

THE MESSENGER

Official Organ of the Swedenborgian Church

JUNE 1970



***CRISIS IN
THE NATION***

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

CRISIS IN OUR LIFE

This month, *The Messenger* addresses itself to the crisis in our nation. The war crisis and the campus crisis receive the most attention, although reference is made to a few others. In this letter of my own, however, I want to refer to war and campus only by example—illustrations that could be drawn just as appropriately from the race crisis, the poverty crisis, the moral crisis, or any of half a dozen others. My particular concern is with a crisis that I see underlying and including all of these, the crisis that makes each of these separate issues so tearingly crucial, the crisis that transforms each of them into battle lines rather than problems that we can work together to solve. This crisis divides close friends so deeply that it threatens their friendship, drives groups to fight to nullify each other's efforts toward a common cause, and vitiates the power of our traditional tools for dealing with differences—good will, reason, open discussion, even language itself.

The War Crisis

Look at what happens, when people who want peace try to talk about the war in Indo-China.

We must be strong to gain peace; but to one, that means strong enough to admit a past mistake, quit killing people, and bring soldiers home; while to another that means strong enough to stand and fight where the battle line has been drawn, for the cause of peace and freedom. We must support the men who risk their lives for our country; but do we support them best by sending them more guns, or by bringing them home? Our wealth and power in the world give us responsibility; but is it to lead in moves toward disarmament, or is it to lead the fight against tyranny and aggression?

I have not often heard these questions, or others like them, discussed as if they could be resolved. Rather, I have heard good and competent men and women being called bad or incompetent, or both, because of differing convictions concerning such questions.

Why?

Conflicting Reports and Confidential Information

Is it because of the conflicting reports that cast doubt on all available information? One retired general who served in Vietnam reports decisive, significant victories by American and ARVN troops; while another reports that the years of war have

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produced no clear military advantage for either side. First-rate reporters, skilled at discovering what really is happening, differ so radically in the facts they find to report, that the "U. S. as Hero" picture, and the picture of "U. S. as Villain," both can be documented from equally reputable sources.

Conflicting reports are a problem, but they are another symptom of the crisis, not a part of its cause.

Is it because the only complete and reliable sources of information are confidential because of national security, so that none of us really know what we are talking about? That's a logical possibility, but two considerations weigh against it with particular force for me. The first, frankly, is that I do not want to believe it: if I do, I must accept the fact that neither the Congress nor the electorate has access to adequate knowledge to responsibly make the decisions assigned them by the Constitution, and our system of government has ceased to function, except as a kind of puppet-show for the amusement of TV audiences and the appeasement of voters. The second consideration is a set of comparisons: in other fields—campus disorders, racial problems, etc.—information appears to be accessible, but good will, reason, open discussion and language fare no better than in the war issue. I really believe that this kind of doubt is only one more symptom of the underlying, all-embracing crisis.

A Spiritual Crisis

The very fact that parallels can be drawn so readily between the crises that exist over the war, over forms of dissent on campuses, and over the problems and conflicts of race, leads closer to the heart of the problem. The parallels lie in the emotionally charged divisiveness that characterizes them all, and the frustrating futility of everyone's best efforts to deal with them, or even engage in fruitful discussion about them. There are so many examples of this kind of break-down, that I have to ask seriously and sadly if our nation of individuals can sit down to effective and constructive talk about *anything* that is both really important and really concrete. That exempts such subjects as church furnishings or the design of a freeway, on the grounds that these kinds of things are not really important on the level that war-or-peace or law-and-order are important; and it exempts such subjects as theology and Heisenberg's principle of in-

determinism, on the grounds that these kinds of concerns are not really concrete in the way that war casualty lists or pictures of rioting looters are concrete.

Can we still talk about anything important and concrete? Can we still use language to communicate meaning to one another, or can it now be only a weapon? Can we still use dialogue or open discussion as means toward creative searching for new alternatives that transcend old differences, or can discussion now be only confrontation? Can reason be used for creativity and resolution, or is it only useful now to discredit or destroy? Is good will a positive and uniting force, or only a vapid cop-out?

It appears to me that the basic, ubiquitous crisis implied by these questions is relatively new in human experience—or at least it has recently become intensely more severe and conspicuous than it has been before. The difficulty of dealing with vital crises, of talking about them, or even keeping friends who hold differing convictions, is worse now than it used to be. It is so common a difficulty in so many situations, that no one can be held particularly and individually to blame for this kind of breakdown. It seems an instructive simile to say it's as if the seeds of unnatural and paralyzing conflict are in our very atmosphere: certainly they are a part of our total environment.

The crisis that produces this troubled state is a spiritual crisis, in that it involves ideas, emotions, memories, attitudes, tendencies and values (major components of spiritual reality), more than it involves the physical data and material consequences of the visible crises—such as the war—which claim our attention. Perhaps it is saying the same thing just slightly differently to call it a crisis of life—the crucial point of a truly cosmic struggle involving the total life process. If this is the kind of crisis it is, it affects every level of life; so that individual lives, social relationships, the entire spiritual environment, and all the interactions among these, are pervaded and influenced by it. It is too vast and complex to be overcome or resolved by any one man's act of will, yet only human acts of will guided by understanding offer any hope of directing the life process into a better way, or even ensuring its continued possibility.

This means that no one is totally responsible, and none is wholly free from responsibility. No one is completely to blame, nor is anyone entirely inno-

cent. Therefore, you and I and everyone are freed from guilt but charged with obligation for the present crisis of life and its impact on our affairs and lives. Perhaps more importantly, when you are frustrated by the futility and anger that meets your attempts to resolve or discuss our nation's crises, this perspective offers a direction in which to look for a new kind of solution. Instead of asking, guiltily, "*What's wrong with me* that I can't explain this to him, or understand him, or convince him, or contribute more constructively to the discussion?"; instead of asking, beligerently, "*What's wrong with him* that he can't understand me, or agree with me, or come up with a better solution?"; you might ask, instead, "*What is keeping us apart*, making us angry, distorting our language, and blocking our efforts to deal with the problem?" If that third question could be dealt with, even tentatively, even in *one* of its many inter-related parts, it would tend to make the first two questions irrelevant, and release significant powers for the resolution of our national crises.

