

The Messenger

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCH
SEPTEMBER 1978

A SUMMER REVERIE

Here on the warm beach life seems so very simple. One's basic needs are met easily, without straining. Eating, sleeping, playing, reading, loving. The hour of the day isn't too important. Surely a most unreal way to live. Or is it? Could we live this way indefinitely? The pros and cons are looked at briefly. Perhaps someday.

There are moments on the beach when earth time and space seem to fade into the background — like the distant water and sky blending into one steelblue curtain. There is no beginning and no ending. And the only thing I am quite sure of, at this very moment, is that on this empty beach I am a person, and I exist, and that I have been made by God. The sheer wonder of it all — that God should want to create me.

I wonder why? He certainly didn't have to. It must have been because He wanted to . . . which means that there is some definite reason why I am alive at this particular time and place, because God doesn't do things haphazardly.

Somehow it helps to be aware of this fact. (Continued next page.)

Conrad Grebel campus,
Waterloo, Ontario.

photo by Phyllis Beath,
Urbana, Ohio.



A Summer Reverie (Continued)

Now the children are busily playing in the sand. Two are digging a channel to the open water; the other is building a sand castle, with turrets and fortified walls. And as they work, words fly back and forth. Questions are asked and no one waits for the answer. I suppose that answers really aren't expected. Each one is so absorbed in his own masterpiece. This is quite normal for children, but how often we find the same situation on the adult level. "Having ears to hear we do not hear." A wife and husband live together in the same house, but the one does not hear the other because they do not listen to one another. Sometimes parents do not hear their children; they are trying to impose their wishes rather than seeking to understand the son or daughter. In many subtle ways we want our children to be like ourselves, instead of helping the child develop his/her own individual personality.

And this works both ways. Sometimes children do not hear their parents because they hear only themselves. Maybe this is why children's voices frequently are uncommonly loud — they want to be sure they are heard. This could be one reason why there is so much misunderstanding in the world — that we talk with ourselves instead of having a free and open two way channel between ourselves and other people. As always, the honest encounter between two persons is much easier said than done. An art to be cultivated. The children leave and I am left alone.

In the distance I see two sailboats passing, one going east, the other west. From my vantage point no sound is heard. The sailors wave and doff their caps, and that's the way it is. Why do we wait so long!

Only the soft lapping of the waves is heard. The wavy ripples of sand stretch along the beach in perfect symmetry. This sand, which now trickles through my fingers, was once solid rock. Over millions of years the wind and water have worked their magic. The permanence of change. Long before I was born, and long after I am dead, the water and sand will still be here. Isn't this rather an ironic commentary on our claims of ownership! Nothing on earth really belongs to us. The world, and everything in it, has been loaned to us in trust, to use wisely. It all belongs to God, and for our few short years in this life we are responsible to Him.

And so the afternoon slips away. One small slice of time, and because of it, the person I am

now is not the same person I was yesterday, or will be tomorrow.

See how that bird soars toward the sun.

P.Z.

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Paul B. Zacharias, Editor

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The Starting Line ————— by Eric Zacharias

This was a Par 4 hole — and my first shot was a dandy. Straight as an arrow, the ball flew down the fairway. With a good lie, I quite possibly could now bring the ball up on the green with a five iron. What a thrill it was!

Now — proud of myself — and thinking that my game was coming along nicely, I picked up the clubs and walked smartly toward the ball. It was a good morning indeed. The air was cool, the meadowlarks were singing their cherriest songs and the squirrels were happily scampering over the prairie grass golf course.

On reaching the ball, I selected my five iron and with great care proceeded to make the necessary preparations for the stroke. This had to be good. Seldom had my initial shot off the tee achieved this distance, this accuracy. The words of the instructor echoed again and again in my mind — “Keep that left arm straight — keep your eye on the ball.”

I swung — hoping that every muscle and every word of previous instruction and all past experience were now co-ordinated to make this what I hoped it to be. Drat! Topped the ball! Lazily, it bounced toward the green — almost in defiance of all my yearning and anxiety.

Finally, the hole was completed. Six shots, a double bogey. As I slid my putter into the bag, my feelings were a curious mixture — of both accomplishment and failure. There was some anger — anger at myself for allowing failure to happen. This was my vacation period and so the decision was made. I will bring my golf game into a more respectable form. I will be out on the course day after day — if this is what it takes. I'll go back for more instruction, and . . .

September is the beginning of a new church year. Is this occasion not similar to the golf course experience? This is for each of us personally and for us together as a church a new beginning, in which there will be opportunities for some successes and some failures. And our responses, too, are quite apt to be a mixture of those that bring us closer to the Lord and those that will be confusing and frustrating. And, at times, we may feel

anger — anger at ourselves because of our ineffectiveness and inadequacies. Still — there is within us a commitment to the game. Come what may — we come back — to try again.

At the time of this writing, Mrs. Zacharias and I look forward to the meetings of the Pacific Coast Association in San Diego on the dates August 24 — 27th. On September 17th, there will be an Installation Service for the Rev. Ronald Brugler in Pittsburgh. And over the weekend of September 24th, the Michigan Association will be meeting at Almont — followed by the Ohio Association over the weekend of September 29th. October will be no less busy with the Kansas Association Retreat the weekend of October 8th, the meetings of the Board of Education beginning Friday, October 13th, and the Installation Service for the Rev. David Rienstra in Fryeburg, Maine on the 15th. And finally, on October 26 — 28th, the meetings of the Urbana College Trustees.

It is my hope that as we come together in our retreats, our Board and Committee meetings that we will give our attention not only to the matters of immediate concern but that we also give some thought to the exploration and implimentation of new possibilities that open the way to personal spiritual growth and to the growth of the Church.

One of the mini-courses offered at our recent convention was entitled, “Outreach in the New Age — Communicating our Teachings to Others.” The Kansas Association has requested that Rev. Richard Tafel Jr., lead its October retreat, devoted to this theme. We do have resources within Convention that can be made available to our congregations. The recent survey of resources will help us to identify skills of our people and these, where-ever practical, will be utilized to the benefit of our Church. I encourage our congregations to write to me advising me of their needs and to share with me their plans for the church at the local level.

We can, with the Lord's help, put the ball into flight — straight down the fairway. The flag flutters gently in the breeze — just over the next rise.

S.S.R. GRADUATION ADDRESS

What Can You Do For The Church?

*Betsy Young
Palos Verdes, Cal.*

I want to thank Ron for the privilege of speaking to you this evening at his graduation. I have enjoyed knowing Ron, and his wife, Valerie, for the past several years. Their enthusiasm and dedication to the work that lies before them, bodes well for our future.

Some of you may not yet be aware that Ron will be working part - time for your Board of Education this year, sharing the other half of his ministry with the Pittsburgh and Cleveland Societies. We on the Board are excited about this new Convention involvement. We believe that education at all levels must be a prime concern. Not only do we have to support programs already serving the needs of our membership, but we want to reach out into new fields, serving new needs in a creative way. We must seek out and serve a spiritually searching and needy world offering our Swedenborgian truths as a basis of life - living skills.

I have some thoughts about ministers and church folks which I would like to share with you this evening, but before doing this, I would like to greet our other graduate, David Rienstra. I have known him for many years,



Betsy Young

meeting him first in San Diego when my family was young and Bob and I were struggling — and rejoicing in the work of that parish. I suspect neither of us would have predicted then that we would be sharing this evening tonight. I would like to commend both Ron and David and their wives Valerie and Carol for the years of personal dedication which have brought them to this evening.

