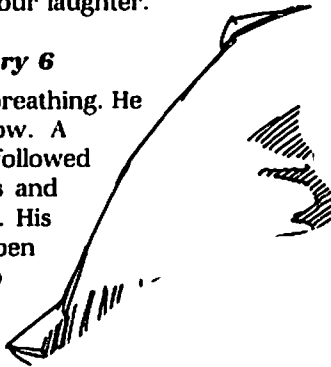
Peter is a breathing corpse. It is a shock to see him today. His mouth hangs open. Twenty seconds of silence and then 4 great rasping breaths. His eyes, always open now, see into a different world. He doesn't seem to be suffering, only waiting, counting those loose breaths.

This afternoon we are all in the room. We talk about the blessing we feel. We are joined in a great peace.

Grace is still angry. "Peter is okay now, but I'm not. When I get home I'm going to go see my minister, and he better not have any wishy-washy answers for me." We all laugh at her and then apologize. We have come to know each other pretty well. Her anger is real, but so is our laughter.

### **Monday, January 6**

Peter is still breathing. He does not move now. A long silence is followed by weak breaths and then great gasps. His mouth is wide open and there are no expressions on



his face. Deep sunk eyes. He looks ancient. Grace says over and over, "This is not my son." We are all dying Peter's death together and somehow it is a real gift.

### **Tuesday, January 7**

Still alive. Soft invisible breaths. Sweating a lot. Eyes staring.

### **Wednesday, January 8**

I pick up the phone and I know when I hear Grace's voice. Peter died last night, quietly. Grace has no grief to share so I say goodbye. I sit on the kitchen floor and cry for a few minutes but feel no grief, no helpless rage, not even much loss. Peter has died well and brought a blessing on us all.

### **Sunday, January 25**

Last night I went to Peter's wake, but I only stayed a short time. My work there is done. Tomorrow I get my next assignment.



*Close Encounters of the  
Real Kind*

## **The Last Days of Harry Chester Buck**

*Marion Stearns Buck*

Having been requested to write an account of the last days of my boy Harry, I will try to do so as best as I can . . . In the Spring of the year 1882, my family, consisting of my husband, myself and six children, were living in Easton, Massachusetts. My youngest child, a girl not six months old, had passed to the other life in November 1876.

In that spring of 1882 diphtheria attacked us, and on the 16th of May our oldest boy, Horace, not quite eighteen years of age, was taken from earth. When he realized that he must go, he spoke calmly and pleasantly of it, and said, "It is all right." In one week from that time on the 23rd of the month, my husband followed our boy. On the 29th my second son, Howard, thirteen years old, was



**Almost his last words were the  
Lord's Prayer, as he was  
accustomed to repeating it  
before sleeping each night.**



with his father and brother. Almost his last words were the Lord's Prayer, as he was accustomed to repeating them before sleeping each night. Then he was gone as quietly as if it was only for a night's rest.

My next child, Harry, eleven years of age, stayed with us until July 8th. The last four days he was with us, he was unconsciously in both worlds at times. He said he saw his father and brothers as plainly as he saw me, and said his father asked where I was and what was I doing. He also wanted us to come to where he was. Harry said, "I told him I would come."

At another time Harry said to me, "There are four girls with father and the little one looks like you." I asked, "What is her name?" He replied, "I do not know." Then I said, "Ask

your father." He did so, and said, "Father says her name is Evelyn." It was my baby's name. My husband had three sisters who were called to go at an early age, and I thought it might be they who were with him. Harry said the little girl was about as big as George (his brother who was then eight years old). My little girl would have been six if she had stayed with us. In a more congenial sphere they may develop in a shorter time than on the earth.

Harry spoke often of his brother Howard and the little girl being beside him. At one time he told me, "Howard brings me water to drink and it does not hurt me like the water you give me; he knows when I want it without my telling him."

At another time he spoke of the house his father and brothers were in, as a large house, as he expressed it, "five times bigger than this one, and I went up a good many stairs to get to the room they were in." As he was very fond of flowers I asked if he saw any. He answered, "Not in the room they were in, but in the rooms I went through to get there I saw some." "What kind were they?" I asked. He replied, "They were kinds I had never seen before."