Tools of Communication

A useable allegory for one of the more apparent powers that can be released in this way, is *tools of communication*. These are the tools that Socrates tried to teach western civilization to use for the resolution of differences and the search for new paths and goals. We have come far from perfecting our skills with these tools, but we have become pretty handy with them—well enough accustomed to some degree of success in their use that we are bewildered when they fail us as drastically as they have in the current crisis. Are they still serviceable in our hands? Can we as a nation still talk out our problem, or has our spiritual crisis weakened our tools of communication beyond the capacity for useful work when the going gets tough?

I'm not going to answer that question, because I don't know. I know what I hope, and I know what I fear, but I don't know what the answer is in reality. But if our tools of communication are still whole, but need strengthening; or if they are broken, but not shattered beyond repair; I know some of what will reinforce and mend those tools.

A Crisis of Trust

One thing they need is more trust. The effect of a

lack of trust in communication can be seen in the example given at the beginning of this article, about people wanting peace and talking about war. When there is agreement on the need for strength, but two interpretations of strength are possible and existing; then it is distrust which makes a person see the other's interpretation of strength as personal weakness. When there is agreement on the need for support, it is distrust that makes one person see the other's interpretation of support as either treason or malevolence. When there is agreement on the presence of responsibility, it is distrust that makes one person see the other's interpretation as either war-mongering or subversion. We need more trust, if communication is to survive, for a crisis of trust is one component of our crisis of life.

But giving trust where it is not earned, is equivalent to surrendering freedom of choice, which is counter-constructive in the present spiritual crisis. By definition, too, earning trust is useless in a relationship if trust is not given. This is a difficult problem, this matter of trust, but not so insoluble as the old one of the chicken-and-the-egg. The earning and giving of trust can proceed simultaneously from opposite poles. One need not precede the other (though deadlocks can be broken by "unilateral" trust).

Furthermore, the problem can be simplified by dividing the question. Trust need not be total, and in experience it seldom is. A man might trust a surgeon to remove his appendix, but not to choose a wife for him: he would not be inconsistent simply because his trust is not total. Similarly, a man may well trust the President with regard to his sources of information and his integrity, while still retaining the option to question (not trust fully) his judgment. An individual who finds that the President's past decisions include some which that individual disagreed with after all the data were public record, can retain both a measure of trust in the President and his own freedom of decision, by questioning the President's judgment. Likewise, a person who finds himself in agreement with the decisions which the President has made in the past, can trust the President's judgment without surrendering his personal freedom to choose and decide. Every individual trusts some others' judgment, and makes decisions in which the influence of others is a fully conscious element; and this involves no surrender of freedom unless the trust is given without basis, or without awareness of what influence is involved or to what extent it is accepted.

Crisis of Love

Another element that the tools of communication need, is love. The crisis of love in our spiritual crisis of life does not concern an urge to possess, or a sentimental tendency to excuse; but an emotion linked with a tendency, together producing a concrete desire for another person's well-being and happiness, for the sake of the goodness and the truth that is a part of that person. In the examples of communication breakdown concerning the war, the absence of love is seen (apart from lack of trust as involved in absence of love) in every attempt to convince another before the most earnest attempt to learn from him, in every attempt to end an argument by "winning" at the expense of the other's defeat, and in every attempt to identify the other's conviction with incompetence or evil. In love, the truth one sees is offered to the other as plainly and effectively as possible, without any attempts to convert him; while the other's perception of truth is heard just as openly and willingly. In love, mutual understanding is the goal, rather than victory or defeat. In love, every attempt is made to understand the other person rather than label or pigeon-hole him.

A Crisis of Understanding

Another quality that our tools of communication need, is deeper, clearer, more distinct understanding. Our national penchant for investigation and interpretive reporting may have produced less real understanding of the issues in our many crises than might have been hoped for, but it has produced a lot more than we have used. What creates a crisis by its absence, is *understanding* of what is happening, what is tearing us apart, what ham-strings our good will and our reason, what is the basic crisis of our life. If we can understand our problems well enough to divide them, so they can be dealt with one at a time, rather than trying to solve one while unconsciously pre-occupied with another, we will have taken a great deal of the strain and burden off the communicative tools we have.

Such understanding will not come easily, however. The nature of the spiritual problem that I have been trying to point out in its general outline and a few particulars, makes it difficult to perceive and grasp. Because it affects us through channels of communication and perception that are unconscious for the most part, this kind of crisis tends to escape analysis or even recognition. Also, because

it has the result of mis-directing and confusing our ideas, motivations, memories, tendencies, attitudes and values at this sub-conscious level, it has enormous power to distort our understanding—especially when we try to understand *it*. Only by the fullest use of powers built into our nature to help maintain our inherent freedom of choice, can we face or deal with this crisis at all. But if there is any true perception in the glimpse that I have gained of it, all these powers must be mustered; for this is our most treacherous and deadly enemy.

Analysis and Prejudice

It should be noted that this analysis of our nation's crises and our life's crisis is not in itself a judgment, or a prophecy of doom. I have tried to locate the crux of a conflict, and report something of the enemy's name and weaponry; but such a report includes no predictions on the outcome of the conflict. At most, it calls for more scouting of the battle lines, more concerted study of the situation, and readiness for possibly serious spiritual struggle. It is written with mingled feelings of gladness that there may be a way out of our so-far insoluble crises that we haven't tried yet, of some alarm at the scope and complexity and general invisibility of the crisis, and of a particular sense of humility. This whole line of analysis claims no special wisdom greater than that of the contributors to this issue, who give eloquent expression to personal convictions and to deep concern over issues that I have not dealt with directly or at all. It is not meant to "explain away" the reality of significant differences that exist in our church as in our nation; nor to derogate in any way the value of strong convictions, extreme positions, or passionate concern sharply focused on particular crises. Rather, it is an admittedly limited attempt—primarily a hopeful attempt—to suggest an approach to differences that may be more constructively useful than some of the approaches I have encountered in my personal contacts and my mostly indirect observation.

Concerned that I might use my editor's and analyzer's role to escape from the kind of commitment that has been necessary from this month's contributors, I feel compelled to make some statement regarding my own position in some of the present visible crises. I hope this statement will be seen as being under the judgment of the foregoing analysis, and not as either a "hidden agenda" in that analysis, nor an attempt to have a "last word" after reading the other contributions to the issue.

