

The Messenger

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH
OCTOBER 1978

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EDITORIAL

ILLUSION OF CIVILIZATION!

Economist Bruce Whitstone wrote an interesting article in a recent *K - W Record*. It began, "To what extent is our civilization an advanced stage of development? By objective standards is our material progress partly illusory?"

"For centuries the Western world has been comforted by the belief that we are in a never ending period of economic improvement. Our automobiles, telephones, and central heating are, after all, proof that living is getting easier."

We assume that material prosperity will continue indefinitely. Progress may be spotty and uneven, but most of us believe that we are on the right path. Onward and upward! Bigger cities, faster jets, electric fingernail clippers, more advanced computers, laser weapons, lottery tickets everywhere. Shades of 1984! What does it mean to be a civilized people?

We look back in history and regard early human beings as savages and barbarians. We picture them huddling around fires in caves. Then, after thousands of years, animals were domesticated, grains were planted, goods were bartered, villages sprang up, and eventually states were formed. As with most things, the emergence of states had both good and bad features.

Whitstone writes: "Before states were established the average person enjoyed economic and political freedoms which almost none of us has today. People could decide for themselves how long they would work on a particular day, what they would do, or if they would work at all. People did what they decided they had to do."

"No executive or foreman stood apart, measuring and counting. Earth, water and game were all there for everyone to take; neither rent, taxes, nor tribute existed. With the rise of the state (the past five or six thousand years,) all of this was swept away."

In the past two centuries the average person's standard of living has risen. But at what cost? Most fathers and many mothers spend longer periods away from their homes and children.

Children in increasing numbers are placed in day - care centers and older people in retire - ment homes, which often adversely affects family relationships.

The state is becoming increasingly involved in almost every sector of individual and family living; in subtle ways our freedoms are being eroded; the divorce rate is approaching the marriage rate in some areas; the percentage of people who depend on drugs and alcohol is an all - time high figure; social scientists tell us the number one problem in the Western world today is boredom and loneliness. And still we insist that we are civilized and our ancestors were only savages!

How does all of this fit into our New Age teaching? We believe that the Lord oversees and indirectly (sometimes directly) guides all of history, but the day by day course of affairs is very much in our hands. We are responsible — which means "responding to" — sons and daughters of God. When we know enough and care enough and have our priorities in their proper place, then we will forge a "civilization" that is acceptable in the Lord's sight. All the tools we need for this task are readily available today, and they are presently being skillfully applied in many places in the world.

It means putting persons ahead of things . . . being "in but not of the world" . . . co - operating instead of competing . . . reconsidering our definition of success . . . discovering and living out the meaning that God has for our lives . . . assuming more responsibility for our own human condition . . . living more simply and naturally . . . fully enjoying God - given and man - made works of art. This is what "being civilized" means to me. I daresay there were people roaming the face of the earth 10,000 years ago who lived this way.

P. Z.

THE MESSENGER

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Paul B. Zacharias, Editor

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The Starting Line ————— by Eric Zacharias

It was all so good from the beginning — the warm welcome from Irving McCallum, the bright red carnation for Betty, and the stirring music of the Mexican trumpeters filling the terminal in San Diego. This is August 24th and we had arrived for the 67th annual session of the Pacific Coast Association. Within minutes, we were at the door of Henry and Ethel Swanton's home — there to be greeted by many friends and colleagues.

The printed program had advised us that the theme for these meetings was "Survival." Was this to be "survival" in the event of a California earthquake? What? We quickly learned. It was the survival of the Church. Friday was "Reflection Day." The Rev. Ivan Franklin informed us that five significant experiences in the Lord's life were to be the basis of our study — Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension and Pentecost. Each group was asked to relate one of these experiences to the life of the Church. What are the implications of the Incarnation for the Church? How can we best serve as channels for the Good News of the Lord's coming? His Second Coming? This New Age?

At the close of the day, each group was asked to share its thinking, its insights, with the whole assembly. Emphasis was given to the essential place of God's Word in our personal devotional life and also in the development of our programs at the local and national levels. The Word is the source of our nourishment — the enrichment of our lives. As a companion to this, there must also be a growing affection for the teachings of the Church and a willingness to risk that life which is in accordance with Divine Leadership.

How, then, can we most usefully serve the Lord in this New Age? We must witness first from that which is within ourselves. For many, this means that we quietly go about doing our daily work the best way we know. Some of us will offer specific talents to the Church and in our communities by urging that social issues be understood in the light of the Lord's life. Some of us will write, some will teach, some of us in the helping professions will try to assist others toward a more satisfying realization of themselves.

Doctrine, it was stated, is not to be forced on anyone. We must train ourselves to be sensitive

to the needs of our fellowman, asking that the Lord work through us to bring that which is useful and good to meet that need. There will be occasions when we are called upon to assert ourselves, to take positive action — there may also be those occasions when it is best that we withdraw to leave the way open for the Lord to work in His own way.

The spirit which pervaded all of our meetings was delightful and infectious. It appeared that everyone was caught up in this positive, hopeful atmosphere, and that we were voicing a common, united promise, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Saturday evening was our social time. Over eighty people gathered at the new, lovely home of Mr. and Mrs. McCallum for a poolside party. With a delightful view of the great Pacific, its waves gently rolling against the bluff, and tables heavily laden with food deliciously prepared, it was an evening long to be remembered. Here, too, in small group conversations, we came to know one another better and to appreciate with a deeper understanding the hopes and aspirations that each of us has for the Church.

How fitting it was that our worship service on Sunday morning in the well-filled church opened with the great hymn of Advent, "Joy to the world! the Lord is come; let earth receive her King." The message in dialogue by the Rev. Ivan Franklin and his wife, Eva, beautifully brought together an image so clear and forceful that the Lord's Church is taking form in each of us. It grows within us to all its fullness as we search out and open ourselves to the Lord's truth and learn to live this out in love one to another and for the Lord.

It was also during the morning service that a dedication and consecration service was held for Mrs. Horand Gutfeldt who is now serving the El Cerrito Parish as a Lay Leader. Mrs. Lois Miller and Mr. Al Hodges who are serving the San Diego Society as Lay Leaders were also part of this service. With the Holy Supper, the 1978 session of the Pacific Coast Association concluded.

It was good for us to have this time together. I wish to express my most joyful appreciation to all of the Pacific Coast Association friends for this most delightful and encouraging experience.

GOD'S LOVE REACHES OUT THROUGH HOUSE CHURCHES

by Valerie M. Dunn

(The following article includes excerpts from a recent United Church Observer. It tells the story of how one group of people found a deeper sense of Christian fellowship and purpose by meeting regularly in homes . . . "house churches." This is a spontaneous, lay-led movement. Many of these people are not satisfied with what they find in the traditional church services. This is their answer . . . small, intimate, personal groups meeting in homes for study, prayer, fellowship and service.

In Convention we have a number of societies without ministers, and there are many more instances where two or three New Church families live in the same area. They have occasional ministerial visits, or services led by lay leaders, but most of us want and need more than this. It is my hope that this stimulating article will spark interest in "house churches" not only among our isolated members, but throughout Convention. Read it carefully and see how it might apply where you live. Editor)

A close personal relationship with God is a basic human need; something that can give us not only strength to cope, but the power to live fulfilling, creative lives.