Once he said, "There is a black-haired man with father." I asked, "Who is it?" His answer was, "I do not know." By the description he gave, I thought it might be an uncle of his father's, one he was much attached to, who had gone from earth some years before Harry was born. I had a small picture of this uncle and brought it to Harry. Before I could say a word, he said, "Don't tell me who it is." He took it, looked at it for a moment, then exclaimed, "Uncle Howard . . . that is the man with father."

He sometimes spoke of other people talking with his father. It seemed to me that my husband was meeting and being welcomed by friends who had gone before. It was a pleasant thought and almost forebade us to mourn for those who still live and in the Lord's good time shall meet again.

One day Harry said, "I told him I would come, and I am going." As he spoke he raised himself in bed as if to go. I said, "You will stay with me a little longer, won't you?" He quietly lay down again, but not long after, he went, never to return.

He had spoken of his little sister (or of the little girl, as he called her) sitting in her father's lap as his father sang to her or told her stories. To me it appeared that my dear husband was happy with his children and the friends who were with him, and although we were left without his visible presence, yet we



should rejoice that they were "all right" as my oldest son had said when he knew that he must go.

*(Exact copy of hand-written and signed account by Marion Stearns Buck)*

Added note by Mary Pratt Pierce:

I had two omissions which my Grandmother told me of when I lived with her for a short time. Her husband's last words were, 'Thy will be done.' Someone asked Harry which he had rather do, go to be with his father and brothers, or stay with his mother and rest. He thought a moment, then said, "I don't care."

The fear of diphtheria was so great that my Grandmother had to read the funeral services at the graves. ♦

*(The above account and added note were given to Esther L. Buck by Mary Pratt Pierce on February 27, 1968.)*



## It's All in Twos

Paul A. Corcoran

Visitors sometimes want to know how many services we have on Sunday, and I tell them two. They are both at eleven o'clock.

One is too formal, has too many ancient hymns and lasts too long. The other is too informal, has too many modern hymns, and lasts too long. There are also two sermons: the one I preach, which is brilliant, witty, and brief, and the one I hear people say is dull, lifeless and far too long.

We have two congregations every Sunday. Both are here at eleven. There's the one the ushers count and the one I count. My group is always larger. The other never seems to catch up. A rule among ministers is known as the fifteen-percent-add-or-subtract-rule. When you tell another minister how many there were in church last Sunday, you add fifteen percent, in case of error. When he tells you how many were in his church, you subtract fifteen percent, for bragging.

It's not just that one of our congregations is bigger than the other. They're also different in nature. Some visitors tell me: "Oh, what a warm, friendly congregation you have. They really made me feel welcome." Others say! "This is a cold church. I was here last Sunday, and nobody even spoke to me." I tell them that we have these two congregations, and I hope they will come back sometime when the warm, friendly one is here.

Everything seems to go in pairs. We have two church bulletins. One we make here in the office, with clear and complete information about everything you need to know. I used to think we had only this one, but people were missing events and saying: "Oh, I didn't know we were having that. It wasn't in the bulletin." I got to wondering what bulletin they were reading. People would call the office to ask, "Does the meeting start at seven-thirty or eight?" and I would reply, "It's in the bulletin—eight o'clock." "Oh," they would say, "I didn't see it there." After a while I realized that there is a second bulletin which a lot of people are getting. Somehow we've got to put that one out of circulation.

We even have two sets of members. There are the ones I know, like you. Then there are others I don't know because they have never been here. Yet they claim membership. Other ministers tell me that they have visited them and learned that they already belong here. I think it means that if they would go to church this is the one they'd go to. I meet some of them now and then in the hospital. They tell me they belong to that church out on Sumneytown Pike, the one made with stones. "You mean Gwynedd Square Presbyterian?" "Yes," they reply, "that's the one." I ask them if they would like to give me that pastor's name so I can notify him that they're in the hospital. "Oh, you needn't bother," they say. "He's a nice guy, but he doesn't do sick calls."

That's when I realize they don't know that we have two ministers on the staff. The other one, who does do sick calls and lots of other kinds of calls, is charming, hard working, a brilliant theologian, very humble, and grossly underpaid. ♦

*This item was snipped from the Fryeburg New Church newsletter.*

## **The Upper Room**

### **Names Written In Heaven**

Leon C. LeVan

**There can be little question that the disciples understood that there was somewhere a far-away heaven beyond the sky where books were kept and where their good deeds were recorded.**

When Jesus was preceeding on his last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, he sent out seventy disciples to teach and preach in the surrounding cities. The report from that first group was so encouraging that he sent out seventy more; and this time the report was so completely enthusiastic that the disciples exclaimed when they returned: "Lord, we can do all things in thy name! In thy name even the devils are subject unto us!" And Jesus addressed to them these extraordinary words: "Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless in this rejoice not—that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice that your names are written in Heaven."