Regarding the war, I share the urge to finish and win the war we're in, to unshackle our military experts while we're in a war, and to avoid the weakness that history has shown in isolationism. Nevertheless, I feel that the Indo-China campaign has been a tragic mistake, comparable to the Cyprus campaign that contributed decisively to the downfall of Athens; I consider it a war that cannot be won, regardless of the manpower, weaponry or tactics employed; I fear most deeply that the manner of our involvement in it has seriously eroded (if not actually destroyed beyond repair) the constitutional balance of power between the executive and legislative branches of government; and I feel that the best interests of our nation and the world would be served by the quickest troop withdrawal possible (while avoiding another "Dunkirk"—Sec. Laird's promise of withdrawal of ground combat troops in twelve months seems realistic).

Regarding the closely related matter of student dissent, I accept the evidence that some of it is instigated by peripatetic paid revolutionaries, working (directly or indirectly) for international Communist imperialism; I realize that some of the other instigators, and some of the most eager followers of the "pros" are neurotic kids acting out their private pathological needs for mindless destruction; but I am convinced that the vast majority of young people in student demonstrations of dissent against government policy (and local university policies that seem supportive or related to it), are simply better products of our culture than we ever dared to hope for or prepare for—young people who accept a free society as the best means to the goal of peace on earth among men of good will, and are ready to put their education and their future careers and even their young living bodies right where their convictions are. When they challenge all the values by which we wage war, conduct business and govern the nation, it is in the name of the highest ideals our culture has given them; and if practicality, or fear of change, force us to compromise with their challenge, trust and love demand that we listen to them as hard as we can.

Apocalypse—The End

Without burdening you with all my prejudices, may I return for one closing paragraph to my analysis of our spiritual crisis? The Rev. Richard Tafel observes that for all the foolishness and danger inherent in dissent against the government, we ought to

listen carefully to our youth because they may be leading us to a better world. He has written in a similar vein when discussing the unknown forms that the Second Coming might take in our experience, and I want to state my deep sympathy with that viewpoint. It seems to me that the spiritual crisis that appears as a lack of trust and love and understanding, is greater now than in the past. Why? I do not know, but I have a hypothesis and a hope.

Theologian Paul Tillich has pointed out that separation and alienation between persons is invariably associated with separation of the individual from himself in psychic conflict, and alienation of the individual from the ground of his being (God). In these terms, the crisis I am talking about could be called the crisis of alienation. But some degree of alienation has been a permanent quality of life since the beginning of history, and I am convinced that the present situation is a new and accelerating crisis. It seems to me that something is devastating even those bridges by which we have tried to overcome our psychic, social and religious separation.

The vastation that Swedenborg says must precede the reality of the New Jerusalem in the lives of men might be something very much like this. I do not pretend to have achieved an understanding so clear and distinct that I can precisely name the spiritual crisis in our life today, or even be certain in identifying it with Swedenborg's description of vastation. But it seems a reasonable hypothesis, one worth examining, that the spiritual crisis I have been describing—the breakdown of our structures of reason, discourse and language that blocks all efforts to prevent or to halt the wars and rumors of wars within and between all nations of the world we know—is similar to, or a part of that vast and pulverizing demolition of all patterns of ideas, emotions, memories, tendencies, attitudes and values that Swedenborg says must precede the establishment of the Lord's kingship in human life. If this is, indeed, the vastation that brings in the New Jerusalem, I hope I have the wisdom to recognize it in time, and the courage to welcome it in faith. Many who have never heard of Swedenborg or the kind of heavenly city that he envisioned, will find that wisdom and courage, I know. I hope that you and I can find our way among them, when the crucial time for understanding and decision actually arrives.

Robert H. Kirven

THE SPIRITUAL CRISIS IN OUR COUNTRY: SIX SWEDENBORGIAN VIEWPOINTS

Six Swedenborgians, with differing viewpoints and concerns, were asked to comment briefly on two questions: "What is the Spiritual Crisis in our Country?"; and, "What Spiritual Decisions must be made by each Individual who works toward resolving the Crisis?"

The Rev. Richard H. Tafel is Pastor of the Philadelphia Church and former President of Convention.

I find it strange to be asked to write in defense of "law and order;" stranger, still, that these principles upon which our country is founded need to be defended or apologized for. I find it strange to be asked to speak also "from the hawk position," which I take to mean supporting the policy of our country in southeast Asia as enunciated by our last three Presidents. Does this imply that those who have been invited to speak from the "dove" position are asked also to speak against law and order?

It is the juxtaposition of attitudes and beliefs in these areas—not the war in Vietnam—that is polarizing our people and alienating large segments of our students and minority groups. We have the same phenomena in other countries, where there is no war, no draft, no racial problems. So what is needed seems to be a perspective from which to view current movements.

What is really being challenged is our whole way of life, including the principles and values and philosophy upon which it rests. Violence, rejection of authority, disrespect for law, obscenity, nonconformity—these are the forms of the present revolt. It is the total repudiation of the establishment, the system, the society as we know it. When seen as forms of dissent and rebellion, they become more understandable, if not more acceptable to the majority.

Granted that there is much in our society that needs to be changed, granted the injustice and inequity that still persists, it is yet difficult to account for the hatred and vehemence of those who wish to destroy it. Witness the clenched fists and the utter hate on the faces of many of the youthful demonstrators, even when marching for peace! One young man has remarked in public, "I used to be thrilled when the flag was raised and the Star Spangled Banner played. Now that makes me want to vomit."

What is it about our affluent society that provokes the cry, "Burn it down?" Because it is affluent? Because it provides a standard of living for eighty-five to ninety per cent of its citizens which is unparalleled in the history of man? Or is it because of a passionate concern for that ten to fifteen per cent underprivileged—ill housed, ill clothed, ill fed? Yet the last nine years have seen eleven million people raised out of the poverty level. "Burn it down?" Why? We have racial problems on a scale that no society has had to deal with, yet when in all history has more solid progress been made in solving these than in the last two decades? Has not the Establishment, our despised society, shown both the will and the ability to complete the task of providing liberty and justice for all? Why "Burn it down?" Why change ballots for bullets?