Yet we needn't look far — maybe no farther than ourselves — to find lonely human beings, with a deep sense of inner despair. People who feel like isolated specks adrift in an impersonal sea, and believe that nobody, even God, really cares. A struggle with some shattering personal problem like marriage breakdown may add to their sense of isolation.

God's love can reach out and touch such lives — through other people. That's why the house church movement, where members of small groups share with one another in homes, can be a powerful, vital force in Christian ministry.

Ruth Pogson became personally concerned about this three years ago. She had resigned as dean of studies at the Centre for Christian Studies in Toronto, the Anglican - United Church school for professional church workers, to join an ecumenical team ministry. But it didn't materialize. With 25 years experience as an Anglican worker in Christian education behind her she wondered, what should she do now?

"I invited my friends to a barbecue in my backyard and we had a brainstorming session about what I should do. Somebody said, 'Ruth, why don't you start something like the Church of the Saviour in Washington?'

"That rang bells. I got all excited inside," Ruth told me. For that church is a seriously committed community with a dynamic ministry of mission, based on small groups, made famous through *Call to Commitment* and other books by Elizabeth O'Connor.

"It seemed impossible, but we spent the evening talking about it. We realized a lot of people don't find their needs met in the traditional church forms. As a recent Roman Catholic study showed, the main problem in society is loneliness. There is a great need for a feeling of belonging, people are searching for meaning in life. It is hard for some to find this in the large, more formal Sunday worship service.

"And there are Christians who want to exercise leadership but may be frustrated in a clergy - dominated church. Or unhappy about a congregation more concerned with buying a new carpet for the sanctuary than with social issues or needs.

"Others just can't tune in to the kind of worship we have on Sunday mornings. Or need a better understanding of the basic beliefs of Christianity but can't find answers to their questions, which may even seem threatening to others in the congregation.

"Some are simply hanging on by the skin of their teeth, out of sense of loyalty and commitment to their church, while yearning for a deeper form of Christian community."

THE PROJECT WAS BORN

So with no financial or institutional base, merely an awareness of a need, a motivation and commitment to work at it, and a dream of what could be, Project House Church was born.

Ruth spent the next year in hectic activity, making contacts with leaders of house church movements all over the continent, and attending seminars. She organized meetings for clergy and lay leaders who wanted to explore the house church idea as a possible structure related to their congregations.

Now Ruth Pogson is the full - time facilitator of Project House Church, aided by four students doing field work.

FOUR ESSENTIAL MARKS

I visited the first session of a leadership house church in Ruth's home: a group of 12 committed to working together over a weekend, followed by ten weekly sessions. They were to experience a house church in preparation for starting one in their own congregation.

Most had never previously met. Yet by the end of the evening a mysterious transformation had taken place: we had drawn close in a way I have never before experienced in a group of strangers. Close, not only as people, but in a deeply devotional, Christian sense. As one participant put it, "The whole evening was an act of worship, a prayer — I feel that Christ is strongly present with us."

Yet all we had done was get acquainted over a potluck supper, then go through introductions: a game where we each learned the others' names by having to introduce ourselves and name the rest in turn.

Divided into pairs, Ruth posed questions for us to discuss, beginning with simple things as "What do you like most about yourself?" Then everyone changed partners for the next question.

Discussion gradually progressed into more personal questions. "Has something happened recently that has hurt you? Are you facing any difficult decision just now? Can you describe any time when you experienced God at work in your life?"

Afterwards we sat in a circle, the lights dim, and I led a few songs. Then Ruth gave a meditation on hands; we looked at our own as Ruth gently talked about how God could use them.

We were then invited to stand at any spot in the room, from the centre outward, to indicate how we felt about getting to know the others, and the evening generally. We each talked about why we had stood where we did; afterwards evaluating the process we had been through.

I had come feeling exceedingly weary, but went home refreshed. Yet sad that I would be unable to participate further.

"As small groups, deeply conscious of being the church, house churches must bear the essential marks which I describe as four — fellowship, worship, study and mission," Ruth told me. "They may express these things in a

wide variety of ways. But basically, fellowship happens because the group is small enough to share one another's life, bear each other's burdens, check one another's decisions and draw forth one another's gifts.

"Worship can be highly personal, with prayer involving and specific, complementing the worship in the larger church community. An important part is breaking bread together as the early Christians did, in an informal, intimate way. Actually the early church was much like the house church, meeting as small groups in homes."

Ruth believes that people need to experience God in three ways, each essential to spiritual growth. "There is the individual, personal relationship to God that we have alone, in our prayer life. Sharing with others in a small group like the house church. And then, the kind of worship we experience in the large congregation."

She explained that the third mark of the church, study, "is essential to discovering what it means to be a Christian in today's world, and know what Christ has to say to us right now. Mission means, simply, that the house group carries out its experience of God in reaching out beyond itself."

House churches take a wide variety of forms, Ruth told me. Last fall she began what she calls an ecumenical cluster — six churches including people of various denominations who also meet monthly as a full group.

"Each has a different focus. Members of the first are trying to discover and support one another in living a Christian lifestyle, discussing this in relation to money, housing, health, prayer, sexuality, relationship, the Eucharist and other things. In another, made up of a group of Roman Catholics, they are getting in touch with their own traditions and hope to share the riches of these with other churches in the cluster.

"The third is studying Elizabeth O'Connor's book *Eighth Day of Creation*, focusing on the use and evoking of one another's gifts.

"The Act of Mission house church is studying social concerns and the members support one another in individual action projects. One works in a drop - in centre, another has become interested in Amnesty International's program of writing letters on behalf of political prisoners in various countries.

"A family - oriented group does things like family worship, actively involving the children. The Holy Spirit is the focus of another house church."

INTERESTED?

If you are interested in forming a similar group, start by reading *The Base Church*, or Don Allen's *Barefoot in the Church*. Then find other interested people and simply begin. Let the members of your congregation know what you are doing, and invite them to visit, a few at a time. Don't tie yourself too tightly to one leader, or one location, or one format.

We are the last to think we have "made it". But we have learned that, with a minimum of support from church leaders or structure, people can do what they think is important, and can experience growth that profoundly affects their lives.

What about "going to church"? It seems to me that a church is a group of people where community can take place, with God and with other people; and community is something we *belong* to, not something we *go* to.

From our experience, we believe that the wholeness of congregation and church can, paradoxically, be strengthened by recognizing and supporting the diversity within it. As Paul writes in I Corinthians (12: 4 - 6):

"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same spirit; And there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; And there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one."

The United Church Observer

A GOODLY HERITAGE

Carolyn Blackmer

Alice (Blackmer) Skinner
Concord, Mass.

A mother's influence reaches into many facets of her children's lives in ways which are both obvious and subtle, but I wonder how much the influences which last over a lifetime are what the mother intends them to be. As I ponder, from a middle - aged perspective, what I learned from my mother, the most significant "lessons" seem to have been "caught" rather than taught. They derive from the kind of person my mother was and the values which were important to her. They are based on the way she lived rather than on spoken prescriptions. Since I've distilled these "lessons" for my own purposes and in my own terms, they may or may not be what my mother intended to teach.

The first lesson has to do with the nature of marriage. It's not easy to distinguish between what I learned from my mother and what I learned from my parents as a team, for together they created the home and family in which I grew up. The possibility of that togetherness, created and lived by a man and a woman committed to each other, is something to learn from in these times when so many marriages flounder. My parents were two very different people in background, in temperament, in ways of relating to others. They shared times of great happiness and bitter defeats. Each had a demanding professional life which benefited from their deep commonality of spirit. From them I learned that a marriage can be a

relationship of loyalty and devotion, of giving each other room to grow, of patience with each other's idiosyncracies, of dedication to each other's well - being, of stability and change. My mother demonstrated a woman's distinctive role in creating and maintaining such a partnership.