There can be little question in our minds that the disciples must have understood from those words of Jesus that there was somewhere a far-away Heaven beyond the sky where books were kept and where their good deeds were recorded. And that is perhaps what many Christians believe today. We should not ridicule that idea, because it is essentially correct, however much in error some details may be. The true substance of Jesus' statement that "names are written in heaven" is the fact that a complete and permanent record of our lives is somewhere and somehow "written" and preserved; and that record is called in the Bible humanity's "book of life."

Now you will want to know whether this teaching means, for practical purposes, that a man or woman must forever face the record of life's worst thoughts and words and actions. Can we never forget that which has been done? Must we forever face the grievous disorders and miserable actions of our unregenerate days?

To those who mourn over the sins of evils of their former states there are words of comfort given. For actually there are two "books" written—a "book of life" and a "book of death"; and our compassionate God has so produced the Divine Order that presently one book or the other shall be closed and taken from us. The "book of life" is that which is "written in Heaven." The "book of death" may be described as "written in the earth."

Once when Jesus was teaching the people in Jerusalem, a group of Pharisees and their followers brought before him what we may conceive to have been a partly-clad, shame-stricken woman and tried to put Jesus into such a position that he would have to order her death. "This woman," they said, "was taken in adultery, in the very act, and the Law of Moses says that such as she shall be stoned. But what sayest Thou?" Jesus did not argue with them. To all intents and purposes he did not even see them. But he did an extraordinary thing. Without so much as deigning to look at the woman's accusers, he stooped down to the ground, and with his finger he "wrote in the earth."

In a sense, God "writes in the earth" in the presence of every sin and evil in the heart of each person; and only a change of thinking, willing, and doing here in this world can change the writing in the "book of life" from spiritual squalor to heavenly beauty. Write a beautiful book, dear friend. Let its pages be filled with Christian deeds. The book that is "written in heaven" is the life that is lived from heavenly motives and for heavenly purposes, and that is the book of the Christian soul. I still remember someone's exclaiming when I moved to the country many years ago: "Write the most beautiful book in the world." But I say to you: "Write the most beautiful book of life."

Let your days be its pages; your weeks its chapters; your months and years its divisions and parts. Let no day go by in which you do not write something in your "book of life" from the Lord. Fill its pages with generous thoughts, with beautiful impulses, with true actions, with life-giving words, with selfless deeds. Do not be dismayed if you have written some pages or chapters badly in the past. Do not be discouraged if whole divisions of your book may not now seem right. No matter how your book stands at the present time—no matter how much your pages may show unfulfilled hopes or lost opportunities, or even deceitful or angry or shameful deeds—remember your "book of life" is not finished, and its remaining chapters rest with you.

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened. And another book was opened which is the Book of Life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works." Rev. 20:21 ♦

## **Don't Get Crossed Up!**

*Dorothy Travers-Davies*

In this final discussion of the 8th and 9th rules of Swedenborg's *On Tremulations*, two divergent angles have occurred to me. To address Rule 8, let me quote — "In all tremulations the angle of reflection is equal to the angle of incidence."

Swedenborg then explains that in a round vessel full of water these waves return to center; in an oblong they go backward and forward; a rope, hanging in a mine shaft, moves up and down in serpentine coils, (the same takes place in a musical chord); and an echo propels the sound backwards and forwards.

The final rule, #9, says, "In tremulations there are millions of variations." He mentions that the sound and pronunciation of people differ like their faces, and writes, "Every vowel has its own separate sound."

My awareness of vowel vibrations was enhanced when I became an initiate with an internal assembly more than ten years ago and first read, "The Intonation of the Sacred Vowels." Here is a portion. If you speak them out loud, with resonance of tone, you actually might feel the difference throughout your entire body.

"Father, let darkness depart;  
Guard us from far-reaching harm;  
Pardon our hardness of heart;  
Bar every harbored alarm!  
Heal us, Redeemer Unseen;  
Free us from needless ordeal;  
Keep our hearts eager and clean;  
Teach us to seek Thee with zeal!  
Guide us, O Christ Crucified;  
Bind all desire to Thy light;  
Fire us to life magnified;  
Find our ways right in Thy sight!"