Now — let us look for a few minutes into the Church which these men will serve. Can you imagine, for a moment, that you have just had a fantastically exciting idea? It is related to something you believe people care a lot about, and really seems to offer some exciting possibilities — not only for the idea itself, but for the people who will be involved, as well! You have had some experience and training in how to set things in motion, you really like people, and you feel that the project serves both the intellectual and caring parts of people's lives — in other words, in Swedenborgese it could be an application of love and wisdom combining for use.

And so you plan carefully — investing much time, talent and often a bit of money (yours as well as some group funds) to make the launching of this special idea a reality. The scene is set, the materials collected, the detailed planning done, and the time for the event has arrived. You have prepared, perhaps, for 15 or 20 people for this first time though a part of you realizes that fewer people may be more realistic. It will work well either way — you've seen to that. So you wait, and you wait, and then you wait some more as a few people drift in (the ones who faithfully support whatever you try to do.) The number finally reaches 6 or 8, and you rapidly try to trim the plans so that the few may be comfortable as they experience an evening that has been planned for many more. Somehow, it all gets muddled through, but a definite dash of cold water has dampened your enthusiasm — and begins to alter your sense of 'the possible' in relation to your future plans.

If this sounds like a 'downer' to you on this night of graduation, please know that is what I have intended. All the hope and enthusiasm in the world which is engendered at a graduation will find rough competition from a few life experiences such as the brief capsule presented here. However, the message inherent in this brief picture is not for our two graduates this evening, but rather for you — and for me, fellow members of our Swedenborgian Church. For we are quite frequently the ones — who for a variety of rational reasons — often don't support, with our presence, activities in our various local Church groups, or in Convention as a whole. Or, if we do manage to be involved ourselves, we come without our friends, or people for whom we suspect our Church has a special message — the ones we deem 'really in need of the New Church,' but whom we seem to expect to be contacted by people other than ourselves.

I know whereof I speak. I grew up in the Church, on the west coast. Split Mountain Camp was a really big activity of the Association at that time. Not only did we attend, but we took our friends, as well. And, if you examine many of the so called "Church pillars" on the west coast today, I think you will find Split Mountain Camp beginnings in a large percentage of them.

After college, I served as Field Secretary for ANCL for four years, as a minister's wife for nearly 25, and just recently again in the lay activity of the Church. I have had the experience of viewing the Church from many sides. I truly believe that that old worn - out cliché applies to us and we must truly consider ourselves to be only as strong as our weakest links.

How many of us tonight, for instance, can truly say we devote the major part of our energy to supporting those things in our lives for which we profess priority concern? If the Church truly serves as the cornerstone of our lives — which many of us say it does, what have we done, *consistently* to preserve, to support, and to expand its usefulness? Are we not, rather, often guilty — as we say others are — of attributing the decline in membership and support to something someone else has done? Perhaps some particular program, or policy decision, or some seemingly deviate form of worship has 'turned us off'. And so, we have allowed ourselves to slip into the habit of becoming something less than supportive in many other facets of our Church programs. Or, looking at the other side of the coin, has it

happened that some folks have clung too tenaciously — for us, at least, to some traditional form or style of presentation, and so, we have used this as an excuse to withdraw some of our creative energies and compassionate understanding from them. And, consequently we have functioned therefore as an impediment in the growth patterns of this Church which we all profess to love!

Thirty - two years ago, as a young minister's wife in San Diego, I found that 'laboring in the vineyard' could be a very lonely occupation. The people of the parish were, it is true, warm - hearted and friendly folks. They loved their Church and wanted it to prosper. But the burden of its success — or failure — tended to be placed, in their minds, upon the shoulders of their employee — their minister. And, why not? He had received an extensive (and expensive) education in the 'true doctrines', and he had chosen his profession freely, without coercion. Furthermore, they were paying him to do the job! Of course they expected to help, and they did, in many ways. But, if the congregation on Sundays did not swell appreciably and consistently, it became "his problem". Perhaps what they really needed, it was rumored, was a more dynamic speaker — someone who would pack them in, like Norman Vincent Peale — or in today's world, a Billy Graham. Or, on the other hand, perhaps it was because he was too doctrinal, said some — yet not doctrinal enough, asserted others.

It was rumored, too, that because he was so young he could not hope to invoke the confidence of the majority of the members. How could he possibly give advice, or counsel, to people who were twice his age, etc., etc., etc. . . .

The good people of the parish admitted that he worked long and hard, spending an inordinate number of hours on the work of the Church. But, they added, if he would be content to do just the 'important things' and cut out all those extra enterprises, such a work load would not be necessary. The problem was, of course, that everyone's list of 'important things' was different. As long as the programs seemed to match *their* particular needs, they supported with fair regularity. But on the other hand, it seemed easy to stay away if the activity was not directly related to a particular concern of theirs. "I work all day", they say, "and evenings and weekends are the only times I have to do things for me. This may be hard for you to understand," they would add, "since Church work is your only concern!"

And, thirty some years later, the picture has not really changed. For, only last year in another parish (near and dear to my heart) what I considered an inordinate hope was being placed upon the shoulders of a minister whom they were trying to persuade to serve them. This was a dear and intelligent man, loved by many, who at the twilight - end of his service to the Church was being asked not only to heal deep and abrasive congregational wounds, but to function as a magic builder, bringing not only prosperity but growth also to a small group of tenacious and dedicated New Churchmen. Now, I commend these folks for their devotion to their Church, and I certainly do not fault them for their stubborn refusal to dissolve as a society. Their kind of dedication can serve as a powerful force for positive growth within our Convention. But I mention them here, rather, because it seemed to me that they were in essence transferring the responsibility for the success or failure of their society on to the shoulders of this one minister. "He will pull us together", they said. "He will make possible the continuance of our society." I objected to this philosophy then, and I do now. No single person should be asked to shoulder this burden. The survival or failure of our Church bodies — singly, or as a Convention — must not and cannot rest solely upon the shoulders of our consecrated clergy or a few elected officials. The challenge, and the responsibility stand equally with us all. The sooner we truly accept this as a part of our shared commitment the sooner our chances for future growth may become a reality.

Is it possible that the harmony we seek and find so comfortable — reflected in single-slate candidates at our elections and resistance to time - consuming discussion and comments on well - researched reports, etc., should be, in reality, disturbing to us? When do we call this a sign of efficiency, and when do we call it apathy?

I am an educator. I have been fortunate enough to have extensive and varied training. It is true that I have experienced some failure, but successes have been many, and most gratifying. I have not, however, been asked to function in a vacuum. There have been students in my classroom with whom I could work. Working in public education gives one this advantage. Those who function in the private sector — and Churches are certainly in this category, are not always so blessed.

These men who are graduating tonight have been well trained. They have ministerial skills, and doctrinal knowledge. They have a desire to serve God, by working with His people, as evidenced by their choice of professions. But, they cannot do it alone. They need us to work with them.

Years ago, in San Diego again, I remember Henry Swanton (who with his wife, Ethel, keynoted our Convention in San Francisco last year) saying that it seemed to him as he looked at the history of our Church that our Convention grew and prospered when there seemed to be almost total involvement. Members were enthusiastically active, converts were eager to serve, and ministers could be confident that they were leading a parade. Sometimes today, I fear, it seems to them more like a lonely vigil — or, at best, a sort of 'holding operation'.