Another lesson learned from my mother is on the subject of making a home. For her, homemaking — which is not to be confused with housekeeping — was an art. She explored the creative possibilities of domestic routine, always on the lookout for ideas about food, about decorating, about efficient procedures. She had the skills to make an inexpensive remnant into a charming dress or handsome slipcover. No matter how demanding her schedule, meals were cooked and served with a flair. She had a knack for involving us all in making the home, which became a center to which the whole family contributed. The result was that my brothers and I grew up knowing the basic disciplines of creating a homeplace and wanting to carry on a tradition we valued.

Mother had a fine - tuned sense of ceremony. She enjoyed Occasions — birth - days, holidays, tea parties, wedding receptions — and was tireless in planning and carrying out special details. How she ever found the time and energy and imagination is a mystery to me. Such dates often come at

inconvenient times, but I learned how special Occasions can be and the importance of making time for their proper observation.

The capacity to find time for people and occasions was partly due to my mother's idealism. She had a strong sense of the possibilities in relationships, in individuals, in homes, in education, and she was dedicated to bringing those possibilities into fruition. She had learned from her own experience what a contribution people can make to each other by sharing what they value. She discovered this when, as a young teenager from a broken home, she went to Urbana to school and met New Church people who invited her into their homes and made her part of their families. Through them she found ideals and she, in turn, passed this kind of nurturance on to many others. Someone once likened our home to Grand Central Station, saying that you never knew who you might meet there. Some came for tea; some stayed for months. The lesson for me was that homes are places which nurture the possibilities of people, and are to be shared with friends as well as family.

One of the key lessons learned from my mother has to do with the potentials of the mind. As an educator and a psychologist, she was dedicated to expanding the uses of mental capacities, both for herself and her students. She would tackle any field of knowledge — even thermodynamics — and get pleasure out of identifying the basic questions which needed to be asked in order to understand it. The example of her energetic mind and quest for its continuing expansion was an inspiration which has prompted me to keep opening out my own mental horizons.

Ideals and the cultivation of the mind were not ends in themselves for my mother, for she was thoroughly practical in putting them to use. She taught and wrote, lectured and discussed — and from her I learned that one could do all those “intellectual” things and at the same time be very much involved and concerned with people and the daily details of life.

My mother's favorite hymn was “New every morning is Thy love.” From her, and my father too, I learned of the ever - renewing nature of the Lord's love and the possibilities of spiritual growth. With the knowledge of regeneration there is potential in even the most difficult of human experiences.

Mother cherished our friendship. I was very fortunate to have a mother who could also be a good friend, a person with whom joys and

sorrows and ideas were shared with no sense of a “generation gap.” To be sure, I miss her, but the lessons I have learned from her life and the heritage she has given me keeps me close to her in spirit.

The Nominating Committee Seeks Suggestions

Over the next four or five months Convention's Nominating Committee will be busily engaged in drafting a slate of nominees to be presented for election at Convention '79 in Urbana, Ohio.

Following are the positions to be filled:

The offices of Convention Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

One minister and two laypersons for General Council.

One position on the Board of Education.

One position on the Board of Publication.

One minister and one layperson for the Board of Missions.

Two names for the Nominating Committee, one to be elected. (Members living in the Massachusetts, Mid - Atlantic, Ohio, Canada and New York Associations are currently ineligible to be nominated to the Nominating Committee.)

One position on the Augmentation Fund.

One minister and one layperson for the Committee on Admission into the Ministry.

Three positions on the Swedenborg School of Religion Board of Managers.

If you would like to recommend the names of qualified, interested Convention members to any or all of the above positions, write to the Chairman of the Nominating Committee, or any Committee member, giving the necessary background information and a brief resume of abilities and interests.

H. Page Conant, Chairman
45 So. Elm Street
W. Bridgewater, Mass. 02379

Randall Laakko, Wilmington, Del.
Jim Zehner, Yellow Springs, Ohio
Pat Zacharias, Kitchener, Ont.
Cele Werben, Brooklyn, N.Y.

THE CONNECTING POINT

by Gwynne Dresser Mack
Pittsfield, N.H.

Communication is the life of human relationships; lack of it is the cause of countless misunderstanding and problems. Many people simply never learn to communicate; self-centered persons have no inclination to do so except when necessary for satisfying desires.

Prayer is communication, the point at which humans and God become connected personally. For twenty years the New - Church Prayer Fellowship has been learning to establish and maintain this most special of all relationships. With fifty members at first, increasing to as many as two hundred from all over the United States and distant places like Norway and Australia, this Fellowship has never met in assembly but has studied and worked together entirely through the postal service.

Recently the Editor of the *Messenger* generously offered space for periodic discussions concerning the meaning and use of prayer, thus helping the Fellowship to keep in touch with members and reach out to others as well.

Through the years members have expressed, in various ways, the following thoughts: "When I prayed for people on the Fellowship prayer - list needing physical and spiritual help, it gave me a feeling of closeness — in God's love — to persons I didn't even know and to others in the Fellowship (many in far away places) who were saying prayers for the same ones for whom I was praying." "The Prayer Fellowship has made us older people, who are unable to do much of anything else, feel that we are of use to our fellow men."

This aspect of prayer — its effect upon the one praying — should give pause to those who disapprove of "praying for others." Such criticism arises from three unfounded interpretations: that praying for others interferes with their freedom of will; that such prayer is telling God what to do; that those who pray *are* telling God what to do, and *are* trying to interfere with other people's free will! Each of these notions is illogical and based upon not fact but assumption.

There is no way that one person, or many, saying a prayer (of whatever kind) can affect another person's divinely protected freedom of will. There is no way that any person can influence or direct God. And no person, knowledgeable in the area of prayer, ever prays with either of those intentions but only toward concern for important needs, and for opening channels of love through which the Lord's decision and power will move.

Jesus Christ said: *ask*. He prayed not only for His disciples but "for them also which shall believe in me through their word." The beloved and constantly used Lord's Prayer teaches us to *include others* in our praying.

So let us all, God's human family, communicate to our Father whatever we feel of compassion for another's emergencies (or our own) — certainly not telling Him to do this or that but *asking* Him please to give us the inflow of His Love and Wisdom and Power which we can not receive until we do ask for it, thus connecting with Him personally and with anyone else who may be praying for the same need.

THE ONENESS OF LIFE

One of the strangest of aberrations is an insistence on separating the physical from the spiritual functions of life. Some people regard the mind and the body as unconnected; and some look upon disorders in the material world as simply not real, implying that to believe this will cause the disorders to disappear. Numerous religious folks think it is inappropriate to let bodily and worldly needs associate with spiritual considerations, and therefore feel it is wrong to pray for physical or material help.

Yet on this earth the whole purpose of human existence rests upon the coordination of body and spirit. Physical functioning is a connecting point between worldly endeavor and spiritual development — the means whereby the embryonic soul takes form for eternity. The body, like an automobile, is what advances the

spirit from here to there, not of its own planning but under continuous higher control.