There are four more verses addressing themselves to the sound of vibrations of the long a, the o, u and short i.

Swedenborg concludes, "From the above rules (all 9) it can be shown that our mobile life, of our nature, consists in little vibrations, that is tremulations." Speech, hearing, smelling and taste as well as sight, he teaches, are only a concentration of tremulations. "It is the same with the motions of temper," he adds, and thereby gets into the area of

thought and how thoughts have physical properties that flow through the entire body, the membranes of the brain, the fibres, the nerves, and even to the bones.

This is why I call Swedenborg the "Father of Holistic Medicine"! By his scientific investigation he illustrated and wrote to the Swedish Royal Medical Society a treatise explaining the onset of the dis-ease process in the body. Modern science within these past two decades is just starting to realize how attitudes influence the immune system.

In the February *Messenger*, Bob Kirven wrote of the opening of the Bible at the beginning of our worship services, how enriching it is and how meaningful to our shared experience. More than ten years ago, I studied under a man who worked with unseen energies and developed a 'transducer' that measured vibrations and force fields around people and things. This piece of equipment grew out of a divining rod base and could be used effectively only by those who had high mineral energies

Wayne Cook illustrated that an open Bible had an energy field that stretched out more than forty feet; a measurable field surrounding The Word on all sides! (Just as Swedenborg wrote about the vibrations encircling a stone thrown into the water.)

Cook's work was verified by Dr. William Tiller, then head of the Department of Noetic Sciences at Stanford University. He and Cook worked many months together experimenting with the life and death forces. The asymmetrical cross is an example of life energies and enhances those who are near it, wear it or even think about it. But the Star of David and the Swastika both are geometrical symmetries and close down the vibrations and energies of those who are near it, wear it, or think about it.

After many years of teaching and demonstrating these energies, Cook was able to photograph by Kirlian photography, the change of color of the aura when a person was exposed to the cross or the Swastika: in fact to any open, life design or to a closed, death design. In the life instance, the aura was filled with vibrant blues and greens, interspersed with shafts of golden light. But in the shut-down geometrics, the colors were red-brown and muddy.

Christ offered us the "life of abundance" or the life of health protected by attunement into the universal consciousness. For this we need knowledge of our God who is also science, and an understanding of the holistic psychological model or the connection with

**Speech,  
hearing,  
smelling and  
taste, as well  
as sight, he  
teaches, are  
only a concen-  
tration of  
tremulations.**

oneness through universal inspiration.

Emanuel Swedenborg could write about these health principles because he experienced them. His little book *On Tremulation*, was translated in 1899 by C. Th. Odhner. It is still being reprinted by the Swedenborg Scientific Association, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, 19009. ♦



## Reflections on Mirrors

Lon Elmer

While flying across the U.S. recently, I declined the opportunity to rent a headset in order to hear the sound-track of the in-flight movie. I was busy studying algebra, and I'd seen the movie before—twice. However, once the film began, I forgot about the algebra (just as I had when I was in high school 25 years ago) and watched the film—sans sound. With no dialogue or music to distract me, I observed *Peggy Sue Got Married* as it played before my eyes.

The director of "Peggy Sue Got Married," Francis Ford Coppola, takes us through the looking glass. He uses Peggy Sue as a kind of Alice who leaves the world of 1980's recently-divorced motherhood, and returns to her senior year in high school twenty-five years ago.

Mirrors play important parts throughout the film. In fact, it opens and closes with reflected images. In the beginning, we see Peggy Sue at her dressing table getting ready for her class reunion. We see her at eye level, from behind her, so that we see her face reflected in the mirror and her back at the same time. Technically, this is not as easy as it sounds. Because, you would think, "Shouldn't you also see the camera and crew reflected in the mirror?" The film ends with a pull-back from a large wall mirror that is reflecting the scene taking place in front of the camera. Again, there is no reflection of the camera or crew. How can this be?

The technical problems from using mirrors in *PSGM* are handled successfully. The

angle shots are easy; no problem with reflections of camera and crew. It's the straight-on shots in which the camera and crew would be reflected that are the challenge. Coppola overcomes the mirror problem by not using mirrors. He creates the illusion of reflected images by having the main characters face the camera. The seconds, those actresses whose faces we do not see, simultaneously duplicate the actions of the main actresses, whose faces we do see, thus giving the illusion of our looking at the back of a character while she is looking at herself in the mirror—from the character's line-of-sight level. Very clever and very effective.