Very simply put, I guess, it means that the future of our Church is up to us. And we had best stop asking what it can do for us, and start searching for what we can do for it! Perhaps it is time for many of us to consider some sort of 'mid - course corrections' in our lives. For, I truly believe that The Church will live, or risk the consequences of failure, depending upon how dedicated and how involved we are willing to be. How much of ourselves are we truly prepared to give? It's as simple as that.

I asked Ernest Martin a few weeks ago what it meant to be 'alive in a New Age', since this was to be the focus of our meetings this year. It's very simple and basic, I was told. In laymen's terms, the foundation is love, which being active — not static — nurtures growth, which in turn brings joy, and ultimately, fulfillment, in other words regeneration. It does sound simple, doesn't it? It requires involvement with the world and with each other — but these are the basic tenets of belief which we have always asserted would be the road to travel towards regeneration.

Where are we tonight in our personal commitments of time and talent to the Church? How we answer this question will have tremendous import for the environment into which these men move to begin their ministries in our Lord's New Church.

S.S.R. GRADUATION ADDRESS

“What Does The Lord Require . . .?”

*by George McCurdy
Boston, Mass.*

Tonight's commencement marks the end of Ron and Dave's status as students of the Swedenborg School of Religion and ushers them to the threshold of ordination. The Committee on Admission into the Ministry, the Council of Ministers and the body of Convention voted to ordain them this coming Sunday.

Having a part in this commencement program is a special privilege for me. Eleven years ago, here in Kitchener, Harvey Tafel and I were ordained into the New Church ministry.

Looking back I well remember the ordination vows assumed at that time. Uppermost in my mind were the questions: “What would the Lord require of me? Would I be equal to the calling of the priesthood and be able to preach and teach effectively the Word of the Lord?”

Perhaps these same questions are in Ron and Dave's thoughts tonight. Ordination is an important decision and the uses of the ministry grow more demanding each year as we move into the New Age heralded by the Writings of the Church. Challenging issues present themselves pushing us into the perfection of our skills and uses of the Lord's ministry.

What does the Lord require from His ministers? In the twenty - first chapter of the book of Leviticus we have one of the most detailed accounts, from the Lord, of the qualifications expected of the priesthood:

“And the Lord said unto Moses, speak unto the priests . . . and say unto them . . . There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people . . . he shall not defile himself, being a chief man among his people . . . they shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard . . . he that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God . . . (let him not be a) blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous, or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded, or crookback, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken . . .”

This is but a small portion of that chapter. There are other points but time does not permit

us to enter into them. Surely the Lord was not addressing Himself to the physical impairments of His priesthood. With the aid of the Writings we learn that He spoke of spiritual goals.



George McCurdy

1. BE NOT DEFILED FOR THE DEAD AMONG HIS PEOPLE:

The Lord asks of His ministers to deal with spiritual realities, not morbid, idle talk. Beware of naturalism but preach of the spiritual life that carries with it the message of eternal values.

2. MAKE NO BALDNESS UPON THEIR HEAD:

The Lord's ministry needs to be totally involved in the unfolding of the Word making spiritual applications to the ultimate. Our ministry is for use and not an intellectual exercise of impractical points of doctrine. We are to illustrate the truths of the Word in practical application of life situations to - ward regeneration.

3. NEITHER SHALL THEY SHAVE OFF THE CORNER OF THEIR BEARD:

Beware that our ministry of the Word is not trimming or tailoring His truth to our liking or for our popularity. We are to preach the truth as set forth by the Lord.

4. NO BLEMISHES:

As priests of the Lord we need to approach the Lord and love Him from clean motives.

5. (LET HIM BE NOT) A BLIND MAN,
OR LAME:

The blind and lame “signify those who are in their own proprium of selfhood.” A.C. 210
The priesthood of the Lord is to have a concern for the welfare of the soul. We serve the Lord’s goal and not our own.

6. FLAT NOSE:

The Lord’s injunction against those with flat noses refers to the fact that he wants His priesthood to always have a keen perception of truth.

Quoting from Job 27:3, “All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils.” We get an insight into what the Lord means about open noses.

7. THE SUPERFLUOUS:

As ministers of the Lord we should not become proud of our own intellectual powers. Humility before the Lord is the key to understanding.

8. BROKEN FOOTED:

Those who are broken footed are those whose supporting basic fundamentals of the Word are impaired. We are to know the fundamentals of the New Jerusalem.

9. BROKEN HANDED:

Represents those whose spiritual powers to ultimate truth are impeded.

10. CROOKBACKED:

Represents the priest whose powers of elevating himself to spiritual things have been impaired. Such a condition comes about when we are weak and deformed within.

11. DWARF:

A priest shall not be a dwarf. The Lord desires of His priesthood a continual spiritual growth. A spiritual dwarf is one whose spiritual growth has been stunted.

12. BLEMISH IN THE EYE:

The key to any ministry is perception and understanding. Our ministry needs to avoid having a weak intellect. It is the Lord alone who can keep our spiritual eyes open and free of blemishes.

13. SCURVY, SCABBY:

The goal of regeneration is to grow and order the internals, but the inner growth can be disturbed if the external is greatly troubled with falsities and evils. They detract from our inward progress. Our conduct as ministers needs to be orderly and reflect in the externals that which is growing within.

14. STONES BROKEN:

Here we have the fundamentals of conjugal love. We are to protect and enhance our

powers to conjoin GOOD and TRUTH. Let nothing destroy or injure this process of conjunction.

These are but a few of the goals set forth by the Lord for His priesthood. They are worthy goals. But let these same goals be shared by everyone in the Lord’s New Church. For the New Age, the Second Coming, has occurred and it requires us to “Prepare ye the way of the Lord.”

CONVENTION MINI - COURSES

Attitudes towards the Writings

The Dole - Woofenden mini - course brought out several points we may be overlooking in shaping a balanced “attitude towards ‘The Writings’.” Generally, the sessions focused on how we may be trapped into missing the overall meaning of any given passages. Some of the points:

Few of us may be getting as much out of ‘The Writings’ as we are capable of because many people seem to bring a single standard to them. That is, *truth*. If we are convinced what Swedenborg says, is ‘true’, we tend to be satisfied. Actually, that’s only *half* the story. We also should consider the ‘*good*’ in the passages — truth *and* good together — then we will come closer to the full meaning of the revelation. Ultimately, our definition of truth and good comes from our own lives.

There are degrees of understanding ‘The Writings’. And how much we understand depends upon our own background and experience. This is one reason why many people find more in the same passages when they re-read them years later. Similarly, Swedenborg’s background and experience prepared him for the Heavenly revelation. The Lord ‘enlightened’ him so he could receive the message, but his background gave Swedenborg the perception to understand and communicate infinite concepts in finite terms.

Theologians do a disservice by attaching paramount importance to Swedenborg’s use of words. Evidence is that Swedenborg was an astonishingly consistent thinker — but an inconsistent, even careless, user of words. He was verbally inconsistent — often using the first word that came to mind.

You cannot always take the printed words of Swedenborg at face value. He used the parlance of the day, perhaps obscuring meaning. Sometimes he overdramatized issues to clarify a point. Also, quite a few printers' errors show up in his books.