How is it that we all have these bodies, amazing machines which we take entirely for granted? How are we able to depend upon and use them so constantly? Mass - produced by their Inventor, they are programmed for both automatic operation and immediate response to the human will; and standing by, behind and above us, are the universal Laws of Order which create and direct and sustain. Swedenborg said "when the body is sick, the mind is sick also." If difficulty arises, what else could we do better than to refer the problem to the Manufacturer? Asking Him for assistance is not necessarily caring more about the body than for anything else, but preferably caring for the mental vitality which depends upon physical machinery for expression.

Not only do some disapprove of talking with God about disabled bodies, but also of asking for *things*. Yet things exist in this world primarily for implementing human effort toward spiritual goals. Throughout earth - activity we function within our bodies by means

of things outside our bodies, and there is no escape from this until our Creator releases us to a higher awareness. It is He who decreed that our souls must work through our bodies and with the things of this world, and must look to Him for guidance in their use. This is surely a reason why God materialized Himself amongst humanity for a while, as a fellow human being, to demonstrate the inseparable connection between body and spirit whereby earth - existence develops the relatedness of all humanity to its Creator.

There is no other way for man's spirit to grow except by obtaining and using, in orderly ways, the earthly equipment which our Father provides for carrying us through the journey into the spiritual and eternal level of life.

(This is the first in a series of Messenger articles on meditation, healing and prayer by the well known New Church writer, Gwynne Dresser Mack. Mrs. Mack is a lifelong member of Convention; the author of a number of books and pamphlets, including "Talking With God"; and well known to many in Convention. We welcome her to these pages.)

ANNOUNCEMENT

The result of the voting by members of the New - Church Prayer Fellowship, as to use of its funds if not needed for further expenses, showed a majority favoring the church work of the Reverend Obed Mooki in South Africa. Chimes for the Wayfarer's Chapel placed second, and the Fryeburg and Almont summer assemblies came in third. There were some interesting individual suggestions which, however, can not be considered under present circumstances.

Since money can not now be sent to South Africa, because of the disturbed conditions there, and to allow time for final decisions relative to the Prayer Fellowship, the funds will remain safely in the bank until further clarification of the *status quo*.

The appreciation of and devotion to their Prayer Fellowship, as expressed by its members, has been most heartwarming and seems to indicate that the program begun twenty years ago has achieved what it set out to do.

G.D.M.

CONVENTION CALENDAR

Oct. 6 — 8	Kansas Ass'n
Oct. 11 — 12	C.A.M., Newton, Mass.
Oct. 13 — 14	Board of Education, Newton, Mass.
Oct. 15	Installation of Rev. David Rienstra, Fryeburg, Me.
Oct. 26 — 28	Urbana College Trustees, Urbana, Ohio
Nov. 3 — 4	Wayfarers' Chapel Board
Nov. 17 — 18	Board of Missions, Newton, Mass.
Jan. 18 — 20	General Council

SUNDAY SCHOOL BONERS

In what order do the gospels come? One after another.

Solomon had 300 wives and 700 porcupines.

Christianity was introduced into Britain by the Romans in 55 B.C.

The Great Flood was sent because of the large number of dirty people.

(continued on page 225)

Nature and Spirit

Poems by Florence Foster Brook
Harrogate, Yorkshire, England



"There is actually a sphere elevating all men towards heaven, which proceeds continually from the Lord, and fills the whole spiritual world, as well as the whole natural world. It is like a strong current in the ocean which with hidden force bears a ship along."

TCR 652

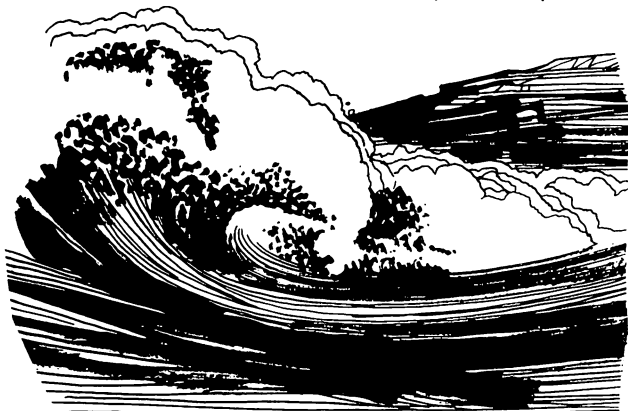
NATURE AND SPIRIT

The Natural World shows forth the Spiritual man

For in his love, his work, his play, he can
Seek out the Spiritual. Nature ever shows
The way of growth. Each plant or flower grows
Toward the sun. In Spring puts forth anew
Its strength, its life fed by the rain and dew
Is nurtured. Every human spirit needs
Its daily food. Its impetus best feeds
In use to others. A talent seldom used
Soon dies, the choice is ours. God's laws
abused

Swift justice brings. An evil world we scan
Refuse to see that evil springs from man.
The Spirit can repress the wrong around
Us. If all seek it, good will soon abound.

* * * * *



"Many believe that man can be taught by the Lord by means of spirits speaking with him, but those who believe this . . . do not know that it is attended with danger to their souls. So long as man is living in the world he is, in respect to his spirit, in the midst of spirits, although the spirits do not know that they are with man, nor does man know that he is with spirits . . . For man thinks naturally, but spirits think spiritually, and natural and spiritual thoughts make one only by correspondences."

AE 1182

THOUGHT

There are some thoughts
Too intimate for speech.
Feelings too deep to find
Expression in mere words.
Their import floats
For ever beyond reach
Of sound.
A silent melody with unknown chords.
Oh would that I
Could but this once express
That hidden music of
The soul in language plain.
It should not die
Unheard
Without redress.
All earth and sky would echo back its grand
refrain.

* * * * *

"There is a true marital love which is so rare today, its character is not known, and hardly that it exists."

CL 58

"While a man is in the world he ought to have heaven in himself, so that he may enter into it after death."

AC 9832

THE CONJUGIAL LOVE

I have known this happy state
Of true conjugal love,
It is a heavenly blessedness
Beyond description.
How describe its bliss?
Except in borrowed words
From that great man
Whose works I read and quote.
He tells us that it is,
"Received directly from our Lord,
It is a true union of both soul and body.
It is the fundamental love
Of all celestial and spiritual love
And hence of all natural love."
Into it are collected all joys
And all delights from first to last.
To know such a love
Is to have lived indeed,
Intensely. No words describe it
No other joy equals it.
Receive and treasure it
With true humility.

* * * *

*"The Word which was dictated by the Lord
passed through the heavens . . . and thus came
to man by whom it was written, wherefore the
Word in its first origin is purely Divine . . . and
when it came to man it became Divine
natural . . . not anything is to be added or taken
away from the truths of doctrine concerning the
Lord, and concerning faith in them."*

AR 959

THE WORD

The Word is like a garden
All full of lovely flowers,
Bright colours full of Wisdom
Enrich its golden hours.
The Word is like the fruit
Begotten of each flower,
The birds and bees distil its seeds
Divine and Heavenly power.
The Word is like an infant
Well wrapped in swaddling clothes;
We ourselves with careful hands
Must unwrap the swathing bands,
To reach each central truth
Of verse and letter.

* * * *

O FOOL, AND BLIND!

"I will not love, I said, for love is pain.
Why should I tortured be?
I hate pain! No heartache, then, for me
— I will not love.
I will not love, for love is sacrifice.
I want to be gay and free,
I want to enjoy life. No sacrifice for me
— I will not love.
I will not love, for love is giving,
Yes, love is charity;
But if I give, there may be penury for me
— I will not love."
"I will not love", I cried.
But some inner voice replied,
"O poor blind fool, hopes thou to escape life
so?
Forget thyself, nor think life hard.
Fear not to love — and know
Love is its own reward.
Love may be pain and sacrifice and giving,
But only those who love can know
True joy of living."