Conceivably, even at this stage in our national life, a better system could be inaugurated. But do those who want to destroy the present establishment have something better to suggest? Does the clenched fist, the Heil Hitler-ing, and the parading of the Viet Cong flag promise better things to come? What kind of society can be built on an intolerance which, even in our universities, will not permit an opposing voice to be heard? Can violence and disregard for the rights of others be the building stones of the future? Must not the Brave New World rest ultimately on law and order, and on respect for duly vested authority?

On the other hand, our affluent society is wallowing in a guilt syndrome, admitting itself culpable of every sin, crime and failure. This is not only unhealthy but divisive, providing part of the very polarization and alienation we are suffering. This sense of guilt is causing us to apologize for everything we are. As though a high standard of living and well-being were a sin! As though wealth, strength, ingenuity and enterprise were a crime! As though the ethos of work and thrift and obedience were things to be repented of, as well as all the virtues and wisdom which we have inherited from the past! And perhaps deepest of all is the sense of guilt at not being perfect, for not being

without fault or blame. The result is to be guilty of everything, and living without strength, without merit, without honor. Guilt is good if it leads to repentance and to increased striving. But when wallowed in as our society is doing at present, it makes for abject surrendering of all that we have or might be.

Perhaps what is needed most at the present time is to see both our strengths and our weaknesses: both what we are and what we ought to be. This we can do by holding fast to the principles and philosophy that have made ours a great country, and by also listening to the dissenters and to the rebellious in our midst. They, too, have something to say, and should have the perfect right of saying it. They, too, are deeply committed, are moved by human concerns, and have their dreams. While we may not countenance their methods and behavior, let us listen to their ideas of what we ought to be.

As churchmen, as Swedenborgians, let us never forget that it is the Lord who in the last analysis is building this world of ours anew. As he works "with all power in heaven and in earth" he can use for his divine purposes the building materials supplied by all kinds of people. "He makes the wrath of man to praise him." In this faith, and with this confidence, let us hold firmly to our heritage. At the same time, let us keep striving to build the world of our dreams and, working together with even those with whom we disagree, let us determine that "This nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth!"



Loring Young was confirmed into the faith of the Swedenborgian Church at the Wayfarers' Chapel, and is one of the first to have obtained Conscientious Objector status on the basis of that faith.

It would take volumes to analyze the spiritual crisis in our country—or, more accurately, the spiritual crisis in the world. So, I will deal with only a fragment of the whole.

The crisis is not a general crisis that can be scientifically analyzed as true for everybody, but is a personal crisis of each and every one of us. What I may call "the crisis" may in no way be a crisis to someone else. However, I will try to outline my methodology for solving problems.

I am young, and I haven't solved the crisis or I wouldn't be here. I can't even define it. I believe that one who had solved the crisis would have achieved the kingdom of heaven. But I do believe that a step towards realizing the nature of the crisis is to assert that war, in destructive form, is in no way justifiable. (War, however, is not "the crisis" on our planet, but rather *one* symptom of the crisis.) If we are to believe in a God of love and charity, what kind of love is it that causes us to take the life of a fellow human being? What kind of love is it that allows us to say "God is on our side?" What right have we to tell the Buddhist that he worships the devil?

I, for one, don't believe that we love people by killing them. I feel sometimes the best way to help one's brother is to leave him alone. To force my ideology on anyone is a sin. Every man must find his own gate to the temple (Swedenborg isn't going to get us into heaven). A Hindu has as much chance as you or I. *Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.* Matt. 7: 7

When we come to a problem the question we must ask ourselves is "in which way can I serve the Lord best?" (Or how can I serve my fellow man best?)

The answer is within you. Before one can be honest with anyone else, one must first be honest with one's self. Once you know who you are, then maybe you can find out who someone else is, and what his needs are. Aren't we all brothers?

"... be whatever you want to be, and do whatever you want to do, as long as you don't hurt anyone." from the American Tribal Love-Rock Musical, *Hair*. LOVE.



Captain August (Gus) Ebel, USN, lives near Washington, D. C. and is a member of the National Church.

The present is indeed a frightening time in which to live. Hardly a university has escaped violent protest of some sort. Postal workers and air controllers have gone on strike against the government. Even high school students are striking in many communities. The country appears on the verge of revolt. Perhaps the revolt has already started. The decade which began so hopefully in 1960 has apparently turned very sour by 1970.

For nearly all of my adult life I have been a member of the Armed Forces. I am sworn to defend our government. It is an oath I do not take lightly. It does not, however, blind me to various shortcomings of the American society, but it does force me to evaluate my position in that society more critically than most people. From this I have gained a measure of perspective which has convinced me that I can be a moral citizen of the world community and a member of the U.S. Military-Industrial Complex at the same time.

Our growing foreign and domestic crisis has occupied most of our attention, but it has been accompanied, even preceded, by a spiritual crisis for the Christian Church in our country. The very vehemence of the former has overshadowed and hidden the upheaval in the Church. Now one hardly ever hears that "God is dead." It is, however, too early to say that the Church has succeeded in reorienting to meet the modern times. Membership in the conventional type of organization is still declining, and new forms are not yet strong enough to give assurance that they will pick up the slack.

For too long it has been fashionable to blame the domestic crisis on the spiritual weakness or to assume that the spiritual crisis is the result of domestic failures. This I cannot accept. Viet Nam, crime in our streets or the environmental crisis could not harm a healthy Church, and while the Church can modify our response to these problems, its strength or its weakness did not cause them. These are not new types of problems. They have always been with us, but now we are becoming sensitive to them. This is a healthy sign of progress to be encouraged.

It is not an accident that the spiritual and the secular crises came at the same time. Their emergence has a common root. As the educational level of our society has been raised, we have been taught to question. Now we have reached a point at which nothing is sacred, not the authority of the Church, not the authority of the government, not the authority of tradition. All must pass again the test of reason. I welcome this change because it provides an unparalleled opportunity for advancement. Only in an environment that questioned the old pseudo-religious laws could "new morality" emerge placing emphasis on love and compassion instead of law. The growing recognition of the rights of people of all races could not survive in a dogmatic environment. Even our arguments on the war in Asia are

unique because for the first time in history many on both sides of the question are exploring moral issues. Yes, there are moral arguments on both sides.