As to the 'revelations': The Lord is infinite — Swedenborg was finite. Concepts from the Lord often are beyond full human understanding — and were filtered through a human mind, written by Swedenborg in Latin. And then translated — making what we read several times removed from the revelation. Hence open to a wide range of human interpretation.

John Harms, Recorder
Washington, D.C.



George Dole and William Woofenden led the "Attitudes towards Writings" Mini Course.

LEARNING CENTRE CONVENTION '78

The concept of the learning centre was introduced by Betsy Young. We found our meeting room set up with areas which we helped turn into learning centres.

Beth Tafel performed a dance to "Here Comes The Sun", and all joined in to learn the body movements.

Bulletin Board technique was illustrated by Carol Rienstra who suggested we include:

1. Greeting or welcome
2. Seasonal item
3. Attendance chart
4. Some item of Church teachings
5. An item of community interest
6. Current lesson highlights

Some items would change weekly, some would be posted for several weeks. Dimension was

created by stapling a box to the board with a picture on the lid, and the art of matting was demonstrated.



"Here comes the Sun", led by Beth Tafel.

Sue Hemmerich supplied a display of items made from "household junk", and a tempting area of supplies for crafts and construction. She recommended "I Can Make a Rainbow" by Incentive Publications, Nashville, Tenn. Linda Tafel described the creation of stained glass window effects from colored tissue and nature items.

A delightful children's 'sermon' was given by Polly Baxter, who demonstrated that you can't learn to play the organ by reading a book. She emphasized children's short attention span. A story with moral application rather than a Bible story was recommended. The 'sermon' is vividly illustrated with physical action and participation by the children.

During the second session we were joined by Convention children.

Martha Richardson demonstrated 'resources' with a film strip "Creation" by Broadnar Film, Nashville, Tenn., and a poem accompaniment by James Weldon Johnson.

Ron Brugler reinforced the learning process with games — a cross - word creation of disciple's names, and a board game "New Jerusalem" whose goal was Regeneration Square.

Suggestions for future learning centre Mini - Courses:

1. More central site so other members of Convention could see the techniques in action.
2. Some material geared to older children.
3. A long term goal — broaden the scope to include all Convention delegates in this type of learning experience.

Recorder — Fran McIntosh

THE ALLIANCE REPORT

*By Dorothy Farnham
DeLand, Florida*

At its Annual Meeting held on Friday, June 30, in Kitchener - Waterloo, Ontario, the Alliance elected the following officers for 1978 - 79:

President — Mrs. Alan W. Farnham, DeLand, Fl. (Dorothy)

1st Vice - President — Mrs. Donald Saul, Washington, D.C.

2nd Vice-President — Mrs. Douglas Gilchrist, Edmonton, Alta (Jean)

Secretary — Mrs. Alice L. Dullea, Brockton, Ma.

Treasurer — Mrs. Robert W. Tafel, Philadelphia, Pa. (Doris)

Mite Box Chairman — Miss Margaret S. Sampson, New York, N.Y.

Religious Chairman — Mrs. Alice P. Van Boven, Riverside, Ca.

Round Robin Chairman — Mrs. Jean Heydon Hoyt, Riverside, Ca.

Publications Chairman — Mrs. Clayton S. Priestnal, New York, N.Y. (Marion)

Nominating Committee Member — Mrs. Thomas Zehner, Pittsburgh, Pa. (Henrietta)

Money was given to the church camps — Almont, Blairhaven, Fryeburg, Kansas, Paulhaven, and Split Mountain, to Urbana College, to Church Women United, to the *Messenger* for publishing the Alliance pages, and to the wife of the President of Convention to help her to travel with her husband.

The Mite Box money to be given to the Rev. Joseph Agbaje for use in his work in Nigeria was over \$1300. \$100 was given to the Mooki Fund and \$100 toward the Blackmer Plaza at Urbana College.

The women of the Kitchener church were warmly thanked for the delightful table favors they provided — decorated eggs, sewing cases, and crocheted flowers. Their hospitality was outstanding and much appreciated by all the women present.

The program for the day was centered on the Convention theme — *Alive in the New Age*. Mrs. Richard Baxter spoke for the young women, the Rev. Dr. Dorothea Harvey for the women in the middle years, and Mrs. Ellsworth Seibert for those who have retired. We discovered that we have a good deal of talent within our own church without looking for outside speakers!

The retiring President, Mrs. Erwin Reddekopp, was given a gift and a vote of thanks for her work during her term of office.



Outgoing President Lisa Reddekopp reports on a busy Alliance year.

AN UNDISPUTED HISTORY TO COME

*by David Fekete
Detroit, Michigan*

I have recently been delving into the wonderful Byzantine empire, the realm formed as a Christian society under a religiously inspired ruler. This early Christian church is spoken of quite highly in the teachings of the Second Coming, as well as its founder Constantine the Great. However, at his beginning as ruler, Arius of Alexandria posed a threat to the religious welfare of the grand state. As argument over the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ grew, Arius asserted that

Jesus was not divine at all. In an attempt to reconcile the conflict, Constantine the Great called the famous Nicene Council which officially marked the beginning of the end. From this council, in order to refute Arius, the idea of three separate Divine Persons reared its ugly head. This doctrinal arguing split the church and added fuel to the fire that was already burning between the Christian Church in Rome and the Christian Church in Constantinople.

“What can we learn from history?” This question is often asked by young students. As they grow older I think they begin to stop asking it when they realize that the only lesson we learn from history is that we very rarely learn from history and we go on doing the same things over and over again. Again and again we make the same ignorant blunders. Being no expert in history, I mentioned the few facts above for one major reason: Convention and the General Church have got to start looking at each other with friendly eyes.

At the 1978 General Convention, a stirring speech was delivered by the Rev. Michael Stanley, President of the Conference Theological School in Manchester, England. He spoke of the need for the branches of the New Church to begin to operate as the societies of heaven and begin working as a one. Not necessarily become one body, he suggested, but to work individually in our own ways to promote the Divine revelations for spiritual life, in mutual love.

This idea strikes me as beautiful and true. And I'm beginning to think that the only thing keeping this dream from becoming a reality is prejudice and precedence. The “alleged” issue is the nature of the writings, but it comes down more to lifestyle and precedence in my opinion. And I fear that bullheadedness is keeping both parties from taking a serious look at both of their stands and seeing where derived doctrine is slanting the true similarities of both positions. I think both parties are unwilling to admit that they each have a good point for fear of then being forced to abandon their heritage and church body. This does not have to be. Do the Africans need to live as the Europeans in order to be brothers? Of course not. And as to whether the writings are *the Word*, or keys to its understanding, where is one without the other? Which matters more, Faith or Charity? They are both one in act. In the same way, the writings are one with the Word of God when used for spiritual growth into a wise and loving life. Without the rational concepts and knowledge of correspondence upon which the internal sense hinges so strongly, the truths which the Second Coming brought down to earth, where would we be with respect to the Old and New Testament? And where would the writings be were it not from the Word from which they were derived? Is not the internal understanding of spiritual life as taught in the Bible just as dependent on the New Church revelations as the revelations are upon the Old and New Testament? In the spiritual sense of the Word, which is being disputed, we can find the answer to the dispute.