Mirrors continue to play significant, yet unobtrusive parts throughout the film. Many are shots in which the camera is off to the side of the mirror, thus viewing it at an angle. The mirror in the girls' lavatory at Buchanan High reflects the faces of the girls looking into it. Not just once, but many, many times—the effect of a mirror reflecting the image in another mirror opposite it, so that the reflections go on and on and on and on. In the girls' lavatory, Peggy Sue—the woman with 25 years' more life experience who finds herself zapped back to 1960 high school—says what she sees, while the other girls are still trying to figure out who they are.

A mirror dominating the hallway of Peggy Sue's familial home reflects order, cleanliness, and emptiness—"reflecting" her parents (it's their house) who strove to keep up appearances, even to each other. We, and Peggy Sue (remember, she's a mature woman zapped back 25 years), see through the roles that her parents play with each other and their daughters.

Even Charlie, Peggy Sue's high school sweetheart whom she later marries, has his "mirror." Mounted on the back of his car's sunshade, right where a vanity mirror would be, Charlie has a picture of Fabian, his idol whom he is patterning his life after. All the mirrors, and especially Charlie's picture of Fabian, bring to mind George Dole's line in "Images of Knowing": "the world we live in is the world we perceive."

*Peggy Sue Got Married* uses time-travel to create a personal journey. Peggy Sue, with her mature vision, re-lives her reality of twenty-five years before. She has not only the opportunity to go through the events again, but also the advantage of knowing the outcome. And, like all good time travelers, she connects with people she later realized she hadn't spent enough time with. Yet through it all, she still wonders what it was she saw in Charlie that made her want to

marry him in the first place.

The film's final scene starts as a reflection in a large mirror hanging on the wall of a hospital room. We see a man bending over a bed. A woman is lying in it. The camera pulls back—putting the mirror's image in the background, and focusing on the Now-time statement of the action in the foreground. The mirror becomes irrelevant to the action taking place before us. Coppola has brought us back through the looking-glass; we are in the Present.

Suddenly, the film ended, and my consciousness returned to being back in the DC-10 winging over the U.S.A. For a while I was with Peggy Sue, back in my own high school, thinking of friends from then, and feeling the warmth of returning home from school to one of Mom's dinners. For two hours I went through the looking-glass and saw myself, to quote Swedenborg, "like one who sees something in a mirror and does not know that there is a mirror there." ♦

*Lon Elmer is active with the Seattle area Swedenborgian Society. As one of the chief planners of Convention '88, Lon will be one of the local hosts scurrying about at this year's convention, but he'll have a few spare moments to discuss mirrors and other reflections.*

## OPINION

### Abortion Involves Complex Ethics

Dear Editor,

I have been following the debate in the "opinion" section of the *May Messenger* and read with interest the letter from Julie de Maine Pendleton. I, however, find the questions of abortion and when human life begins a bit more complex than Mrs. Pendleton does.

Prior to my coming to Urbana, I served as chaplain and behavior management specialist at a school for behaviorally disordered adolescents. While I was there the question of abortion came up several times. It is a question that I have given much thought to over the last few years. The young women

who were facing the question of abortion were all unique individuals. Each had a unique family background, a unique environment and a unique personal history. One would not expect them to find the same answer to a question as complex as abortion.

Mrs. Pendleton writes in her letter that the three physicians in her family have practiced medicine with, "'Primum non noceere' (first do no harm) as the basic guide for their profession." I'm not quite sure what Mrs. Pendleton is trying to say by this, but if she is saying that it does less harm in the first place to refuse an abortion, I must disagree. There may be more physical or emotional harm to the mother if an abortion is refused than if it is performed. "Primum non noceere" does not answer the question of when "human life" begins or the ethics or morality of abortion; it is merely a rule to apply in specific cases, the final determination being still quite debatable.

