

# THE MESSENGER

June 1967

"an historic document"  
"the obituary of convention"

"He seems to think of himself  
as a Swedenborgian, but..."  
"...his profound underlying  
principle of 'real religion.'"

THE READERS  
WRITE

THE  
BIG  
J U N E  
CONTROVERSY  
ISSUE

THE EDITOR  
REFEREES

"SWEDENBORG SCHOOL OF RELIGION: It's a good school!"  
"Why don't our Sunday Schools teach our youngsters?"

"The Messenger will lose a goodly  
number of readers unless its appeal is  
more helpful in Christian doctrine."

CANCEL MY SUBSCRIPTION

"This is my church but I sense that  
something isn't there any more."

"The terrible gulf between theory and practice  
may yet be the Achilles heel of our civilization."

## Letter from the Editor

One of the interesting things about the Editor's job is reading my mail, the reactions to the form or the substance of *The Messenger's* reporting. One of the frustrating things about the job, especially after I asked for letters, has been the difficulty in sharing them. Unaccountably slow mail service has separated publication and delivery so much that responses to one issue seldom reach me until after the next issue has gone to press, and often too late for the one after that. Sort of takes the zing out of a snappy come-back!

For this issue, however, I have collected a number that I think you may enjoy sharing with me. Some of them are about *The Messenger* itself, but most of them center around one of a few areas of controversy. I hope no one is upset by the fact of controversy: to me, it is wonderful that so many care so much about what someone writes, or what Convention does. It's nice to know that I am not the only one who gets excited about some of these things.

That brings up a problem of editorial responsibility. Would you like to share my problems, along with my mail?

One aspect of the editorial function is subjective: as a participant in the life and thought of Convention, chosen to edit its official organ, I feel called to react in print to what I feel most exciting and important —

whether the reaction is in my own words or those of a contributor. This is to say that *The Messenger*, like any publication, reflects the viewpoint (or bias, if you will) of its editor; and this is neither surprising nor regrettable, but a creative value of editorial awareness.

Another aspect of editorial function operates in direct tension with the first. It is an objective aspect, involving observation of the range of moods and interests of Convention, and reflecting all of them in something like due proportion to their extent and intensity.

From one standpoint, I should publish whatever represents an existing position or feeling within Convention. On the other hand, I am a thinking, feeling man, and not a computer programmed simply to collect and repeat. I have a responsibility to concerns and opinions that differ or conflict with my own, it is true; but simple fulfillment of that responsibility could be an easy escape from the more dynamic responsibility to exert my judgment and ability as effectively as possible in the service of what I conceive to be the greatest good for the future of our church.

This issue should reach you shortly before you leave for Convention, and copies will be there for you if it did not. Perhaps we can talk about this problem — and about some of the controversial subjects that prompted the letters which follow.

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The opinions of contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or the Department of Publication, or represent the position of the church.

# Letters (to) the Editor

## THE AQUEDUCT PAPERS

The Messenger's "Most Controversial Writer of the Year" Award goes to the Rev. Brian Kingslake of Cleveland, Ohio. He is the author (not, as some over-literalists apparently have feared, the amanuensis) of the "Aqueduct Papers" that have appeared periodically over the last couple of years. Both his style and his particular interpretations of Swedenborgian theology have evoked strong reactions both pro and con. One letter published in November also produced counter-reaction. Herewith a sampling:

Dear Editor:

I would like to have the opportunity of expressing, through this column, my satisfaction with the new *Messenger*. It makes easy, but serious reading and the "size of type" doesn't seem to make too much difference to me, especially since my wife made me get new bi-focals. Articles, in general, have been useful and thought-provoking. The use of some pictures helps to keep *The Messenger* "alive." The Aqueduct Papers add a special flavour to it too, and it is my opinion that they appeal to the average reader with their simplicity yet profound underlying principle of "real religion."

I think it has been good too to revive the Letters to the Editor. It affords the readers an opportunity to make known their own convictions and philosophies, and their criticisms and suggestions which hopefully may on occasion be useful to our Church.

In this connection, then, I request the privilege of making an observation about the recent criticism and judgment of "Aqueduct." It seems to me that "Water-over-the-

Dam" is ALL WET in his evaluation of Aqueduct's handling of the "Talking woman." Water-over-the-Dam has unwittingly placed himself in the same "judgmental" category by his blanket judgment of today's church member." According to his estimation then, there are no church members today, including Aqueduct, who have had the experience of sharing in the "journey of self-understanding in an atmosphere of tolerance and love." We would all do well to observe and heed the words of our Lord in His Sermon on the Mount when He said, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees you will never enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Trusting that *The Messenger* may be a useful tool in serving the members of Convention in their spiritual growth, I am,  
Sincerely yours,

Erwin Reddekopp

Dear Editor:

In the October issue of *The Messenger* Aqueduct (an inhabitant of the spiritual world) described a great railroad accident which took many lives. He said:

"I understand your newspapers are calling it a 'major disaster' and a 'tragedy'. Yet the whole purpose of your world is to provide and prepare souls for life here, and everyone of you will come here eventually, so why the event should be regarded as tragic I cannot imagine!... The actual situation is, that the Lord takes everything into account in determining the hour of everyone's death: the man's own needs and actions, the actions of other people which impinge upon him, and also the operation of the laws of mechanics and physics — which are God's laws for your world. If the greatest benefit, or the least harm, will accrue from any particular person's premature departure from your world, then that person will die young; otherwise he will wait until his physical body is worn out with age."