Clara Duckworth
Conference *Lifeline*

* * * *

WHAT KIND OF A CHILD?

What kind of a child is this baby?
What sort of a person is he?
I gaze and I gaze at his features;
What kind of a child will he be?
I want to keep asking this question;
I don't want an answer to - day;
I want to keep full of this wonder;
I don't want it slipping away.
For if I should come to conclusions
And think that I really do know
His qualities, tendencies, make - up,
I've stifled his freedom to grow.
So let me remain full of wonder,
Stay open through all of his years,
Discovering ever new features,
Aware of whatever appears.

Emilie Bateman



FRYEBURG FLAMES CELEBRATE 50TH ANNIVERSARY

In 1928, the Fryeburg New Church Assembly held its eighth session. Classes and lectures were held in the Fryeburg church. Adults were housed in dormitories at the Fryeburg Academy and meals were served in the Alumni Building of the Academy on Main St. The girls slept in a cabin on the shore of Lovewell's Pond, nearby, and the boys were housed in tents alongside. Mrs. Walter Swanton, the housemother for the young people, suggested that they might wish to organize the group, so she and seven young people met around an open grate stove in Harmony Hut, the girls' dorm. Those gathered were mostly Swantons — Mrs. Swanton and her children Walter, Lucy and Edith, and her niece and nephew, Mary and John Swanton. Also present were Velma Bates and Marjorie Delle.

Many suggestions were offered for a name for the group, each one expressing better the warmth they wished conveyed by their name. When Walter Swanton finally said, "Flames," it was accepted at once, and the Fryeburg Flames were born. The purpose was, "to put life and interest into the Assembly, and to make it attractive to young people . . ." Charter members — those attending sometime during the two - week session in 1928 — numbered twenty - nine, and Mrs. Swanton, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Dole, and Mr. George S. Dole (youth adviser) were named honorary members.

This August, fifty years later, the Flames gathered for a gala reunion. The planning began when Nancy Perry discovered the old Flames record book in a closet last year and conceived the idea of a 50th reunion. Lois McCurdy and Louise Woofenden were the

other two members of a committee under Nancy's chairmanship, and David and Carole Rienstra were the coordinators working with the Fryeburg Society and the local press. Those who assisted in many ways are too numerous to mention, and the good times and conversation cannot possibly be adequately reported in this outline of the weekend activities!

The reunion began on Friday evening, August 18, with a Stunt Night performance planned by the present Flames, and entitled appropriately "Potholes on Memory Lane." It presented acts from memorable past performances, and included appearances by a number of Embers (former Flames, now adults). Saturday morning the normal schedule of lectures and classes was followed, and after lunch returning Flames had the opportunity to tour the grounds to see all the new buildings and the changes wrought by the passage of time. They also enjoyed a swim in the Saco, which was not its usual frigid self, owing to an unusually hot, dry season.

At 6:00 p.m. a wine and cheese party on the lawn, hosted by Fred and John Perry and Lois McCurdy, was followed by the taking of a group photo, at which time it became apparent that nearly 150 people had convened. Soon dinner was announced and as people entered the dining hall they were greeted by beautifully decorated tables, done by Wendy Schnurr with the help of Lois McCurdy, Carole Rienstra, Dorothy Young, and others. Driftwood, pine boughs, mountain ash sprays, flowers and candles adorned each table, and there were floral arrangements on the mantels and walls. At the close of the cold buffet, Bill Woofenden, acting for president George McCurdy, who was absent, thanked the many who had made the reunion a success, and called to the front the five charter members who were present: Walter Swanton, the Flames' first president, Lucy Swanton Clark, John Swanton, C. Fred Burdett, and Velma Bates Ramirez. On behalf of the present Flames, Lee Woofenden presented each with a plaque made of a slice of hickory log, decorated with birch bark and hemlock cones and inscribed with name, date and the words, "Love and charity are a celestial flame. — Swedenborg." Lucy Swanton Capon, who had been at the Assembly earlier in the day, but who was unable to remain for the banquet, was presented a plaque in absentia.



Wine and cheese on the lawn of the Fryeburg Assembly.



Lee Woofenden presents plaque to Walter Swanton, the Flames' first president.

Following the banquet Fred Faxon's 1935 movie of the Assembly was shown, plus slides from the fifties to the present, eliciting shrieks of recognition, laughter and witty comment.

The weekend culminated in a service of worship and communion led by George Dole in the Fryeburg Church of the New Jerusalem. Hans and Inga Synnestvedt sang a lovely duet, and the children's choir delighted the congregation. Ushers serving the communion were John Perry, Stewart S. Perry, Jr., Michael Salvetti and Douglas Daniels.

The feelings of all present were expressed in capsule form by Walter Swanton during a short speech at the banquet. Addressing the present Flames, he told them to treasure their experiences at Fryeburg, for they would prove to be among the most precious moments of their lives.

Louise Woofenden

THE GIFT OF HOPE

*Clayton Priestnal
New York, N. Y.*

In Nathaniel Hawthorne's collection of stories, *A WONDER BOOK*, there is a tale entitled "The Paradise of Children", which is an adaptation of the ancient Greek myth concerning Pandora and the mysterious box she was warned not to open. The world then was populated entirely by innocent children who knew neither sadness, pain or hunger. Their days were filled with joyous songs and laughter. Curiosity about the contents of the box eventually became too strong, so one day Pandora surreptitiously lifted the lid to peek

inside. Swarms of ugly, stinging insects escaped and scattered abroad implanting their vicious fangs in children everywhere. From that day on care, sorrow, sickness and old age became a part of human experience. The released insects symbolized Trouble. While Pandora was bemoaning what she had done, a wee voice was heard within the box begging to be let out. After considerable coaxing, she again raised the cover and out sprang a diminutive figure, lively and cheerful, whose name was HOPE.

All the pernicious insects set free are still swarming over the earth — trouble and more trouble plagues the human race and no remedy has yet been found. But there remains HOPE.

HOPE is what the New Church gives to the world. Darkness and disorder are indeed all - pervasive in these troubled times, but the New Church teaches most emphatically that the Lord's providence is continuously at work to bring about human happiness and self - fulfillment.

The HOPE held out to the world by the New Church is not limited to a few precepts and insights; its total theological outlook is permeated by God's love and wisdom. With divine help sorrow can be a somber door opening into the sunlight; pain can give one pause to consider the difference between the flesh and the spirit; disappointments can eventually enrich the soul to a degree greater than do easily acquired satisfactions; and the bleak and barren trails one travels over in life can lead to the lush meadows and gardens of paradise.

In every doctrine of the New Church there is to be found HOPE. The down - hearted, the grief - stricken, the old, the young, and those who are still unsatisfied with what they have found in orthodox Christian theology, are invited to explore and test by use the boundless riches contained in the religious philosophy of the New Church, and by so doing they can hasten the coming of an age which will be truly "new".

con't from page 221

The message came to Abraham that he should bear a son, and Sarah, who was listening behind the door, laughed.

The greatest miracle in the Bible was when Joshua told his son to stand still, and he obeyed.