I would be guilty of oversimplification if I looked only at the positive aspect and ignored the violence and destruction that has become so widespread. Impatience is a characteristic of youth that prevents them from accepting the fact that something is impossible or cannot be changed. That is the reason why they traditionally lead the fight for progress while elder statesmen sit back and counsel caution. It is impatience that has led some to lash out in divergent directions often without clearly defined interim goals. Though I could wish they would temper their enthusiasm with wisdom, I find their drive the indispensable quantity. As one who can no longer class as one of the youth of our country, it is my prayer and deepest challenge to recapture some of their impatience and merge it with my experience without diluting either. At the same time I must see present development and evolving morality in clearly less frightening perspective.



James Zehner teaches high school in Columbus, Ohio while pursuing graduate studies. Originally from the Pittsburgh Church, he frequently conducts lay services for the Swedenborgian Church in Glendale, Ohio.

In this era of non-negotiable demands, I received yesterday, a non-negotiable one from my draft board which demanded that I inform them of my address, specific occupational duties, travel plans (i.e., permission to attend the World Assembly in London), criminal record, health record and educational level as well as any family responsibilities I might have. In three weeks, the students that I had in my classes last year in American History will be graduated from high school. Some will be immediately taken out of civilian society and subjected to training which is geared to strip them of any ability to think independently, teach them to unquestioningly obey authority and of course, train them to forget all the types of behavior that makes them fit members of the society at large. For the most part, those who undergo the experience will be overwhelmed by it and after their term is over, will return to civilian society with the addition of the authoritarian training. What can the effect of this be on democratic society? The first and most visible effect is to polarize the society. The sight of my students being sent off like the young Athenians to the Minotaur has obviously had its effects on my thinking.

Polarization is more than just dividing the society into groups that think differently. It divides the nation into groups that see one another as "the enemy." It nurtures a paranoid belief in conspiracy. It makes attitudes more calloused and depersonalized. It allows people to accept any type of reaction against the enemy. This reaction is almost invariably authoritarian. There is essentially no difference between those who advocate allowing police to attack citizens indiscriminately and without restraint and those who attack a bank building. People who applaud a judge's sentencing a youth to either jail or a haircut are reacting in approximately the same fashion as those who blockade some nameless dean in his office and threaten his safety or his very life. A lynch mob, no matter what its purpose or ideology is still a lynch mob. The tragedy of what is happening in America today is that such terroristic behavior has become acceptable to most people. My contention, and it is certainly not one that many will accept, is that one of the chief causes is the fact of a majority of our citizens undergoing dehumanizing military training. The values of the military have conquered in our society without the constraints of the military to at least maintain some order, authoritarian as it would be. This was most recently driven home to me by the sight of the construction workers' attack on the peace demonstration in New York City. Such a non-thinking, non-moral attack was a manifestation of army training without the army.

Swedenborg constantly emphasizes the love and wisdom that man is capable of exercising. He says that man is a rational animal. I am beginning to have my doubts. Leaving aside the question of how we got where we have, it seems indisputable that we have lost our capacity for looking at situations with a rational regard for consequences to our fellow creatures. As New Churchmen, the main area where we can work is on the individual level. Understanding of how we operate and acceptance of others is ultimately the issue, not the political solutions.

To emphasize process and not a catechism must remain the goal of New Churchmen.



Walter Orthwein is a member of the Church of the Open Word, outside St. Louis, and is a student at the Swedenborg School of Religion.

"If in this world there should exist a heavenly government, consisting of men who had an angelic dis-

position, there would nevertheless be in it faults; and if these were ferreted out, reported, and exaggerated, this government too might be undermined by calumny, and thereby gradually a desire might be raised up among the well-disposed to change and destroy it." (Quoted in *Life and Mission of Swedenborg*, Worcester, p. 278)

Thus did Swedenborg, in 1762, reply to unreasonable criticism of the Swedish government by a fellow member of the Diet. Today, in America, we have the most heavenly system of government ever instituted on earth, despite many attempts from within and without to weaken and destroy it. Our problem is not that some of our people have become too good for our present system of government, but that many of our people no longer possess the morality, the strength and self-restraint, that freedom requires. As a nation, we are growing soft and superficial. We have traded independence for comfort. We have lost our determination and our sense of direction. Our money, like our faith, is hollow. All standards are gone. Even Dr. Spock is appalled. The day of reckoning will not be put off much longer. Our crisis is spiritual, and only on the spiritual plane will it be solved. George Washington, in his Farewell Address, warned: "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports . . . And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion."

The fantastic national hysteria in recent weeks—out of all proportion to anything like a sane response to President Nixon's Cambodian announcement—is one sign of how sick this nation has become. Many would have us believe that the President has "expanded the war;" that the United States is an "aggressor" trying to "force its system of government" on the hapless Vietnamese; that "the people" have been "betrayed" by the President; that campuses are erupting in violence all across the country simply because students are "frustrated" because nobody will "listen" to their cries for "peace" and that they are now being slaughtered in a wave of "repression." This kind of madness hardly deserves a rational response, but since it is so widespread I will comment briefly on some of the specific issues.

1. WAR. The larger war we are engaged in is a world-wide struggle against the ruthless advance of Communism. This war is being waged both mili-

tarily and philosophically. We are not in Southeast Asia simply to give the Vietnamese the right to choose their own form of government. This is just one front in the world-wide effort to resist Communist expansion. The Cambodia campaign is merely a maneuver—a rather minor one, at that—in the Indo-China War. The only immoral thing about our involvement in the war is that we didn't win it years ago, as we easily could have if we were not aiding the enemy with one hand while fighting him with the other. The recent proposal to build Ford trucks for the Soviets is just one of many examples of this kind of thinking. Who do you think supports these "crises" around the world? What could be more strategic than trucks? The Communists were short of trucks in the recent move into Czechoslovakia? Do we want to see Fords rolling in the next time? Many similar proposals were not defeated.