I hesitate to take issue with a voice from the spiritual world, but how can Aqueduct be so cool and detached in the face of death? True, we will all die some time, but is it

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR -- *cont'd.*

not "tragic" when a young husband and wife are separated by death, or when they lose one of their children, or when children are left orphans? Perhaps we can understand Aqueduct's point of view when we read his last sentence: "Yours is indeed a dark and confused world. How grateful you must all be that, through the Lord's mercy, the days of your life on earth are numbered, and you can look forward with hope and confidence to your eventual release!"

Our church heralds the dawn of a new age when the new Jerusalem descends from God out of heaven. We live in a time of crisis, but it is wonderful to be alive and to have a part in the building of the Lord's kingdom. When the Lord created the heavens and the earth, he said: "Behold, it is very good." Life here is not something to be escaped from, but entered into and enjoyed. It is comforting to have faith that the Lord has prepared a place for us after death, but is there any rush to occupy it? Heaven can wait!

I am chiefly disturbed by Aqueduct's view of divine providence. He seems to think of himself as a Swedenborgian, but it seems to me that his interpretation of Swedenborg is distorted. His "confusion" is shared by many others, including eminent clergy of the church today. As an example, I quote from the April 29th *New Church Herald*.

"The fourth question (asked of the president of the British Conference) was, 'A young woman with two children had just lost her husband, aged 24 years, in sudden and tragic death. She asks, Why should this happen to me? What reply would the President give?' The President pointed out that Providence is in everything of life. It is a doctrine of the Church that death occurs when the balance of usefulness in this world has expired. When a person is more useful in the spiritual world either to himself or to others, then he may die physically. We must learn to accept Divine Providence — even in such a tragic death. All compassion and affection needs to be given to this widow and her grief directed towards the care of her children. At length, she may be led to

see the shining truth that resurrection follows death."

There are passages in Swedenborg that seem to give support to the above quotations. For example, "The Lord foresees, provides, and disposes everything; but some things from permission; some from admission; some from leave; some from good pleasure; and some from will." (AC 1755) "The least things are foreseen and provided to eternity." (AC 2679) "The Divine Providence is universal because in the most singular things."

These quotations can be interpreted to support a belief in "determinism" or a form of predestination. When we stress the sovereignty and providence of God, we are always in danger of denying or minimizing man's freedom and seeing him as a mere puppet. We are delivered from this one-sided interpretation when we view the question in the perspective of Swedenborg's total theological system. From this perspective we see the primary importance attached to the capacities of liberty and rationality. Swedenborg states as the first law of divine providence that man should act from freedom in accordance with reason." (DP 71-99)

It is the Lord's will that everyone live a life that leads to heaven, but he does not force us to live this life. He leads, guides, and inspires, but he does not compel. He permits us to violate his commandments and to act contrary to his will. He respects our freedom, even if it means we plunge headlong toward hell. His providence is still over us, and operates at all times in myriads of ways unknown to us (DP 70), but a central law of this providence is that we are free to act in accordance with what our own reason dictates.

We often fail to distinguish between what God wills or desires and what he permits. Swedenborg wrote: "There are no laws of permission per se or apart from the laws of divine providence; rather, they are the same. Hence to say that God permits something does not mean that He wills it, but that He cannot avert it in view of the end, which is salvation." (DP 234)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR -- cont'd.

As parents we "permit" our children to leave the house, go to school, ride a bike, drive a car, prepare for a vocation, date, marry. They can be hurt in any of these activities, but we allow them to be hurt in view of the end which is maturity, or growth or salvation.