Mrs. Pendleton states in her third paragraph:

Further, Exodus contains a law concerning the striking of a pregnant woman. If she came to no harm, there was no penalty. But if "any lasting harm follows, then you shall give life for life." (Exodus 21:23)

I disagree with this interpretation of the scripture. Exodus 21:22-24 reads in the R.S.V. version:

When men strive together, and hurt a woman with child, so that there is a miscarriage and yet no harm follows, the one who hurt her shall be fined according as the woman's husband shall lay upon; and he shall pay as the judges determine. If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

If the woman was unharmed following her miscarriage, a fine was paid; if she incurred lasting injury following her miscarriage, then a more severe penalty was exacted. It appears to me that the loss of the child was not considered as grievous a loss as an injury to the mother. Note the phrase here is, lasting harm, and the miscarriage was the only point of contention; a judge was to decide the fine. The fine was not set; it was decided case by case.

Mrs. Pendleton goes on to quote from *Arcana Celestia*, 5052:

Angels are present with infants in the womb, and the Lord works through the angels to care for the unborn child.

I agree that this is a relevant passage. It shows that Swedenborg saw that an unborn child was under the care of angels, but the passage does not tell us when this care begins. Is it at conception or later on?

Mrs. Pendleton later quotes *Conjugal Love*, 386:

There are two universal spheres from the Lord for the preservation of the universe—the sphere of procreating and the sphere of protecting what is procreated.

The protection that Jesus gives to what is procreated can take many forms. I remember when my father died several years ago, he had suffered four heart attacks and had survived a stroke and quadruple coronary bypass surgery. He had been informed that his kidneys were functioning at less than one quarter of normal function. We prayed for the Lord to protect him as he faced this new problem. He died that evening. I feel that the Lord had protected him. The Lord protects His children in many ways.

Mrs. Pendleton then quotes from *Divine Love Wisdom*, 390:

When the heart and lungs cease to correspond, separation and death occur. Death does not occur only when breathing stops, but when the heart no longer beats. So long as the heart moves, love remains with its vital heat and preserves life, as is evident in cases of swoon, suffocation and in the condition of fetal life in the womb.

Here again, I agree that the passage would indicate that Swedenborg believed that human life is present in the wombs, but in this passage it seems to be concurrent with the beating of the heart. What about before there was a heart in the fetus?

The General Convention's standing resolution #5 adopted August 3, 1969 states:

Resolved: That the General Convention support the legalizing of abortion in cases where it is responsibly applied for the physical and emotional welfare of those involved. Be it also resolved that such therapeutic abortion shall be considered primarily a matter of concern between the patient, attending physician and personal counselor.

This resolution goes to the heart of the question as well as anything I have read on the subject. Abortion is not something to be entered into lightly, or without much thought

and soul searching. But neither can we condemn it in every circumstance.

**Carl Yenetchi**  
Chaplain, Urbana University  
Urbana, Ohio

## **Leapin' Lizards!**

Dear Editor,

After looking at the February editorial, I would like to say "Leapin' lizards and Great Balls of Dancing Fire!" But maybe should be more dignified and say that I am so very grateful for your clear interpretations of spirituality.

Your definition of "religious provincialism" is very, very timely and greatly needed in this era of great sectarianism, where so many people seem to think that they are the guardians of God's truth. You especially have been "very quick to spot potential allies." I certainly do agree with John Naisbett's predictions about the two kinds of churches that are apt to survive in the remainder of this century (those that are reactionary and those that are synthesizers).

The last few lines of your editorial hit the nail squarely on the head, and I hope strongly enough to drive it down deep: "To the degree that we actually engage in spiritual inquiry with intensity, we will to the very same degree be ready to serve the needs of those searching for higher ground—a ground rising above and beyond that barbed-wire fence posted: religious provincialism." Great!

**Bessie E. Behrendt**  
Great Bend, Kansas

## **Nominating Committee Correction**

The May, 1987 *Messenger* omitted the nomination for the two-year term of the General Council.

## **General Council 2 year term**

► **Hampton Schoch, North Carolina**

I live in North Carolina with my wife Elora. Before my retirement I worked in the textile business. As an isolated member I feel I can be of help on the Council to those in similar situations. I served one year on General Council which I found fulfilling and would like to continue in the two year term.