In March 1967 the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee warned that "the enemy strategy is to engage us in a protracted war of attrition which will tax the patience and undermine the determination of the American people to resist." Everything has been going according to plan, with our cooperation. Sen. Symington (D.-Mo.) testified to the disastrous effects of our "no-win" policy after returning from Vietnam in 1967. His testimony and that of our generals is similar to that on Korea 15 years before. That situation has never really been settled. If it had, as it could have been, we wouldn't be faced with Vietnam today.

The Cambodian campaign has already been a great success and will no doubt save thousands of lives. Captured so far, at minimal cost in lives: enough arms to outfit almost 70 enemy battalions of 500 men each; more ammunition than the Communists would use in two years; 12 tons of medical supplies; enough rice to feed more than 10,000 troops for a year. Assuming Sihanoukville will now be closed to the enemy, it will be very difficult for them to replace these supplies. The Viet Cong has violated the supposed neutrality of Cambodia for years. They had begun their terrorist activities in Cambodia, despite our warning that if they did, we would be forced to act. Our action may save the new pro-Western government of Cambodia, which is begging us for help.

There is one sure way to make the biggest tragedy of all, a third world war, inevitable: pull out of Asia and Europe and show that we will not protect

their peoples from Communist imperialism. Our strength is the only restraint on the Communists.

Read *Deliver Us From Evil* by the late Dr. Tom Dooley if you want to get an idea of why we are fighting in Vietnam. The atrocities he describes—against children, too—are too sickening to go into here. And these are not isolated incidents, but matters of policy. Terror is the main weapon in the Communist arsenal. Then read the article in the June *Reader's Digest* about the humanitarian projects carried out by our soldiers at great personal sacrifice. Significantly, Dr. Dooley notes: "Early in my Haiphong stay I was puzzled not only by the growing number but by the character of the Communist atrocities. So many seemed to have religious significance. More and more, I was learning that these punishments were linked to man's belief in God." We see the same pattern everywhere the Communists move in—no authority other than theirs can be tolerated. In Tibet, priests were hitched to plows, crucified etc., etc. In China, where 40 million were slaughtered, five Catholic priests were buried alive within the last year or so. In Korea, by far the highest death rate among American POWs was among *chaplains*. The war is spiritual.

2. KENT STATE. Hand-wringing and slogans and platitudes will not prevent future such incidents. Contrary to the headline in the New York Times of May 5—"60 Years of Quiet at Kent State Are Shattered in Era of Protest"—SDS-inspired riots have been disrupting the campus for several years. On October 7, 1969, a campus survey by the AP showed 81 per cent of Kent students approved the calling of State Police to put down terrorist activities of April 8, 1969.* Days of violence preceded the shooting incident of May 4. On May 3 the situation was so serious the Governor of Ohio visited the campus. He characterized the rioters as part of "the strongest, well-trained, militant revolutionary group that has ever been assembled in America." Students defied a court injunction not to assemble. They continued to battle the Guardsmen Sunday night and into Monday morning. May 4: the Guardsmen, outnumbered something like six to one and having used the last of their tear gas (the "students" threw the cannisters back at them), were in full retreat. The mob was throwing bricks and large rocks. One of the Guardsmen interviewed on CBS said: "I was never so scared in my life." A student who

*U. S. News and World Report, May 25

witnessed the incident from a second-story dorm window said he was sure the mob was going to beat the Guardsmen to death.

Probably it is too late to avoid more incidents like this. The professional, trained insurgents are only too happy to use misguided student sympathizers as cannon-fodder in their riots. Dr. Sidney Hook predicted back in 1964 after the riotous events at Berkeley that as a consequence of the faculty's refusal to condemn the student seizure of the administration building, American higher education would never be the same again. It hasn't. Campus anarchy might have been nipped in the bud if normal disciplinary measures had been employed (expulsion—what I would have faced, just five years ago, when I was in college). I refer you to another article in the June *Reader's Digest*, by a liberal professor: "I'm Tired of the Tyranny of Spoiled Brats." Incredibly, the loudest criticism we hear today is not directed toward the rioters but toward those who dare criticize them. Those who call them "bums" or whatever are hardly responsible for their fanatical behavior, and are actually reacting quite mildly. Al Capp, former liberal, now a "facist, racist pig," recently declined an invitation to speak at Princeton by noting: "Princeton is dedicated to training subhumans . . . When beasts no longer roam campuses but are locked in cages, then, and not until then, will any sane man accept your invitation." Perhaps language such as this doesn't help matters, but neither does appeasement. Humphrey tried to appease the students at Northeastern this year, and they drove him off the stage.

3. REVOLUTION. All you hear about these days on campuses is revolution. Yet professors and clergymen who indulge in this kind of talk express shock and dismay at Kent State. What do they think happens in revolutions? People get shot. Guillotines go up in the square. Terror reigns. Lives and property are ruined. They are horrible. And the ironic thing is that of all countries in the world there is the least excuse for revolution here. A revolution occurs when the majority rises up to overthrow tyranny. What our so-called revolutionists really want is a *putsch*—the seizure of power by the minority to institute tyranny.

Among the slogans of the clench-fisted haters is, "All Power to the People!" What people? Certainly not the American people, the vast majority of whom voted for either Nixon or Wallace and against "peace" through surrender.

4. REPRESSION. Bilge! If we're so repressed how come *convicted* savages roam the country at will, leaving hatred, destruction and death behind them? Jerry Rubin is now going about holding "Kill Your Parents" parties. This was the theme of his talk at Kent State shortly before the violence there. Anarchy always leads to tyranny, so I guess the radicals will be getting some repression soon. Of course, so will we all. Louis Nizer noted in a recent *New York Times Magazine* article: "I reject the accusation that my suggestions are repressive, and insist that defeating the revolutionary techniques of disruption—obscurity, procrastination and violence in the courtroom—is not only essential to preserve our system of justice but is the best way to preserve the rights of the defendants."

5. THE SYSTEM. Notice how the system "works" whenever it does what its critics want it to (reject Carswell, for instance). Otherwise, "destroy the system." We have come to hail anyone who advocates "working within the system" or "non-violence" as some kind of saint. Actually, this is the very least that our civilized society demands.

And notice how often when non-violence is counselled it is only for tactical reasons, not moral or philosophical. "Violence will only hurt our cause. Now is not the *time* for violence," they say.