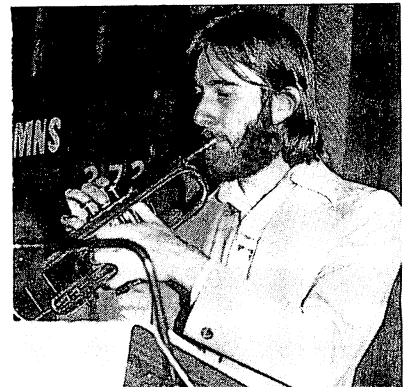
“... there proceed from the Lord the Divine Good and the Divine Truth . . . both of these are in the Word . . . therefore the Word gives life to those who read it in a Holy manner.” (Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture, 19.) The writings have revealed the precious heavenly way of life and the correspondences that play so vital a role in the Biblical makeup. The soul and body make one in operation, so the Word and the Writings make one in the operation of spiritual uses. Can't we now come into this internal sense, namely love and wisdom? Can't we now act as a one to promote the spiritual uses of the church on earth? It doesn't make much sense to argue over the internal sense of the Word when, if we were in it, we would be in love and wisdom.

Philip Sherrard has an interesting comment on this issue. I quote from his book *Byzantium*.

“The commercial inroads of the Italians were accompanied by a steady worsening of the relations between the two Christian Churches. Some points of disagreement were purely theological (e.g., whether the Holy Spirit proceeded only from the Father, as the Orthodox Christians maintained, or from both the Father and the Son, as it was stated in the amended Latin creed). Other disputes were political, or quasi - political.” (p. 162)

“The deterioration of relations between the two halves of Christendom eventually had a direct influence on the fall of Byzantium to the Turks.”

Both arguments stemmed from falsity, and when they refused to stand up for Christian values both beautiful churches fell — one naturally and the other spiritually. Let us come into this internal sense of love and wisdom. From that standpoint our differences will altogether disappear.



David Fekete

UP FROM THE ASHES

*Marion Kirven
Newton, mass.*

Much of my work in the Library over the past year has been with archive material. I have been doing research for other people, and I have been entering recently acquired material into the archives. The job has its high points and its low points. Those of you who have been around here, have heard me fuss about being “just a keeper of a mausoleum” and you have seen my sign in the vault that says: *The burning issues of today are the ashes of tomorrow — Here are the ashes.* I decided, for this report, to share some of the ashes with you. The following is a letter from the Rev. Leonard Tafel to Mrs. Charles Kuenzli in 1950:

“On one of your reports recently passing through this office there was a query which has kept running through my head ever since. I determined to try and say a word about it the moment I had a bit of free time. As I recall, it pointed first to a time “when people were attracted to and accepted our teachings, and our churches grew . . . We know there is something radically wrong with our presentation or with our lives, for the doctrines are still heavenly, and people need them so much” You ended with a request for suggestions as to how to make your work in Florida more effective. (The above is from memory, but I think carries your thought.) I am making no suggestions as to your work, but would comment on your statements; you ask much the same questions that earnest New Church people have been asking themselves for many years. I have been mulling over them for twenty - five years.

FIFTY YEARS AGO. I suppose all who can look back as far as this do so with a sort of pathetic longing for a return of those “good days”. I was 12 and recall something of the enthusiasm of the times — large groups, definitely ‘doctrinally minded’, earnestly discussing “The Doctrines”. I think four things did much to foster our initial growth.

a) The **Times**: It was an era of ‘polemical Protestantism’. There was a real battle of beliefs, creeds and practices. Evening services were often attempts to show the inadequacy of what others held, and the superiority of one’s own belief. Our doctrines being what they are our ministers had a real advantage over others, and their followings showed this.

b) The **Ministers**: Practically all of the ministers came from other faiths, which they had found inadequate. The doctrines of the New Church came to them as light after darkness and with the stern demand that this light be brought to others. Intolerance was then the rule, and men with “Swedenborgian leanings” were ostracised — and as a rule came with joy and gladness to the smaller body where they felt at home. Read the experiences of Giles, L.P. Mercer, Barrett, and a host of others. They were **big** men however you look at them, and they filled our churches and built the societies we inherit.

c) The **People**: Our early New Church people were interested in doctrine, and the services, doctrinal classes, etc., made up much of their social life. As people looked askance at Swedenborgians, this drove our people into more compact, self - sufficient units. This doctrinal interest was not confined to our people, they saw it in all those about them in other churches.

d) In **Life**: However doctrinal - minded these pioneers were, they felt the necessity of taking doctrine into life. They took what Swedenborg had to say about educating children most seriously - Sunday School flourished as a result of this and also from the larger families then customary. Likewise our marriage teaching — I don’t know whether marriages were ‘better’ then than now, but there was a determined effort to make them conform to known teachings. The same is true of the teaching on immortality and the life beyond. (Just check the number of sermons in those days on marriage, children, and immortality.)

Sometimes I look back on those days with a kind of nostalgia, but I realize that no effort on our part can duplicate them. We are different people living in a different world. We face problems quite different.

The world we address is more interested in pointing to similarity than in stressing differences, especially in matters of Christian belief. We look also in vain for those hard - and - fast differences which once made our teachings so clear and bright by contrast. In those fifty years Protestants have made many steps in our direction, particularly as to life after death. Ministers, also, in other churches

can teach along our lines without facing ostracism and expulsion (i.e. Dr. Fort Newton).

While I suppose there was always considerable spiritual apathy, it seems much more pronounced today than 50 years ago. Invention and 'progress' have tended to direct more and more thought to the natural and material than to the spiritual. Facing a most crucial period the rising generation tends more and more to put its trust in material rather than religious and spiritual things.

I believe our ministry is as devoted to the New Church as was its fore - bears. I do question just a bit whether second - and third growth New Church people can feel the urge and enthusiasm of converts. I do question whether we ministers have gauged the world in

which we live as keenly as did our pre - decessors, or that we are speaking as effectively to our world as they did to theirs.

And yet, regardless of all the differences enumerated above, we have today as distinct a message as did any previous generation of our ministers. We have a world as badly (or more so) in need of the teachings of the New Church as ever was. Putting ourselves in the stream of Divine Providence we have the omnipotence of the Lord in His Second Coming back of our weak efforts. To so place ourselves calls for more devotion, worship, prayer and humility than we have yet given: but to do just this is our present challenge."

Cordially yours,
Leonard Tafel

LIFE AFTER DEATH IS 'BEYOND DOUBT', DOCTOR SAYS

by Tom Harpur
Toronto Star Religion Editor

"We now know beyond all shadow of a doubt that there is life after death," says a Chicago - based psychiatrist who is one of the world's foremost authorities on death, dying and care of the terminally ill.

Dr. Elizabeth Kubler - Ross, a slim, graying woman in her early 50's, told a Toronto press conference recently that the testimony of many thousands of people of all ages and races who have had near - death experiences has convinced her and a growing number of doctors that death is "the highlight of living, the gateway to a richer, fuller life."

The Swiss - born doctor, who later spoke to a packed audience at Convocation Hall, told reporters:

"We now have gathered over 100,000 pieces of evidence. It is no longer a matter of hypothesis, but of sharing what I know. Those who are ready for it will accept it. The rest, no doubt, will reject it."

The author of *Death and Dying* said there is an amazing uniformity of experience among all those who have been pronounced clinically dead and then have recovered.