We pray that our world will be saved from the annihilation that can come through wars, and wish somehow that the Lord would prevent wars from occurring. But Swedenborg explains that the laws of permission are also laws of the divine providence. (DP 234-274) "Unless evils were allowed to break out, man would not see them, therefore would not acknowledge them, and thus could not be induced to resist them. Evils cannot be repressed, therefore, by any act of providence; if they were, they would remain shut in, and like a disease such as cancer and gangrene, would spread and consume everything vital in man." (DP 251)

It seems naive and even blasphemous for anyone to attribute to God a train wreck, the death of a young husband and father, the burning of a space capsule, or the murder of civil rights workers, saying that it was all for the best; in his foresight God knew that this was the best time for these people to enter into the spiritual world! God did not prevent these catastrophes from occurring, for to do so would have been contrary to the laws of the divine providence. (DP 331-340) He permitted them to occur, and under his providence he hopes that we will learn to overcome prejudice, savagery, selfish ambition, ignorance, etc. If we believe that God, in his infinite love and wisdom, decided that it was for the best for all concerned that 6 million Jews be ushered into the spiritual world in the 1940's or that young American soldiers in Vietnam make the transition this year, we absolve ourselves of all responsibility to work toward peace and brotherhood.

If it is true that a person's death comes at the best possible time so far as his spiritual welfare is concerned, it would appear that the Lord falls in the cases of those people who live hell-bent lives. Wouldn't these people have been spared eternal suffering

if they had been taken as children? Why should the Lord rescue some from hell, but prolong the earthly lives of others so that they can become utterly depraved?

Life is not a cosmic chess game with the Lord moving us about like pawns, taking us off the board when the going gets too tough, or removing us when a match in heaven needs some more players. The ways of God are beyond understanding, but we can use the intelligence that He gives us to seek to understand, by observing life, meditating upon the Word of God, and searching for insights wherever we can find them.

Sincerely yours,

*Ernest O. Martin*

## NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

*In December of 1966, General Convention joined the National Council of Churches. I have received a number of reactions, and am confused by the fact that the majority of written ones have been negative, while most in-person ones have been favorable. Here is a good sample of the written ones.*

Dear Editor:

*The Messenger* of this month is an historic document, introducing the National Council to our folks as never before, I think, and meaning much to the Council, which receives copies, I suppose. You probably feel you have hit the type you want — excellent in my opinion. Congratulations on it all.

*William F. Wunsch*

Dear Editor:

Now that we have had two issues of *The Messenger* — one devoted entirely to National Council of Churches and our membership, the last issue almost half of its pages given to the NCC; May we have a series of sermons by New Church minis-

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR -- *cont'd.*  
ters? Let us hope that we may be an influence in the Council for good, showing forth the goodness and Truth of our Lord; and not try quite so hard to be like every one else. Let's stand up and be counted as members of the Lord's New Church.

*Mabel Parker*

Dear Rev. Tafel:

I have read with considerable interest, your magazine of January, 1967. I enjoyed *The Messenger* very much as it addressed itself to the National Council of Churches.

I'm particularly impressed by the letter from the Editor, entitled "Reflections on the National Council." It seems to me that this would be good to make available to new communions anticipating joining the Council. If I may have your permission to do so, I will from time to time use photo copies of this as we converse with potential new members.

Sincerely,

*James L. Stoner*

Assistant General Secretary, NCC

Dear Editor:

I am writing to request that you cancel my subscription to *The Messenger* and since it is so early in the year I would appreciate a refund for the issues I do not care to receive.

I have just finished reading the January issue from cover to cover, and to me, it was like reading an obituary of Convention. I cannot understand the exuberance of having been accepted by the National Council of Churches. Aren't you mistaking good for that which is socially desirable?

Well, there is nothing for it now but to re-read old copies of *The Messenger* written before the new morality ideas began to permeate the pages.

In Ernest Frederick's "Impressions" he states, "Old doctrines and dogmas are being forgotten". Oh no. Not quite.

Come to think of it, how would association with Dr. Arthur S. Fleming be considered even socially desirable. Does Convention actually approve of the conclusions reached

at the Miami Assembly?

*Nadine Mills Coleman*

Dear Editor:

I am writing in regard to the first paragraph in the right hand column of page three of the January 1967 *Messenger*.

Am I to understand that there was an omission in the summary of types of groups that compose the national body or am I to assume that we fit one of the categories mentioned?

It has been my understanding since joining the Church that we fit none of these categories and that the lessons of recent years have taught us that charitable (but not cowardly) consciousness of our distinctiveness is the only basis upon which to communicate to others, that is, theologically.

Are we to continue to further "fuzz" our identity now that we are members of a large ecumenical body, or are we to jealously but charitably guard our distinctiveness even in seemingly small and technical matters so as to serve our proper use in the world?

Shall we do as Israel did and forget our distinctiveness because certain forms of worship are similar? Israel fell. Shall our mission be given to another?

*Gladys A. Wheaton*

## CHANGE IN THE CHURCH

*There have been several reactions to changes in the church and in the world, and to change itself. One of the first replies to the July-August "Convention Issue" was an eloquent piece that was typed and ready for use so long that I have lost the writer's name -- but I print it now with apologies. A second letter came in response to the April Issue before it was published, since Mr. Priestnal had seen the Bellevue American article before I reported it.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR -- *cont'd.*

Dear Editor:

To be a Swedenborgian was, it seemed to me, to have a faith that, in its very essence, is timeless. To be a New Churchman was to grow with the years in the teaching and the understanding of a church beyond the limitation of time, a church constant, a church relevant to the needs, the ever-changing whims and social life of man, whenever — wherever. That was some 40 years ago. It was good, I thought, because its teaching was for the ages and all time to come. I still think so.