6. DISSENT. Advocating the violent overthrow of the government and participating in riotous action to overthrow the government is sedition and treason—not dissent.

7. PEACE. When and where since the end of World War II has there been any peace? In Hungary? In Czechoslovakia? Germany? The Middle East? Tibet? Cuba? Korea? Vietnam? Where? When has there ever been this much-talked-about peace that our withdrawal from Vietnam is supposed to return to the world? The Communists create crisis after crisis and the world looks to us to make peace. All around the world are powder-kegs which they created and control—Germany, the Middle East, Latin America, where will the next "crisis" be?

But suppose the Vietnam war ended tomorrow and by some miracle the Communists abandoned their goal of world domination. Would there *then* be peace on our campuses? I doubt it. There is always another issue ready for the agitators. Pollution, perhaps. Or poverty. Or racism. Or grapes. On and on it will go. Why?

The problem is basically self-love and lust to dominate others. These radicals—Sidney Hook calls them “barbarians of virtue”—think they possess all morality. Since we possess all virtue, they think, it is our right and duty to compel others to accept our solutions. It enrages them not that people won’t “listen” to them, but that we won’t all *do* what they want. If the majority of students want to go to class or whatever—no matter, we of greater morality have the right to impose our will on them and deprive them of their rights. They are totally selfish. A good example of this is a recent “anti-war” protest in which students turned on all the water faucets in their dorm and managed to deprive an entire town of water.

I wonder, is it really their great love for their fellow man that motivates them, or is it an ideology, a social scheme—their *own idea*—they are in love with?

The philosophical and spiritual root of the problem is this. For Marxists, man is simply matter in motion; his character is determined by his environment. Capitalism is held responsible for all his shortcomings. Eliminate Capitalism and we can have utopia. This is directly contrary to the Christian teaching that man is essentially evil—that what is his own, his “*proprium*,” is bad, and that it is only as he submits his will to God’s that he can be saved.

Pathetically, the basic assumption of the Marxist point of view has been largely adopted by many theologians. They look to man instead of to God to solve all problems. The emphasis in liberal Protestant theology today is on the “Kingdom of God.” The goal of establishing the “Kingdom of God” is used to justify social changes and even violent revolution. We even read such astounding terms as “Christian hatred” and “Christian killing.” This is spiritual insanity. Individuals must reform themselves. This is the way to bring peace on earth. The phrase “Kingdom of God” is self-descriptive. The Kingdom of God will come when men acknowledge God as their king, when their ruling principle is love of God and their neighbor. Real love is freely accepted. Just as it is impossible for God to establish His Kingdom in heaven by forcing men to love Him, so it is impossible for it to be established on earth at the point of a gun. Nor will all our science, technology and sociology bring it.

Certainly the left-wingers talk about “freedom” and “liberation” all the time. But what is their

definition of freedom? The “rights” they proclaim are not the unalienable rights set forth in our Declaration of Independence. They are privileges which can only be granted by the state. God does not give us the right to a guaranteed annual income or education or whatever. Just as we are spiritually free to choose heaven or hell, the only condition in which we can become truly human, so political freedom involves the possibility of failure along with the chance for success. This is the risk freedom entails. Already the liberals are getting squeezed in their own vice—they want the government to do everything for everyone but not do anything *to* anyone. You can’t have it both ways.

There is an article in today’s Boston Globe about the destruction of a \$1 million computer center at Fresno State College in California in a fire bomb attack. The story is on page 50—not even news any more. On the front page is an article about a public pronouncement by Mao Tse-tung supporting the “revolutionary struggle” of the American people against the “fascist rule” of the Nixon Administration. There’s no dissent in Red China—the opposition, by the millions, has been wiped out. Are we going to choose Mao’s way, or the Christian way and preserve order and freedom while working to better our country? If we choose the former, don’t worry about having to explain to your grandchildren why they were born slaves. They won’t be asking any questions.



Perry S. Martin is a Swedenborgian from Cincinnati, Ohio and the other cities where she has moved with her husband, who is now President of Convention.

We are asleep, unaware. We live in a dream, and we do not know that our dream is speaking to us in symbols. We are unaware of our inmost needs for love and life; for deep relationships that call forth our capacity for giving to our uttermost depths, and our hunger for receiving all that others have the need to give. We do not know how to listen, though we long to be listened to. We do not know how to speak, though we starve for understanding.

We are content to let others make decisions for us—our families, our church, our society, our government. We are more swayed by what our neighbors will think of us, than we are by our own sense of right or concern. We let our government tell us that

we must sacrifice many innocent lives in Cambodia, many many Vietnamese lives, North and South, military and civilian, in order to save the lives of our American boys.

We bemoan our high taxes, which may deprive us of a third television set or some other convenience, while we hear our government tell us that we cannot afford to decently feed and house and educate the poor. We spend billions for rockets to the moon, but we manage to forget that in other hemispheres people are starving and sick and homeless. We shriek for law and order to protect our property, unconcerned about the poor and the black and the socially unacceptable who cannot find justice in American courts. In the name of patriotism we stifle dissent and the freedom for which America was founded. We are swept along by the current—whatever is current, and we deplore the youth who reject our values.

What are our values? For what are we willing to spend our time, our energy, our money, our lives? We cut down our forests for paper cups, and junk mail and newspapers which are largely advertisements. We pollute our water and air with the manufacture of luxuries and the convenience of cars.

We are asleep and who will waken us? Will we listen to the voice of the peaceful dissenter? Will we hear the cry of the poor? Or will it take a nightmare to rouse us, an angry revolution which sweeps away everything our civilization has achieved, for good or for ill? What voices will penetrate our sleep?

It may be the voice of our children; if we will hear them, maybe the anguished cry of the poor. Perhaps a friend may be desperate enough to call us and we will hear him. If we are lucky we may find a group where we can risk the sharing of ourselves, where we can discover the loneliness and emptiness inside, where we can experience the healing of acceptance and love.

In reaching out to others we get in touch with ourselves. In awareness of our own needs, we find compassion. In the risk of exposing ourselves, we find strength to change. But not until we awake to the need are we willing to give up the security of our present way of life. Desperation is the beginning of change!