"They say they were aware of shedding their physical body as a butterfly sheds its cocoon," she said. "They have a heightened state of consciousness and a sense of being made perfectly whole. The blind can see, the lame

walk, and the retarded have a new sense of wisdom."

The "dead" person passes through several distinct stages, she said. All fear of death is removed, there is an awareness of light and of being in the presence of an unconditional love to which various names are given — Christ, God or Krishna — depending on the person's own background.

"What's more, you never die alone," the doctor said. "Always there is the state where you are met by a loved one or dear friend who has gone before."

Invariably, the "dead" person is aware of then being summoned to an evaluation of the whole of their past life in great detail. The meaning of it all — for both good and ill — becomes plain, but there is no sense of condemnation, only a deep understanding of what it all meant.

"It is significant that those who are allowed to go this far and then are permitted to return feel that they have been reborn," Dr. Kubler - Ross said. "They have a new sense of what is really to be valued in life and discard most of what they previously strove to gain. Further, they never have a fear of death again."

Those who survive their near - death experience nearly always say they were "told" to come back, that they were being given a second chance or that they had some unfinished service still to give to others, she said.

The doctor dismissed critics who suggest these experiences are merely the result of biochemical changes in the brains of those who have had strokes or car accidents.

Often in cases such as multiple - victim car accidents, she said, one member of a family

who has been rushed to intensive care and has not been told that other relatives have been killed will report "seeing" the others waiting for him or her "on the other side."

In an interview, Dr. Kubler - Ross said some of the bitterest opposition to her findings comes from religious people.

"They think that life after death should be a matter of faith and not of proof, and so they get very put off with hard evidence," she said.

Volumes of Anchor Bible blaze ecumenical trail

NEW YORK (AP) — Gradually, one by one, the volumes roll out, 30 of them so far, with 30 or more to go, in one of the longest, most comprehensive publishing ventures on the Bible ever undertaken.

The library - sized volume, called "The Anchor Bible", blazed an ecumenical trail at its outset 22 years ago that since has become a common pattern.

It enlisted Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish experts in their shared craft and objective: to bring out just what the old, Biblical books sought to say when first recorded in their original settings.

"That commonality of Biblical scholarship preceded the ecumenical movement," observes the Rev. Dr. David Noel Freedman, professor of Biblical Studies at the University of Michigan and general editor for the series.

"It bridges all denominational barriers, crosses all the lines."

When the project first originated in 1956, under the former general editorship of the late archeologist - Scripture scholar William F. Albright, that interreligious involvement had seemed impossible.

"But he saw it work with his own eyes," says Freedman, an associate of Albright, who died in 1971 with Freedman taking over the editorship. "It was revolutionary when it began. But now it's true of all Biblical scholarship. It's become a common enterprise."

Each member of the team of authors takes on a Biblical book of his particular interest, translates it freshly from the original language and, in a volume or more devoted to it, offers accompanying commentary and notes putting it in context of its historical situation, its culture, linguistic nuances, authorship and purposes.

Unlike most of the modern surge of Bible translations produced by groups of scholars,

the Anchor specialists individually render their translations of the books. "The results are uneven like the Bible itself," Freedman said. "The books originally were produced by different writers."

The material draws on recent archeological finds such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, and lately on the newly turned up Ugaritic tablets of ancient Ebla, predating the Bible, but mentioning matters cited in it.

The tablets are "the most important find ever made" in relation to the Bible, Freedman said. "They provide hard information that we've never had before in a way that cannot be challenged."

Food Resources said heading for breaking point

WASHINGTON (AP) — A food and population expert says the world's population may be on the verge of overburdening natural resources that sustain life.

"Signs of stress on the world's principal biological systems — forests, fisheries, grasslands, and croplands — indicate that in many places these systems have already reached the breaking point," Lester R. Brown says in a book published recently.

United Nations population specialists predict that the world's population, now about four billion, may reach 10 billion to 14 billion before levelling off. But Brown warns this may be impossible.

"Expecting these systems to withstand a tripling or quadrupling of population pressures defies ecological reality," he says.

Brown was a food specialist with the U.S. agriculture department and the Overseas Development Council. He now heads a non-profit study organization here called World-watch Institute, which has issued a series of reports and books analysing wide problems of food, energy and other resources in relation to human needs.

His new book is *The Twenty Ninth Day*. The title is the name of a riddle.

The riddle pictures a pond with a single floating water lily leaf on the first day; on the second day, another leaf sprouts, and on each day thereafter, each leaf sprouts a new leaf so that the total number doubles daily.

After 30 days, the pond is entirely covered with leaves and the riddle asks: On which day is

the pond only half covered?

The answer is the twenty - ninth day.

Brown says the riddle describes most people today, seeing a world population of four billion and supposing there is plenty of room for more, when it is already the "twenty - ninth day" and only one more generation may fill the world with all the people it can support.

Brown warns that excessive population can not only fill the world's biological systems but can overtax and destroy them.

"When this point is reached," he says, "crises can emerge suddenly, with little warning."

Commonest Of All Sins

Louis Cassels, senior editor of the United Press International comments on the text, "Love is patient; love is kind, love is not rude" by saying,

"The commonest of all human sins is putting other people down. It's so common that many of us who are guilty of this kind of psychological aggression never stop to think how wrong, how truly evil it is.

"It is characteristic of the put - down that the person administering it thinks he is being terribly subtle, whereas the victim immediately recognized the slap for what it was intended to be. To pretend you really did not mean to hurt or embarrass someone, is to compound malice with hypocrisy."

from the Kansas Plaines Banner

SCIENCE MIND

*by David Fekete
Detroit, Michigan*

In the realm where fascination rules,
and love is undefined,
the memory's facts become its tools
which then enchain the mind.

And lo how our world emulates
the scientific brain.

He stands alone, above, beyond
and scowls with disdain.

For to his mind we worthless fools
are wasting all our time.

We search for fun, for life, for love,
and quest to find our souls.

which to his blinded eyes remains
an unknown, worthless goal.

LLOYD WRIGHT DIES AT 88

Lloyd Wright, architect of the Wayfarers' Chapel in Palos Verdes, California, died in Los Angeles on June 1st. A memorial service was held at the Chapel on June 23rd and participants included the Rev. Harvey Tafel, the Rev. Ernest Martin, and members of the family.

Lloyd Wright was often confused with his father, Frank Lloyd Wright, but he achieved an international reputation in his own right. The Wayfarers' Chapel was his most famous work. "In the design of the Chapel," Mr. Wright said, "we had to correlate the environment, the natural setting that existed, with the architectural constructs. This was a God - given opportunity for a God - given purpose . . . I want the trees and their trunks to be seen," he said, "and the space beyond, so that those who worship in the sanctuary will perceive the grandeur of the world around them and beyond them . . . I used glass so that the walls and roof are transparent. The trees, the natural growth, the sky, and the sea become part of the Chapel. The glass provides protection, but at the same time gives the congregation a sense of outer as well as inner space."

In designing the Chapel, Lloyd Wright found himself in complete accord with the positive outlook of the Swedenborgian Church and its emphasis on a harmony between the world of the spirit and the physical world. After the Wayfarers' Chapel was completed, he was asked to design the Good Shepherd Community Church in Park Ridge, Illinois. It, too, is a striking building of contemporary design with extensive use of glass. It does not enjoy the spectacular setting of the Wayfarers' Chapel and so had not attracted such wide attention. Mr. Wright also designed a church for the El Cerrito parish of the San Francisco Society, but the building was never erected.