But, I am reminded, as the world has changed, so the church too, must change. In words of the poet, "Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve." As I drive to modern Convention at break-neck speed over the four lane expressway, I see and feel the ever-changing hand of man at work. I scan the California Association bulletin. Ah, yes, as the clever hand of man has changed the modern highway, so has the church. For yes, it too, I am told, must change to suit the needs of men.

I arrive at the meeting place. The same, beautiful old church is there, and many of my fellow-churchmen whom I have met and loved. In due course I attend our meeting, the lectures, the sermon. This is my church but I sense that something isn't there anymore, that used to be. And I remember now — the change. Ah, yes, my church is changing, indeed. I've been Jungian psychoanalyzed, revelationally dynamitized, psychologically soul-cured, individually destinated and symbolitized. In truth it has been a glorious excursion through some of the highest realms of intellectual thought ever devised by modern man.

Why, then, as I depart, has this something, this sadness come to overtake my convention spirit? Forgive me, for I have taken that lingering, forbidden look behind. I see again, in memory of years long gone — the old church that I have loved. For in that fading church beyond its walls, was something of beauty that man can never replace, something of strength and power and love for the simple man — unchanging, eternal.

For the New Churchman there are, indeed, challenging days ahead. Ways of ease and compromise are here to reckon at every turn. Shall the New Churchman follow the path devised by man in his new morality? Shall he embark on a fast, but dangerous streamlined freeway to Heaven? Shall he purchase one of the new, low-cost, all-route combination tickets now on sale to Catholic, Jew and Protestant alike? In effect, shall his church change to suit the ways of man? Now, surely, more than ever, does not the truth lie in the reverse process? Please (and I implore all the powers that be) I do not want my church to change. I want it to awaken and to serve. And where necessary, I want it to arise and condemn. For then, and only then, can it be the church today of which so many Christians of the past have taken pride.

In this day and age, as never before I want to be a Swedenborgian. I feel the need to retain and preserve the purpose and the identity of our church, undiluted, unchanged. Though made by mortal hands, it is designed, I think, to follow that Building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. I hope and pray that we may keep it so.

*(Anonymous -- thru  
editorial error. Sorry.)*

Dear Editor:

There arrived in the mail the other day a newspaper article, obviously sent for my reading. The caption filled me with a sense of sorrow, if not tragedy. It read, "Church Moves 'Out' To Bring People 'In'". The church was one of our denomination. A line spoken by Cardinal Wolsey in Shakespeare's play King Henry VIII, at the time of his downfall, came to mind:

"Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness."

This newspaper article described how the pews and altar were removed to provide facilities for secular activities, including dances with a "live combo". These are legitimate and useful interests, of course, but should the New Church be so completely preoccupied with them? Should the mayor of a city spend his time sweeping the streets? Should a virtuoso be content to play

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR -- *cont'd.*  
a jew's-harp? Should a church which possesses "truths from heaven" tuck them under a bushel and cater to the earthy demands of man?

To see a New Church group divorce itself so entirely from the sacred uses of the New Jerusalem is bound to fill many with dismay. Can we really serve the Lord as a New Church if we permit external interests, pleasures and tastes to crowd out the spiritual concerns of the Church and the importance of Divine worship?

If we are to pass into oblivion as an ecclesiastical organization (and I am not suggesting that we need to), let us go faithful to the high spiritual purposes which the New Church has espoused for so long. Then all lovers of truth in the ages to come can say when they look back, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant".

*Clayton Priestnal*

## GENERAL REACTIONS

Dear Editor:

I have been sending *The Messenger* to three persons who are not members of the New Church, and are only interested in learning the new truths of the Church. The present *Messenger* seems to have no message for such persons. I am of the opinion that *The Messenger* will lose a goodly number of readers unless its appeal is more helpful in Christian doctrine.

*Leonard Cole*

Dear Editor:

In reading with interest the current issue of *The Messenger* my attention was taken by the Detroit League's activities of ANCL, particularly No. 5 which mentions the "Forgotten Assets" Booth at the Church Bazaar, used articles like 'White Elephant'.

It so happens that I have been puzzling over the origin of 'White Elephant' table with the uneasy feeling that we might be using a religious symbol in an unfortunate way - so far I have not tracked down the origin. Perhaps the Detroit League has the answer.

I like their designation of "Forgotten Assets".