If David had one fault it was a slight tendency to adultery.

from *Pulpit Digest*

THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION

"CHRIST'S LAST TEMPTATION"

*by Rev. Richard H. Tafel, Sr.
Philadelphia, Pa.*

Swedenborg teaches that the last temptation by which the Lord overcame the hells was the crucifixion. He says, for instance, "Thereby the last temptation of the Lord was in Gethsemane and on the Cross when he gained complete victory." Please help us to understand how he "gained complete victory on the cross."

My immediate answer to your question is to say that Jesus did not want to die, for in dying he would be asked to do what is required of no other human being, and yet, out of his sense of mission and in his supreme dedication to the will and purpose of God, he paid the last full measure of devotion. This is admittedly an enigmatic answer, and needs a detailed explanation.

One reason that we find it so difficult to understand the agony in Gethsemane and the Passion on the Cross lies in the fact that we will not let Jesus be a human being exactly like ourselves. Yet this is the testimony of the Gospels and the wisdom of the Early Church, and is insisted upon in our own theology. On the level where he lived his life, Jesus was human in every sense that we are. He shared all our drives and cravings, our feelings and hopes and despairs, our longings and dreams. He had the same mortal weaknesses and needs that we all have. He became weary, knew hunger and thirst; he cried. He shared our common need of praying to God, of seeking strength and guidance and comfort from Him.

Another reason for our difficulty is that we look at the Cross from this side of Easter. We know how the Incarnation Drama turns out. In the Garden and at the Cross that drama reaches its climax, defeat or victory poised in the balance. Had we been there and had we insight into the factors and forces involved, we would have held our breath because it could have so easily gone either way. For us today, the events of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday only take on something of their suffering, their despair and agonizing temptation if we make Jesus an authentic and complete human being; and if we see the Incarnation itself as a "Grand Perhaps," as a gigantic question mark placed over whether the human race would live or die.

The question posed by the Incarnation may well be put, non-theologically, in the following simple way. How much can the human frame endure? How clearly can the human mind reason and understand and see aright? How unwaveringly loyal will it be to that which is envisioned as the highest good? We know, again from our side of Easter, the life lived in answer.

In the Gospels we see One giving himself fully, freely and completely to the purpose and will of God as he comes to envision it. We see One dedicating himself with all his being to the love of God and to the service of man. We see One putting out of himself every thing mean, lowly and self-regarding, everything unworthy of man or less than humanity's best. Hatred, in all its many forms, is overcome by love; prejudice and outworn tradition, by understanding and compassion. As we see Jesus rejecting all suggestions of evil and falseness, we see him not only pushing these out of himself but also driving the forces which had incited them back to the hells from whence they had come.

Throughout the course of this perfectly lived life we see One progressively and increasingly opening himself to the inflowing of divine life from the depths within him. Wisdom, deep and gracious, fell from his lips. "He spoke with authority," causing a hardened Roman captain to exclaim, "Never man spoke like that man!" Love radiated from him, love such as the world has never known, in the presence of which people were changed and transfigured. Power came to abide in his hands: power to heal and to cure, power to drive evil spirits out of those demonically possessed, power to calm wind and tide — and people began to murmur, "God!"

THE HUMAN SIDE OF GOD

It is hard for us, from our perspective of nearly two thousand years, to keep in mind that it was not God but a man who was doing all these things. That it was Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth, a human being like ourselves. Take some of the so-called "hard sayings of Jesus" for instance, such as "Be ye therefore perfect" or "Turn the other cheek." When exhorted to follow Jesus and do as he did, what is our

natural response? "O, that was the Lord! I am only human after all!" Is it any wonder, then, that we find it so difficult to understand the Passion of the Cross.

God cannot be said to fail; man can. Where there is no possibility of failing there is no temptation. If it had not been possible for Jesus to have refused to "drink the cup" or "come down from the Cross", there would have been no Agony or Passion. Swedenborg, correctly, makes Gethsemane and Calvary one and the same temptation: Jesus' death. In the Garden he faces it and accepts it; on the morrow that decision is put to the test.

THE LIFE WE LOVE

How did dying constitute Jesus' last and most grievous temptation? At the risk of being considered blasphemous, we recall the countless men who have bravely gone to their death for a great cause, for love of country and, yes, for their Lord. The early Christians, knowing that they were to meet the lions on the morrow, spent the night singing hymns and giving thanks that they were to die for their faith and to be reunited with their Lord in death. Peter, when informed that he was to be crucified, begged not for his life but for the privilege of being crucified upside down, because he felt unworthy to die in the same manner his Lord had. Nathan Hale, facing death as a spy, bravely and calmly says, "I have one regret, that I have only one life to give for my country." And Jesus?

I said at the beginning that Jesus did not want to die; that in undergoing death more was demanded of him than is asked of any other human being. When we die we know that death but marks the transference of our existence to the further scene of its continued activity. For Jesus, death would mark his annihilation as a human being. His life would go out into nothingness, extinguished like a blown-out candle. For him there would be no tomorrow in another world. For him death meant his willingness to allow God to possess all of his being to the point where there would be nothing left of himself. Could such a complete sacrifice be actually made? A giving up of everything that makes our human life so precious? An abdicating of life itself?

Yet it was exactly this that was posed by the Incarnation, by God's stepping into his world as Man to be "God - with - us" in a Divinely Human Presence. Jesus was the human response to God's coming, his life the dedication to the divine will and purpose. By a Perfect Life he had opened the way for God's infilling presence. At the climax of the Incarnation the Most High was almost fully

come into this Holy Temple so wondrously prepared as his permanent dwelling place. Almost, but not completely. That "almost but not completely" spells out Jesus' last and most grievous temptation.

THE LAST, FIERCE CONFLICT

There were in Jesus up to the very last a human consciousness and a human will, that part of his being not yet surrendered up, that narrowing area still distinctly his own. That is why he continued to pray to God as to another person. It was against this vulnerable and fallible humanness that the hells flung themselves in all their fury in a last desperate effort to prevent him from "drinking the cup" which in Gethsemane he saw he must drink. If they could keep him from "laying down his life for his friends," from paying the last full measure of devotion, they could exclude God from his creation, and then the whole of creation would be their helpless plaything. Think of this when you say, "He overcame the hells and so delivered man"! If you have ever had to push shut a door against a desperate and evil - intending intruder, you know that the last half inch is the hardest and most crucial. If you succeed, the door is shut and barred; if you fail, the enemy comes storming in and all is lost. It was that last half inch that was at issue here, the life or death of the race hanging in the balance.

In the Garden of Gethsemane it was not the prospect of physical death that caused Jesus "to be in agony and pray most earnestly" so that "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." It was rather the prospect of personal annihilation and all that that entailed: having no more part to play in the redemption and salvation of the people he loved so dearly; not being able henceforth to give of himself to others and to minister to their needs; no longer to love and encourage and inspire; having to let go of, totally and for all time, that which had come to be more precious to him than life itself. But even all this he fought through, thought and prayed through, until he could say, "If this cup not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." This resolving of Jesus' last and most grievous temptation was put to the testing on the Cross.

The crucifying is the most exquisite form of torture ever devised by the human brain. The agony of outraged flesh, the pull of the nails, the pressure upon severed nerves and torn tendons, the thirst and the exhaustion, the slow dying without dying — unimaginable! Yet if we make this terror and agony Jesus' most grievous temptation, there is no Passion of the

Cross. If that was what the Suffering on Calvary was, his cross rises no higher than those other two crosses on that same hill. No; the Passion on that center cross moved on a vastly deeper and more terrible level of intensity. The powers of hell beat upon that narrowing still - human area of his being, desperately attempting to turn him from his life mission and from that final commitment prayed out in Gethsemane; seeking by every wile and devilish appeal to widen the closing gap between him and God; using doubts, half-truths and truths to drive a wedge between the two wills within him.