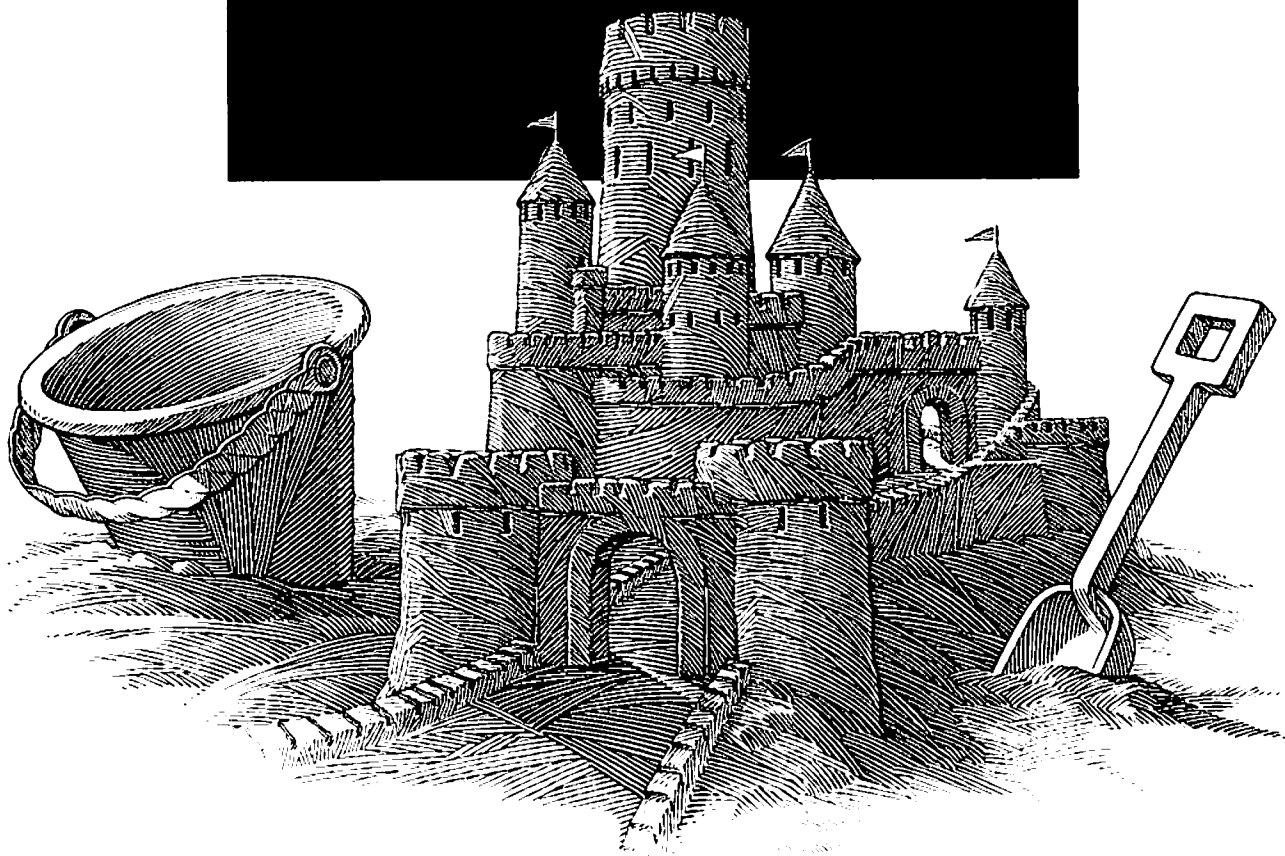
## Down Blueberry Dark

*The cottage clocks clucked metallic tongues  
Bonging as bright as the coppery sun,  
Down scraggly pine to periwinkled rocks  
As if boys heard time in silk summer's run  
By hurrah of sea huge as kingdom come  
Or unparted grasses webbed with spidered tales  
Under headlands' tatterdemalion sky  
Watching far waves swell into humps of whales.*

*Treasures renewed under sun-shattered fog:  
Pumpkin-orange cork, rockweed pods to pop,  
Hermit crab tenants walking under whelks;  
Rough starfish, kelps, pungent shells to swap.  
Taut adventure tangled in green apple chunks,  
Puckering tartness rinsed with swigs of wind  
By mock Magellans tracing tidal streams  
Till marshy trenches or interest thinned.*

*Minnows spurted from palms cupping shut,  
Darting to safety with a silver flick,  
While sun-castled sand drooped before foam,  
Crumbling in the chanter of waves sloshed thick:  
The tide at full, screen doors thwanged the night,  
Ahabs for eels, the harpooners descended  
With warning whispers down blueberry dark —  
Memories ago, when nothing ended.*

William F. Dougherty





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