*Ruth B. Cheney*

Dear Editor:

When we tell our name, "The Church of the New Jerusalem," to a new inquirer there seems to arise in our minds the thought that there is a need to explain. This is quite natural because the name alone isn't self-explanatory. But in explaining that we are a Christian, not a Jewish church, we sometimes have the uncomfortable feeling that we are apologizing for the necessity to do so.

Swedenborg chose humble anonymity to identify the author of the new Christian revelation by simply signing himself "A Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ," as is well known. Why don't we emulate him whenever we find there is a need to give an explanation about our church name? After saying "The Church of the New Jerusalem" we could simply add the line "serving the Lord Jesus Christ." This is a humble statement that at once identifies, explains, and indicates a way of life of professing members.

This line could very well be used on letter heads, bulletin boards, and in fact on any or all of our printed literature. What do you think?

*Eugene and Henrietta Denning*

To the Editor of The Messenger:

Why don't our Sunday Schools teach our youngsters at a tender age that our thoughts and desires come to us from the spiritual world? Then, as they get older, rationalize this with them by pointing out that clay can not think or love.

"That all which a man thinks and wills, and hence what he speaks and does, flows in from the one only Fountain of life; and still that the only Fountain of life, that is, the Lord, is not the cause of man's thinking evil and falsity, may be illustrated by these things in the natural world: From its sun proceed heat and light, and the two flow into all subjects and objects which appear before the eyes; not only into good subjects and



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR -- cont'd.

beautiful objects, but also into evil subjects and ugly objects, and produce in them various things: for they flow not only into trees which bear good fruits, but also into trees which bear bad fruits and even into the fruits themselves and cause their growth; in like manner they flow into good seed and into tares also; then again into shrubs that have a good use or are wholesome, and also into shrubs that have an evil use or are poisonous; and yet it is the same heat, and the same light, in which there is no cause of evil; but this is in the recipient subjects and objects."

Divine Providence, 292

"The Lord speaks with every man, for he wills and thinks that is good and true, is from the Lord. There are with every man at least two evil spirits and two angels. The evil spirits excite his evils, and the angels inspire things that are good and true. Every good and true thing inspired by the angels is of the Lord; thus the Lord is continually speaking with man, but quite differently with one man than with another."

Arcana Coelestia, 904

We should teach the youngsters to pray that they may elect the truth and the good — that by "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done" they seek help from the Lord to elect the true rather than the false, the good rather than the evil. Then, as they mature, they will better appreciate the acceptance of the bread and wine at communion.

We can well take a leaf from the book of those who profess that if they are allowed to teach the youth until they are seven, they will have their loyalty for the rest of their lives.

You will say that we now teach nothing but New Church truths in our Sunday Schools, But, as you well know, a very high percentage of the children leaving our Sunday Schools carry nothing with them which they can point to as distinctive and eminently useful in their everyday living — nothing that ties them to the church, wherever they are, for the rest of their mortal lives.

*Gordon Mack*

\* \* \* \* \*

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# Swedenborg School of Religion



*Crowd of over 140 from the Swedenborgian Church and the academic community hear Prof. Robert Handy's address at the formal Dedication of the Newton Campus of the Swedenborg School of Religion, Saturday, May 13, General Convention President Richard H. Tafel, Secretary Marjorie Barrington, and Treasurer Chester T. Cook led a large body of official and personal well-wishers from Convention churches. The General Church of the New Jerusalem was represented by the Rev. W. Cairns Henderson, Dean of the Academy Theological School, Bryn Athyn, and Editor of New Church Life. Prominent representatives of the academic community, in addition to Prof. Handy, included: the Rev. Ellis O'Neal, Librarian, Dr. Vaughn Dabney, Dean Emeritus, and Professors Russell Tuck, Walter Clark and John Brush, of Andover Newton Theological School; Professors Amos Wilder and Frederick Packard of Harvard Divinity School; Professor J. Robert Nelson of Boston University School of Theology; President James Gettemy of Hartford Seminary Foundation, Hartford, Conn.; President Ronald Jones and Dean Jerry Walke of Urbana College, Urbana, Ohio. The city of Newton was represented by the Rev. Russell Gundlach, President of the Newton Council of Churches; Newton Aldermen, William E. Hopkins and H. James Shea, Jr., and neighbors from nearby homes.*

Dedication proceedings were presided over by the Rev. Edwin Capon, President of Swedenborg School of Religion. Two former presidents of the school also took part: the Rev. Everett K. Bray gave the Invocation, and the Rev. Franklin Blackmer the Scripture Reading.

The Dedication proper included reports

from the Chairman of the school's Board of Directors, Mr. H. Page Conant; Chairman of the church-elected Board of Managers, Rev. Ernest O. Martin; and a prayer and dedication by the Rev. Richard H. Tafel, President of the General Convention of Swedenborgian Churches — the denomination served by the Swedenborg School of Religion.