The temptation which they directed at him was not a gross or an obviously false one, such as those mockingly voiced by the crowd below: "Save yourself!" "Come down from the cross, and we will believe you!" "Use your power, and prove that you are what you claim to be!" Jesus' last and most grievous temptation was the high water mark of the hells' attempt to inundate the mind of man with their flood of evil and falseness. With devilish subtlety they focussed their attack against his sense of mission, the redemption and salvation of mankind. We can only guess at the suggestions and doubts they ingeniously insinuated. How they must have played upon his reason and his compassion!

"Look! Your disciples have abandoned you. They have not understood."

"Haven't you made a disastrous mistake in timing?"

"Just a few more things said or done may mean the difference between success and failure!"

"Your work is not finished! This is not the time to go!"

Appeal after appeal, subtle and plausible, ingeniously couched so as to put in jeopardy the divine purpose to which he had dedicated his life. This, hour after hour, with body wracked and mind being drained of its keen powers. Doubts, misgivings, questionings. What is right? What is true? What is real, and what phantasy and delusion?

Add to this undermining and soul-wracking the feeling of helplessness and the sense of abandonment which accompany all spiritual temptations, during which God seems to be far away and unconcerned. Raise that feeling and that sense to the intensity of Jesus' cry on the Cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Always hitherto in his temptations, as Jesus fought his way out of the darkness into the light, there had come

ministering angels to comfort and strengthen him. But there were none at the Cross. Even after the Agony in the Garden "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him." But here he had passed beyond what any human being had ever experienced, so there could be no angels to minister to him now.

We are left with only that cry of utter abandonment, and can follow Jesus in his final and most grievous temptation no further. Mercifully that cosmic struggling is hidden from our eyes, for it is far beyond all human understanding. We can only know, from that last cry from the Cross, that it is crowned by final and complete victory, "It is finished! Into thy hands I commend my spirit."

(Send your religious questions to:

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

LIVING FORWARD

"Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forward." Kierkegaard

"The life which leads to heaven is not a life of retirement from the world, but a life in the world." Swedenborg.

If our little planet seems to be hopelessly mired in confusion, stress, and pervasive hate between various groups of incompatible, social, economic, and religious persuasions, it is during these times that reflection of Kierkegaard's and Swedenborg's statements can be enlightening.

We witness injustices every day — violations of civil liberties on very personal levels, i.e. crime, destruction of property, etc. Achieving elementary human rights such as equal opportunities in housing, jobs, wages, and education regardless of race, creed, sex (or preference) is still a struggle. The Constitution affords civil rights for every American citizen, but not necessarily equal rights regardless of sex, which is what the battle for the equal rights amendment is all about. Blacks are still striving for decent jobs, housing, and education, Indians for recompense from broken treaties, farmers for fair prices, and other minority groups for freedom from harassment, with only a halting progress.

Whether or not it is fruitful to anguish over these injustices is really not debatable. We

know from history that horrendous decisions have been (and still are) made by governments. It is only by continuous exposure and recognition of these evils that we can avoid them in the future — *living forward*. Even though we knew it happened, the recent television broadcast of “Holocaust,” evoked vivid and overwhelmingly painful memories. Other nations are *still* committing atrocious crimes of genocide and, with the exceptions of some groups like Amnesty International, the National Council of Churches, the Quakers, and various other church missionaries, the majority of us remain silent. We shouldn’t. We should *live forward*.

But why are these massive injustices still being so widely tolerated? Swedenborg wrote that man is microcosm of the world and that the individual’s *spiritual* state is a mirror image of the world’s. In light of the persistence of man’s inhumanity to man, it appears that our spiritual state remains indeed a sorry one. Is there a way out?

Any choice we make strengthens our motivating affection (or will). It is our individual and collective wills which determine the course of our lives. Just as nature changes seasons magically, so too does the inward progression of the human spirit. Nature recycles itself in perpetual renewal. The human spirit is also regularly recharged and new growth occurs. Unlike the lower forms of life, the human is granted the gift of freedom and rationality. We have the freedom to do either good or evil — or to turn one into the other. Ideally, we should become regenerate enough to work for the forces of good from unselfish motivation.

Intellectually, we know that personal regeneration is necessary. All religions teach this. But the application is where the difficulty lies. Swedenborg wrote: “All religion is of life and the life of religion is doing that which is good.” Doing “that which is good” varies with each of us according to our talents and understanding of love and wisdom. Love *without* wisdom is powerless. It should be our task, therefore, to remove the abstraction of Swedenborg’s concept and begin our renewal — for the sake of ourselves, our neighbors, and our nations.

“Whoever practices charity and justice is as though he filled the whole world with loving - kindness.” The Talmud

From the Swedenborg Foundation Newsletter

FROM CHURCH RECORDS

BAPTISMS

STEIGER — Christopher Joel and Michael John, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Steiger were baptized into the Christian faith in Riverside, California, on June 4, 1978, the Rev. John Spiers officiating.

WIBERG — Mrs. Betty Wiberg was received into the faith of the New Church through adult baptism in the Cambridge New Church on June 11, 1978, the Rev. Wilfred Rice officiating.

CONFIRMATIONS

KONITSKY, KOZAR, MANNING, RICE — Sally White Konitsky, Jon and Joan (Archer) Kozar, Richard J. Manning, Dr. and Mrs. Charles Rice were confirmed into the New Church faith in the Cambridge Society on May 21, 1978 the Rev. Wilfred Rice officiating.

GLINSKI, NWACHAN — Martha Glinski and Thomas and Deborah Nwachan were confirmed into the New Church faith in the Cambridge Society on June 25, 1978, the Rev. Wilfred Rice officiating. Mr. and Mrs. Nwachan are from the Cameroons in West Africa and expect to return home in a year or so. They became acquainted with New Church doctrines through Martha Glinski and the personnel of the Swedenborg Library in Boston.

MARRIAGES

EMBURY — LECLERC — David Embury and Cyndee LeClerc were married in the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, Alberta, on May 6, 1978, Lay Minister John Bennett officiating.

BERGMAN — COLLINS — Eric Bergman and Brenda Collins were married in the Church of the Holy City, Edmonton, Alberta, on June 17, 1978, Lay Minister John Bennett officiating.

BRAID — CAMOZZI — Angus Braid and Anne Camozzi were married at the home of the bride in Oshawa, Ontario on August 17, 1978, the Rev. Paul Zacharias officiating. The bride’s maternal grandparents, the late Mr. and Mrs. Martin Zacharias, were well known in New Church circles in Western Canada.

MAYNARD — ANDERSON — Bruce Maynard and Sheryl Anderson were married in the Church of the Good Shepherd in Kitchener, Ontario, on Sept. 9, 1978, the Rev. Paul Zacharias officiating.

FAITH HEALERS WANTED

by *Bill Etue*
Washington, D.C.