The Swedenborgian Church will be forever grateful to Lloyd Wright for his creative genius in the service of our church. At the Wayfarers' Chapel we look forward to a continuing involvement with the Wright family through the services of architect Eric Wright, son of Lloyd Wright. Eric has worked with his father for many years and assisted in the design of two current projects, an addition to the Chapel's Visitors Center and a dramatic reception office or glass loggia. It is expected that these buildings will be completed in the fall.

By Christmas 1978, we expect to install a carillon of sixteen bells in the Chapel tower. Lloyd Wright was excited by the project and his face shone and his eyes twinkled as he talked about it. The Wright family has asked that gifts to the Chapel in memory of Lloyd Wright be used for the carillon.

Ernest O. Martin

BOOK REVIEW

"For too long Christians have stolen away to a secular therapist to buy listening love for \$25 to \$40 an hour," Paul M. Miller contends in his latest book, *Peer Counseling in the Church*.

"Church fellowship has suffered because they did not trust nor care for one another enough to want to give and receive help by counseling each other in Christian love."

Few other books about counseling assume that Christians with ordinary common sense and tact can readily master the skills needed to help each other solve ordinary problems in living.

Paul M. Miller is Professor of Practical Theology at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana. He holds membership in the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education and in the Association of Professional Education for Ministry.

He has served as chaplain in three hospitals and as a consultant and facilitator in numerous marriage counseling and couples communication groups, growth institutes, and group dynamics laboratories.

"Too many people go away for counseling who could and should have received help in their home church," Miller maintains.

"Just a few hours of total attention, of genuine caring, of listening love, of tactful suggestions, and of wise intervention would have met the need of the vast majority of those who left their congregations and paid hard cash to receive counseling elsewhere."

In *Peer Counseling in the Church* Miller reviews attitudes and skills essential to counseling and suggests tactful ways to begin a counseling relationship. He gives specific suggestions for effective vocational, premarital, and marriage counseling by concerned fellow Christians.

Counseling, as used in Miller's book, is a series of interviews which one mature person holds with another in an effort to assist that person to gain insight and to solve a problem.

"Counseling is a specialized and carefully structured form of friendship in which the total attention of both persons is focused upon the life of the one with an admitted problem," the author explains.

"To be effective the counselor must possess mature attitudes, the capacity for sustained and perceptive listening, and the skills of tactful intervention, all arising from a deep grasp of human nature," Miller continues. "When the

counselor is consciously seeking to serve from Christian motivations, some additional dynamics are added.

"It is simply amazing to me that the church has come so far in history without taking its obligation in peer counseling seriously.

"I confidently expect that as the use of paraprofessionals continues to increase, and as the human potential movement further reduces the stigma from giving and receiving help with feelings, many churches will be ready to train their members in peer counseling."

Peer Counseling in the Church, by Paul M. Miller is published by Herald Press, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, and Kitchener, Ontario. It is available in bookstores in quality paperback format at \$4.95 (\$5.45 in Canada).

FROM CHURCH RECORDS

MARRIAGE

FROESE — TUPPER — Carl Peter Froese and Marilyn Robert Tupper, were married in Saskatoon, Sask., on July 20, 1978, the Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiating.

DEATH

REHMANN — Walter Rehmann, 86, of London, Ontario died on July 9, 1978. The resurrection service was held in Kitchener, Ontario on July 13, 1978, the Rev. Paul B. Zacharias officiating.

We Get Letters

SOME COMMENTS ON THE RECENT CONVENTION SERVICE

Dear Editor:

Experiencing Convention among New Church friends seems to me like experiencing something in a heavenly society, a heavenly Jerusalem, after which we return to our Jericho's to practice what we have learned. We surely owe thanks to our Kitchener friends for hosting a delightful and happy meeting.

As usual, the Sunday service was the highlight of the four-day gathering. The Communion service, likened to the Lord's feeding of the five thousand, was a beautiful close. But I missed in the opening worship service the passages from the Word we are accustomed to. When we are given passages in the Word, especially the Psalms, to be used in worship, as Swedenborg tells us, why should we substitute some sentences composed by modern man?

The passages in our Book of Worship are excellent and well chosen to open worship; but if an alternate is desired for some occasions, there are other passages from the Word to be found. Perhaps next time the Book of Worship is revised, there could be a few different opening worship sentences, but all from the Word.

Alice Van Boven
Redlands, Cal.

HEALING PRAYER

Dear Paul:

The late William Wunsch helped me translate this prayer of the early Christian Church. At Cambridge we distribute many copies . . . it helps bring visitors back again.

I hope that other churches will give it a try.

Bill Rice
Brockton, Mass.

PRAYER FOR HEALTH AND GRACE

O Lord, who art the true physician, who without waiting to be summoned didst come from heaven to earth to visit the sick, I put myself in thy hands. Help me this day to trust in thee alone. Thou alone canst give me lasting health. Thou art my salvation and my life, my comfort and my glory, my hope in this world and my crown in the world to come.

Amen

INTERESTING SPECULATION

Dear Editor:

Can there be a positive relationship between the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg and Joseph Smith? There are many similarities that join the two sets of writings: a love for the Word of God; recognition that many are saved, not just those of one's own church; knowledge that little children are already part of the kingdom of God; agreement that there has been a judgement on the historical Christian church and the fact of a new church dispensation; belief in eternal marriage; joy that the Lord continues to speak to His church individually and through a chosen man; acknowledgement that the Christian faith is *doing* the Lord's commands; recognition of representatives and correspondences; a keen awareness of the spiritual world and its connection with the temporal world; and a multi-degree commitment of love to the Lord and the neighbor — or the purpose — uses of good and truth from Divine Man through mortal man.

The *Book of Mormon* is perhaps the simplest and most eloquent testimony in the Christian world that Jesus is Jehovah come in the flesh to redeem His people. Repeatedly He is taught to be the Father and the Son, the Savior, the Creator, the Lord of heaven and earth. It also speaks of the Father and the Son as separate personages, revealed in a time - space sequence and spoken of according to appearances.

Those who have been touched and re-formed by the ministry of the Word through the prophet and seer Emanuel Swedenborg might justly wonder: And what might the reading of the *Book of Mormon* and *Doctrine and Covenants* do for me? If it is wisdom in the Lord to read them, one might be delighted with a new and affectionate picture of the Lord at work among His people in their individual and complex states, as well as awed by the sight of an effective organizational form for the mutual nourishing of the saints and for the extension of the good news of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ among all nations and peoples.

These same writings promise further revelation on the laws of marriage and the testimony of John regarding the fullness of the Father being in the Lamb of God. Could it be that *Conjugal Love* and *The Apocalypse Revealed* and/or *The Apocalypse Explained* are an answer to that promise? Could it be that the Lord has prepared a people schooled in obedience and love to Him now to receive the heavenly arcana revealed by Emanuel Swedenborg?