# Dedicates New Campus



*Dr. Robert T. Handy, Prof. of Church History at Union Theological Seminary, New York, featured speaker at the SSR Dedication. Dr. Handy is past president of the American Society of Church History and member of the Faith and Order committees of the world and national Councils of Churches.*

## TOWARD A REVITALIZATION OF CHRISTIANITY

*Excerpts from Dr. Handy's  
Dedication Address*

One of the great problems of modern western civilization is the gap between theory and practice. So often our theories tend to run in one direction, our actions in another. David Potter once remarked that the gap between theory and practice "might seem quite extraordinary — indeed, almost

incredible — if we were not so accustomed to it." But we do get used to it; we even become complacent about it. That terrible gulf may yet prove to be the Achilles heel of our civilization. John Kenneth Galbraith was commenting on a frequently-observed characteristic of our time a few years ago when he said:

"Once men said what they were going to do. Now, they consider it sufficient to say what should be done. Speech was once a portent of action. It has become a substitute.

"As speech has become an end in itself, we have come increasingly to concentrate our energies on the magnificence, or anyhow the grandiloquence of expression. We live in the era of the memorable speech. If a man cannot be practical, he at least can be memorable."

So our words often illustrate the gap between theory and practice, between idea and action. I'm convinced that part of the reason why one may suddenly get a feeling of unreality in a typical Protestant service is because one gets a glimpse of the distance between what is being said and what may actually be going on. The effective seminary must continually be addressing this situation of the gap between theory and practice, in the culture at large and in the life of the church in particular. It tries to bridge the gap from both sides, not only in what students and teachers think and say but in what they do. The Christian theory of the classroom and chapel must somehow be reflected in the Christian practice in administration and student life.

One of the important reasons for a Practical Field of theological study and for a busy Field Education Program is to provide opportunity for students and faculty to act out their theories, live them on the field of action, evolve them out of the realities they face there. At Union Seminary in New York, with many other seminaries, we are pouring considerable resources of faculty time and institutional money into our Field Education Program and we are enlisting many churches deeply in the effort. The experiences in the field can help the student to have a deeper grasp of human and church problems that can make his theological

work more realistic and more focused. It can help us all to deal more effectively with that fantastic and terrible gap between theory and practice.

One of the reasons why men who have been caught up in loyalty to Jesus Christ find themselves bound to him even when there are many things that would pull them away is because in him was the incomparable matching of deed and word, of practice and theory. What he did illumined what he said; what he said interpreted exactly his deeds. It is in his spirit and under his guidance that the Christian school of religion must face the plaguing issue of the gap between theory and practice. When this is done, then the many words spoken and the deeds that are done can contribute significantly toward the revitalization of Christianity.

A second major issue troubling the Christian world is the tension between unity and renewal. The achievement of fuller Christian unity is of course the longing and hope and goal of many modern Christians. The growth of great councils of churches, the work of consultations on church union, the achievements of the Second Vatican Council are important milestones on the road to unity. Ecumenical events of recent years have brought together Christians who for years have been strangers to each other.

The renewal of Christianity is of course a perennial need; periodically men grow accustomed to the real challenge and offense of the gospel of Jesus Christ and grow complacent if not decadent in faith. The same crisis comes and forces men to see the gospel anew and live their faith in new ways. Indeed, one can tell the story of the Christian Church as long series of renewal movements.

Most of us, of course, are for both unity and renewal, and believe them to be complementary to each other. Emanuel Swedenborg was devoted to both. The late Walter Marshall Horton once said, "I am convinced that if Emanuel Swedenborg returned to earth today, he would see in the movement for a United Christianity, or the 'ecumenical movement,' as it is commonly called, the New Church of which he dreamed, and

he would urge the church which bears his name to help in the movement." When Swedenborg spoke of the church he customarily set the discussion in a renewal frame of reference. For example, he said, "As a renewal of the Church in both the spiritual and natural worlds was effected by the Lord when he was in the world, a similar prediction, namely, that a new heaven and a new earth should then come into being is made in the prophets. . . and elsewhere."

Today, however, there are many who see a widening split between the emphasis on unity and that of renewal. A year ago Albert van den Heuvel, then of the staff of the World Council of Churches, wrote an article entitled "Crisis in the Ecumenical Movement," in which he analyzed the growing tension between those who seek first the unity of the church through theological dialogue as a step toward renewal, and those who insist that renewal and action must come first, and maybe unity will follow. When Professor Berkhof reported to the Central Committee of the World Council early last year, he said, "...there are a considerable number who have disengaged themselves from the official ecumenical movement in order to take refuge in the spontaneous activities of smaller circles that are profoundly taken up with discussion of contemporaneous problems (e.g. secularization)." They are concerned about renewal first. So the tension grows between the stress on unity and the drive for renewal.