Faith healers are usually thought of with great skepticism, but imagine for a moment that you were given the power to heal people. Would you use that power? If you could make a blind man see by merely waving a magic wand would you do it? If you could return the dead to life, or enable the bed-ridden to rise and walk again would you do it? Now, assuming that all your answers were "yes", next ask yourself if some inconvenience to you would make any difference. An inconvenience such as a few hours of your time, or making a couple of phone calls. If not, then there is some wonderful news you should know about. Everyone in the Swedenborgian Church is now able to do these things — everyone!

The way to achieve these miracles is by becoming an organ donor. Your eyes can enable the blind to see. Your heart can return the "dead" to life. And your kidneys can restore vitality and a normal life to someone in need of a kidney transplant. Your magic wand is any ballpoint pen. And the magic word is "yes".

Becoming an organ donor is usually an easy matter. Forty states and five Canadian provinces have programs through their Departments of Motor Vehicles whereby driver's permits bear a checkbox next to the words "organ donor". Such licenses are accepted in these areas as written authority for the use of organs for transplant. Your local Kidney Foundation or Lions Club Eye Bank will supply you with a *Uniform Donor Card* to keep in your wallet or purse. It has the same legal value in any state or province as the special driver's license.

Today over 12,000 potential kidney recipients exist in the U.S. and Canada. The 4,400 kidneys made available last year were 8,000 short of the number needed. The day to day lives of those 8,000 people who have no donor available are not unlike Erin and Kelly Land. Erin and Kelly were leading miserable lives. Kelly who is now 7 and Erin, 9, both suffered from kidney disease. It eventually destroyed their kidneys and forced them to depend on a Dialysis machine. They ate restricted diets, were constantly sick, and their growth was stunted. They were allowed 10 ounces of fluid a day and with that they had to take 27 pills a day.

However Eric and Kelly were among the lucky ones who received transplants. In their case each parent gave a kidney to their sons. Now they are active normal children. There are children as young as 2 who could receive a kidney transplant, if there were only enough to go around.

Our desire to live our faith should serve as a further incentive for each of us to become an organ donor. After our mortal exterior body has served its purpose of housing our interior being while we are on Earth, it becomes useless to us. Here is an opportunity to make that former shell serve a useful purpose soon after we begin our passing over to the spiritual life.

Take time now to check with your Kidney Foundation or Lions Club Eye Bank and have them send you a *Uniform Donor Card* or better yet request enough of a supply to pass them out at church. In many cases speakers are available from these groups to give talks and answer questions. A "getting around to it someday" attitude may keep potential recipients from experiencing joys in life we often take for granted.

NEW ADDRESSES

Mr. Philip Alden
32 John Circle
Lititz, Pa. 17543

Rev. and Mrs. Ron Brugler
225 Beau's Drive
Lake Arthur Estates
Portersville, Pa. 16051

Rev. and Mrs. David Rienstra
P.O. Box 111
Fryeburg, Maine 04037

Rev. and Mrs. F. Robert Tafel
6672 Barrett Rd.
Falls Church, Va. 22042

After October 31, 1978:

Rev. and Mrs. Paul Zacharias
81 Church St. #905
Kitchener, Ont. N2G 2S1

(The *Messenger* address remains the same.
See masthead inside front cover.)

THE UPPER ROOM

FOUR GREAT JUDGEMENTS IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

Leon LeVan
St. Petersburg, Fla.

While the existence of the Spiritual World is disavowed by many Christians because they cannot see it with fleshly eyes, that fact should not prevent us from reporting transactions of surpassing moment (as found in Emanuel Swedenborg's Writings) for the church on earth.

There have been Four Great Judgments in the Spiritual World, each coming at the end of an Age or Dispensation of the Church.

The First Great Judgment is pictured in the Bible by the "Flood." The "Flood" was the symbol of the Last Judgment in the Spiritual World on the Most Ancient Church which is meant by the "Garden of Eden." From the resurrected good people of that Most Ancient Church the First Great Heaven was formed. It is called the Celestial Heaven.

The Second Great Judgment was accomplished by the Lord on those people in the Spiritual World who had been resurrected from the idolatrous nations such as Babylonia, Assyria, and others. Those nations constituted the Ancient Church (after the Most Ancient) and all from those nations were judged in the Spiritual World. From the resurrected good of that Ancient Church the Second Great Heaven was formed. It is called the Spiritual Heaven.

The Third Great Judgment was performed in the Spiritual World by the Lord Jesus Christ at the time of the Incarnation. Little is said about it in the Gospels because the Gospel writers did not know about it so could not write about it. Jesus imaged it symbolically in His parable of the "Wheat and Tares" and the "Sheep and Goats," but men's "eyes" were closed and they did not "see." A few days before His Crucifixion, Jesus said: "Now is the Judgment of this world." "Now is the Prince of this world cast out." At that very time in the Spiritual World, unseen to mortal eyes, Jesus was executing the Third Great Judgment (on the Israelitish Church) and that fact has sometimes inspired the mistaken idea that Jesus "descended into Hell."

But there was still a Fourth Judgment to come. After a period of more than 1,700 years following the Incarnation, the Risen and Glorified Lord accomplished that Fourth and

Final Judgment in the Spiritual World and formed the Third Great Heaven from the resurrected good among Christians.

After that Final Judgment in the Spiritual World was accomplished, a new Church began to appear on the earth and is still appearing. It takes its name from the last two chapters of the Bible, the "Church of the New Jerusalem." You are of that Church. You know its teachings and doctrines. You know its history. You know its place in the succession of Churches from the time of the Biblical "Flood." You know it was promised in the *Prophets, Psalms, Gospels, and Revelation*. You know its trials, its kinship with Heaven. You know about the real life of Angels and the doctrine of Heaven's occupations and uses which that Church teaches.

You know about death and resurrection; about the Progressions and changes - of - state in the Spiritual World. You know about governments in Heaven, Angelic communities, God - given marriages, laws of Divine Providence, the true nature of the *Word* — and (most important) you know how you should think of God (and love God) who is the Lord the Savior Jesus Christ — Jehovah in a Visible Form.

The specific "Church of the New Jerusalem" (which goes by several different names) may be said to consist of all who love the New - Church writings and teachings; but in the widest sense it includes all of every Religion on earth who acknowledge the Divine under a Human Form and shun their evils as sins against God.

When we look on the Church's trials and temptations here in the natural world, we are sometimes prone to lose heart. But if we remember that the Church is the Lord's and that He gives us the very "treasures of Heaven" in our humblest conditions, we should be more thankful than words can express. "Yet a little while is the Light with you. Walk while ye have the Light, that darkness overtake you not; for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth While ye have the Light, believe in the Light, that ye may be the children of Light."

THE MESSENGER
 Box 2642 Stn. B
 Kitchener, Ont. N2H 6N2

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The basic principles of the New Church are:

- 1) **There is one God** — the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit being aspects of Him as soul, body and activities of a man are aspects by which he may be known.
- 2) **The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God**, including both literal instruction for a good life, and an inner meaning which describes the mind and soul of man and the love and wisdom of God.
- 3) **Man is essentially a spirit** clothed with a material body. At death the material body is laid aside — never to be resumed — and the person himself continues to live on in the world of spirit in his inner spiritual body, on the basis of the kind of life he chose while here on earth.
- 4) **“All religion relates to life, and the life of religion is to do good.”** Religion, touching life at all points, challenges us to raise our whole present experience to spiritual heights and to transmute our religious insights into the living tissue of permanent character.

It is in this spirit and in the light of these principles that we are invited to worship, and in company with like minded individuals to seek the deepening of the true Christian life.