Joanne Vasquez
Bellevue, Wa. 98008

“WELLS OF LIVING WATERS”

Dear Editor:

I find the “Wells of Living Waters” one of the most meaningful within the scope of the beautiful language of Correspondence. It is representative of the Word in the literal sense in which is the internal or spiritual sense. From correspondences we also learn that the wells of living waters were built by the prophets of old, under the direct supervision of the Great Architect, the Lord. They were built using stones of truths, which like the literal sense of the Word will forever remain with us. Neither will the Living Waters of Truth which flow into the wells, from the Lord through heaven, ever pass away.

Water is the greatest ‘solvent’ known to man; so is truth which it represents and capable of ‘solving’ man’s spiritual problems to eternity. It is certainly not by accident that so close a relationship exists between oxygen, the air we

breath, corresponding to perception of thought, consequently faith, and waters of truths. Unfortunately modern man is methodically polluting both, meaning that both faith and truth are inadvertently being defiled. The great impurities found in our drinking water gives spiritual credence to truth being falsified in the form of deadly micro-organisms.

The world may be faced with a constant threat of continued pollution of our drinking water, but we take great comfort in the thought that the New Church is spiritually showing the way, as the keeper of an uncontaminated well of living water. It was acquired, not by the use of a divining rod, but by an inspired Aquarian under the guidance of the Lord. Of the many ancient wells which have become dry, down through the ages, only One remains open, with the contents of the Living Waters intact. The location of this sacred well was revealed to Emanuel Swedenborg, faithful servant of the Lord. It was he who was commanded by the Lord, at the opportune time, to lift the great stone at the well's mouth, to reveal and dispense to the world the "Living Waters of Truth".

The writings tell us that "the opening of man's life after death lasts only a few days, and that he is afterward led from one state to another, and finally either into heaven or into hell." If this procedure is standard practice in the spiritual world how, may I ask, can the Swedenborgian Church anticipate instant induction of a natural man into the spiritual world of the New Church?

Perhaps the solution lies in the Waters of Truth, the greatest solvent known.

Sincerely,
John Powerly,
St. Petersburg, Fla.

ANOTHER LOOK AT "MARRIAGES AND WEDDINGS"

Dear Mr. Editor:

Ernest Martin's article, "Marriages and Weddings", made pretty good sense to me, and I am sorry that it brought such adverse reactions from other correspondents. I wonder if it would help understanding to consider example situations:

Think of one couple who enter blithely into marriage, going through all the accepted forms and customs, spending plenty of money

(probably not their own), surrounding their vows with celebration and display.

Think of another couple who consider the matter carefully, then reject the established customs as empty forms, too rigid and too expensive. They insist that marriage belongs to heart and life, and needs no legal or ceremonial forms.

Now of course we must not judge internal states, even of fictitious people. Nor should we generalize from individuals to the whole population. But would you not think the second couple were as likely as the first to build a true marriage, — perhaps likelier?

Another way of looking at it: If you could ask a celestial angel whether a certain couple were married, would he/she look for the answer in a marriage register?

The spirit needs outward forms, but surely doctrine teaches us, and outward observation confirms it, that these outward forms are various and liable to change. We must not let them take control of us. Like the Sabbath, they are all "made for man, not man for them."

Yours sincerely,
Rev. Ian Johnson
Huddersfield, England

CONVENTION CALENDAR

Sept. 17	Installation of Rev. Ron Brugler, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Sept. 22 — 24	Michigan Ass'n, Almont
Sept. 25 — 27	Committee on Worship Philadelphia, Pa.
Sept. 28 — 29	Dept. of Publications, Philadelphia, Pa.
Sept. 29 — Oct. 1	Ohio Ass'n., Cleveland, Ohio
Oct. 6 — 8	Kansas Ass'n.
Oct. 13 — 14	Board of Education, Newton, Mass.
Oct. 15	Installation of Rev. David Rienstra, Fryeburg, Me.
Oct. 26 — 28	Urbana College Trustees, Urbana, O.
Nov. 3 — 4	Wayfarers' Chapel Board

“CAST THE NET ON THE RIGHT SIDE”

*Leon LeVan
St. Petersburg, Fla.*

The Lord's resurrection took place several weeks before He appeared by the Sea of Galilee where the disciples were fishing. They had “toiled all night and taken nothing.”

Now Jesus stood on the shore and called to them to cast their net on the right side of the ship. They did not know it was the Lord but did as He said; and this time their net was so full of fish they could not draw it in. A “net” is the Scriptural symbol for a person's mind or understanding. As the Fisherman's net is designed to catch fish so a person's understanding (or mind) is designed by the Lord to perceive spiritual truths from the Word.

You do not say a person's understanding actually “fishes” for ideas or “fishes” for truths from the Word of God; but if you should express yourself in that manner, you would not be greatly amiss. For our understanding is like a net. It acquires things. It catches things. As you or I cast our questions, our investigations, our inquiries into the “sea of the Word” we either obtain truths which can be used for regeneration and life or we fail to do so.

You may even think of the particular verses of the written Word as the very “fishes” of that “sea.” More exactly, you may think of specific truths of the internal sense as such “fishes.” Just as the net catches fish, so the mind or understanding procures truths from the Word of God and the Doctrines of the Word.

We “cast our nets” on the wrong side of the ship when we look on the Word and Doctrines without desiring or loving their inward spiritual truths. It is impossible to get good results in our “nets” if we do not have a living desire for the genuine, spiritual truths of the Word. Without such a living desire we “toil all night and take nothing.”

To catch fish even in the purely natural sense there must be preparation, purpose, and resolution. Similarly, truths must be loved, desired, and toiled for if they are to become our permanent possessions from God.

Why is it that so many people in this enlightened age insist they cannot understand the Word and so are excused from trying? The answer is — they are “casting their nets on the wrong side.” They “toil all night and take nothing.” This tells us we should take the time

and trouble to learn unforgettably what is the exact way to “cast our net on the right side.”

To “cast your net on the right side” means you must desire and seek the spiritual truths of the Word of God for one supreme purpose — to help the state of your soul. If you are a person urgent to know what God says to the human mind and heart, then you will “cast your net on the right side,” — employ your mind, your understanding, to perceive and procure spiritual, life - giving truths from their only source. The Lord speaks to men by means of truths. The very God of Heaven gives more truths in the Word and New Church doctrines for reformation and regeneration than the number of stars overhead or the fish in the Galilean Sea.

Do you need those truths? Do you love them? Do you desire them with your whole heart? If so, you “cast your net on the right side” — which means you search the Word and Doctrines for truths to advance the state of your soul.

Many a man or woman is intellectually brilliant. Many come from the front ranks of college classes. Yet they often find the feat of understanding the inward truths of the Word beyond their powers. Why? Because they “cast their net on the wrong side.” They search for intellectual information but not for the uses of spiritual life, not for uses of regeneration.

On the other hand there are those who have no claim to brilliancy. Some are most humble — sometimes self - taught simple mountaineers. Some are like the unspoiled people of distant lands who have found that the Word and New Church doctrines give them plenteous spiritual light for their life on earth.

The fact that the net of the disciples on the Sea of Galilee did not break is a final revealing detail. “Nets break” when the natural mind becomes so excited by fancied truths or falsities that a person becomes a religious fanatic. But the nets of the disciples did not break.

This tells us that the truths of the Word and Doctrines are eminently rational and reasonable. They lead towards humility, patience, and mercy. Instead of tearing the understanding apart with irrational ideas they make it rational, enlightened and whole.

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Paul Zacharias
Box 2642, Stn. B
Kitchener, Ont. N2H 6N2