Unexpectedly in these fast-moving days one can find himself suddenly caught in this tension; he can find himself torn between the irenic "yes" of spirit and the thundering "no" of conscience. Now that the sons of Luther and Calvin — and Swedenborg — suddenly find themselves in dialogue with the sons of Ignatius Loyola and Pope Pious IX and Pope John XXIII, on both sides there can quickly come second thought — must unity be bought at the price of what one believes is really essential to renewal? How shall the need for renewal and the need for unity be reconciled? How shall they be kept complementary and not competitive? This is an issue which every effective Christian

*Cont'd., p. 94*

# By Way of Appreciation

The subject of this article concerns itself with some long time held feelings about our seminary: The Swedenborg School of Religion. It's a good school! But what about my feelings?

Almost all my adult life (I'm 24) I have noticed over and over how difficult it is not only to identify my real feelings about this or that, but too, how difficult it is to freeze them on paper. The difficulty in the first case, i.e., of identification, is to sift and disentangle, to conceptualize accurate and clear ties of interrelationships among my many different feelings about any given subject, and then to let myself feel the real feelings (s). The difficulty in the second case, i.e., of freezing them on paper, is to use just the right words to communicate to the reader exactly how I feel. To write in such a way that he can vicariously experience my experience. This is sometimes very difficult for me in writing.

I mention these things in the hope that you will sense my struggle and give me the benefit of the doubt as you try to grasp and understand; so you will, from the outset, stand ready to fill in the gaps of ambiguity as I might do if we were face to face in conversation. This is not a definitive analysis, it's a "feeling paper."

What is a seminary in its essentials? Isn't it nothing more than how its faculty conceives of it? I am aware that there are many influences on each faculty member: The board of directors and other such "political" pressures; the wives of the faculty members; the milieu of theological schoolness; the mental and emotional maturity of each faculty member, and many other influential forces. But in the last analysis, after all these forces have run their courses and become spent, it is they, the faculty, who create and sustain this living, moving institution called a seminary. So when I talk about our seminary I am really talking about the faculty members.

(I would like to mention here that I could also express some negative feelings about our school, simply because I have them. It is important to mention that I have them because it makes my positive feelings even more significant: The significance here lies in the fact that my positive feelings retain their power to be felt in the midst of my negative feelings! They have not, as so often happens, been crowded out.)

Basically, there are three reasons why I feel appreciative. The first is that the faculty members as a whole and as individuals leave each student in freedom to grow and develop. I'm aware of the awful ambiguity of that word freedom, so let me give some "signs" of this freedom by way of definition. If, for example, I am taking a course of action which in all likelihood will be detrimental to me, the faculty will not interrupt to force a detour. Leaving me in freedom, they will try to influence, but will not, either overtly or covertly, use compulsion.

Another sign of this freedom to grow and develop that I speak of, manifests itself in the way the faculty allow and encourage each student to participate idiosyncratically. Even though this means "rocking the boat" on occasion. There is minimal emphasis placed on outward conformity for its own sake. There is much emphasis on meaning for its own sake. In short, the faculty does not tamper with the students' freedom to behave as they see fit. Likewise, the students are free from behaving as the faculty thinks they should. Somehow this leaves me with the feeling that I have real responsibility -- not pseudo-responsibility. My response is a calling forth of previously unknown efforts to meet the challenge of the hour. I sometimes hear myself as a tractor whose engine begins to growl from the added strain. The growing and developing I do is real because it is really me. I have never experienced another school like ours in this respect. The "cost" to these men, of not tampering with our freedom, is that they end up following uncharted, non-predetermined paths. This is a risk at many levels. They feel it is worth it.

My second "reason" for feeling appreciative, is that they let me influence them. This leaves me with an increased sense of self-esteem. I matter. Even as a student I'm somebody. When I contrast this feeling with the one I have upon entering the doors of Boston University, I can point to one of the prices of size. When our new school was being built, for example, I was consulted as to the wisdom of this or that particular innovation. After all, why not? I'm one of those who will live in it! I hope you can sense here a viable, working relationship with emotional bonds. Sure the faculty remains the faculty and the students remain the students' but that doesn't mean genuine sharing is blocked out. Somehow the faculty feels secure enough to take seriously and value the natural flow of student influences.

My final reason for feeling appreciative, by far not the least important, is due to the faculty's ability to really listen. They know how to listen with what is sometimes called a "third ear." That is, they listen for what I am trying to say, rather than always listening to what comes out of my mouth. This says to me that they care most about what I really am, not concerning themselves with all my many appearances! This is important, because it gives me a kind of security in which to develop knowing I will be interpreted as to my intentions. Not my ostensible behavior. They do, however, help me to understand my ostensible behavior, because, after all, it's there for a reason.

This ability to listen with a third ear is also important because it helps me with my own personal problems. It gives me a sounding board onto which I can project my thoughts and feelings without fear of criticism, without fear of a moralistic response inhibiting the expression of real issues. To me, this is an aid (not always comfortable) to my development. I can more readily get in touch with the real John, the more fun John, the more hostile John, the more able John, the more insecure John: the many faceted John. I am thankful to be in this environment.

As one fine lady I know said recently: "A real teacher, teaches nothing. He or she simply creates the conditions in which

learning can take place." Oh how some have failed! But oh the rumbling thrill of dynamic and revelatory insights when some succeed!

*John Billings*

*Pre-seminary student, SSR*

*HANDY, cont'd from p 92*  
seminary must address. Our labors in the fields of Bible, history, theology and ministry must return to this question again and again, and wrestle with it again and again. For if either the demand for unity or for renewal become ends in themselves, if they become the real determiners of our lives in Christ, then we shall find neither unity nor renewal. As these two concerns are kept in proper relationship to the cause of Christ and are filled with his spirit, they will be found to be not at war with each other but in indissoluble partnership. In a context quite different from ours today, yet relevant to our needs, the apostle Paul once exclaimed, "For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (II Cor. 4:5). Analogously, we do not preach unity or renewal, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and these things as servant movements as we are servant people of the Lord. In Christ, these important movements for unity and renewal will, with us, be partners in obedience.

## NEW URBANA SCHOLARSHIPS

New opportunities for Convention young people to attend Urbana College have been provided recently by the establishment of the Pearl N. Pausch Memorial Fund, given in memory of his wife by Mr. George Pausch former Vice-President of Convention.

The \$5,000 bequest is placed at the discretion of the President and Vice-President of Convention, to provide scholarships of up to \$1,000 for New Church young people who are accepted by Urbana and are recommended by their church or association.

If you are qualified for the Pausch Scholarships, or know someone who is, write for application forms from Mr. Stewart E. Poole, 2024 DuPont Building, Wilmington, Delaware, 19898.

# STATISTICS

## Births

Tammy Lynn was born on March 2 to James and Barbara Holt from the Fryeburg Church.

Carlton, Jr. was born on April 4 to Carlton and Georgia Magee from the Fryeburg Church.

Wanda Lou was born on April 22 to Stanley and Joan Magee from the Fryeburg Church.

Shara Lee and Cara Lynn were born April 22 to Billy and Sandra Lewis from the Fryeburg Church.

Jeffrey Michael was born Jan. 2 to Michael and Jean Blake from the Fryeburg Church.

## Baptisms

Pamela Deane, infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edward E. Wiens of The Pas, Manitoba, was baptized on April 23.

On April 20 Catherine Kim, infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob and Joan Neufeld was baptized. Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiated.

Gideon Francis Boericke, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gideon Boericke, Jr. was baptized on Sunday, March 26 in the Philadelphia Church with Rev. Richard H. Tafel officiating.

Valerie Ellen Hansel, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lee Hansell was baptized on Sunday, April 23 in the Philadelphia Church with the Rev. Richard H. Tafel officiating.

Kiersten Renee Gaball, daughter of Lt. and Mrs. Boyden R. Gabell, Jr. was baptized on Sunday, April 16 in the Philadelphia Church with the Rev. Richard H. Tafel officiating.

Jacob Bernard Neufeld was Central Butte Sask., was received into New-Church membership by adult baptism on April 20.

## Marriages

Michael Worrall and Janice M. Hamilton were married in the Fryeburg Parsonage on April 28.

Stephen Young and Phyllis Stone were united in marriage on April 7th at the Pretty Prairie Church in Kansas.

Annie Marie Fairchild, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Fairchild of Larned, Kansas and Mr. Warren Boman were united in marriage on May 6th.

James Ackison and Miss Deanna Wiens were united in marriage at The Pas, Manitoba, on April 22nd with Revs. Henry Reddekopp and A. E. McDonald officiating.

## Confirmations

Margaret Sandra Gifford was confirmed on March 26, in the Philadelphia Church with the Rev. Richard H. Tafel officiating.

## Deaths

Jacob Wiebe of N. Battleford, Sask. passed into eternal life on April 17th; Resurrection service was held on April 20th.

Resurrection Services were held for the following people from the Fryeburg Church: William F. Leach on April 5; Mrs. William (Alma) Leach on April 23; Albert H. Willett on April 17; Frank Meserve on April 22 and for Mabel W. Dresser on April 25.

## A NOTE ABOUT THE CONVENTION JOURNAL

The Recording Secretary of Convention regrets exceedingly the delay in the printing of the 1966 Convention Journal. Manuscript has been fed to the printer since the last of January without any slack. But the printer's promised four or five week's time estimate has turned into a three month period. The Journal was mailed May 3, 1967.

THE MESSENGER  
June 1967

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