Perry S. Martin

DR. ZEHNER INSTALLED AT URBANA

Dr. Paul A. Zehner was installed as the 15th president of Urbana College in simple, yet impressive, ceremonies Sunday afternoon on the UC campus.

In his Presidential Address, Dr. Zehner reaffirmed the college's "quest for educational purpose," admitting that "I don't think we have arrived . . . but we are working hard at it."

He pledged to continue the dialogue among students, faculty members, the college administration and the community to help determine "what we will be in the future."

Speaking before a large audience on the UC campus, Dr. Zehner said that members of the college community are working to create a "long-range plan, based on our educational purpose." Such a plan, he said, would include future offerings, possible innovations, future building needs and necessary support.

"We will continue to remain a small college," he pledged, "with continuing emphasis on a strong liberal arts program." He promised also that the college would "extend itself into the national and international picture."

The inauguration ceremony highlighted a weekend of campus activities that included a meeting of the Urbana College Board of Trustees, a dinner honoring the members of the President's Club, a meeting among student and faculty representatives and members of the board, and public tours of the campus.

Directing the installation ceremony Sunday was Philip Alden, president of the trustees.

Invocation for the ceremony was pronounced by the Rev. John Ware of Urbana while greetings from the Swedenborgian Church were brought by the Rev. Edwin Capon, a member of the college board of trustees.

Dr. Zehner, a native of Ridgeville Corners, Ohio, received a bachelor's degree in 1949 from Valparaiso University, a master's degree in 1960 from Northwestern University and his Ph. D. in 1966 from Northwestern.

see also p. 114

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION ADDRESSES ISSUES OF NATIONAL CRISIS

At the meeting of the Illinois Association in St. Paul on May 16, 1970, two major statements directed the attention of delegates to national issues, especially the questions of war and peace, and student concern. The first was a welcoming address by Dale Lange, President of the St. Paul Society and the other was a letter from the Association Secretary, Roger Paulson, who was prevented from attending the meeting by pressing business at Urbana College. Both statements are printed here, along with a Resolution passed by the Association after lengthy discussion.

WELCOMING ADDRESS

On behalf of Virginia Street Church I welcome you as delegates of the 123rd Annual Meeting of the Illinois Association to St. Paul. Special welcome is in order to the Reverend Mr. Ernest Martin, President of the General Convention of the New Church and to the Reverend Mr. C. Arthur Scott, Executive Director of the St. Paul Council of Churches.

The theme of this meeting is the "Church in the 70's." Such a theme, it seems to me is extremely timely in relation to the events of the past two weeks and more. As a professor at the University of Minnesota I have been involved in those events. It has not been possible to stand aside and not be affected by the sincerity of students in protesting against the senseless killing of people on both sides of an extremely complicated political and military struggle. But these students are not protesting just an illegal war which has been even further escalated, they are protesting against all injustices from one human being to another. They want all people to be treated truly as equals; they desire true justice in our courts; they wish us to do unto others as we would be done unto. Injustices to the poor, to the blacks, to those of the weaker sex, to the middle class who pay the government's bills are symptoms of a government which is unconcerned about people and life. The hope of the students is that people who make up our government will become responsive to the real world which is made up of people. In effect they are saying that our actions finally should rest on one basic principle, a basic tenet of the Christian faith: the great commandment. "A new command I give to you, that you love one another even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. Let no man seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor." Is the Church in America finally willing to accept this commandment as a means of action? Do we finally want to put this great principle into practice?

These questions and others like them are being asked by our youth today. Is the Church in the 70's willing to address itself to the question of our youth, is it ready to listen, and understand what the voices of the 70's are saying?

Welcome again to St. Paul. I hope our meeting today and tomorrow will go beyond basic Church business and attempt to find out what the Church will be during the next decade, but even more important I hope we begin to seek an answer to one of the questions of our youth about the Church: namely, what kind of commitment will the Church give to its own principles? How will we as Swedeborgians respond to that question?

Dale L. Lange

LETTER TO ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION

Dear Friends:

It is with a heavy heart that I sit down at my desk to write this letter. First, because it is not possible for me to be with you when you are meeting in my home Church and, secondly, that Colleges and Universities in our country have, this past week, gone through a week of tragedy and heartbreak.

On the bulletin board you will find some pictures of the student body at Urbana in reaction to the escalated war in Cambodia, the four students killed on the Kent State Campus and the outbreaks of violence throughout the length and breadth of our country. The front page eight column picture shows a group of our students at a memorial service in front of our library. They prayed for people everywhere to unite and replace hatred with love and understanding.

They prayed also "that for many years we have been loudly protesting man's inhumanity to his fellow man. The hatred and bitterness the Lord experienced is still alive. Today things are not better, they are worse." They prayed "we, as you were, are scorned, laughed at, and spit upon when we march and sing and try to turn from death to life. We have made mistakes, and sometimes been brash, arrogant and at times, even violent—but we feel so helpless. We are still being drafted and trained to kill—and sent to die in faraway places for reasons that are unclear to us. We watch our cities crumbling and dying—we see people of other colors still denied their humanity!"

And the prayers continued—perhaps the greatest outpouring of misery and confusion and heartbreak I have ever witnessed. It all moved me beyond *anything* I have ever heard or witnessed before in my life. The prayers explained the feelings behind student unrest more eloquently than any other explanation I've heard these past eight years at Urbana College. I wanted to share these with you—so that perhaps you will learn, maybe for the first time, why students are behaving as they are.

Perhaps this will make the recent events more meaningful for you. I sincerely hope you will talk about these past weeks even if the subject is off the theme of your meetings.

I am going to ask that you give us at your College, your reaction in the form of a resolution from the floor of the Annual Meeting. These praying students need your love and moral support now worse than ever before. *Please react*—and let us have your reaction.

There has been no rioting or burning on our campus for which we are profoundly grateful. There could be if we don't reach out now when our students are so deeply involved and concerned. Our students are being referred to as "bums and reprobates" by the leaders of our country because they dissent. My friends, the right of dissent is as important to our country and freedom, as the right to worship as we please. React to this point if you would give us your love and support.

Recognize, I implore you, the high caliber of our young people today. They are better educated than the majority of us and have been born to a world of almost constant war and turmoil. They have to face the problems of our expanding popu-

lation and the rape of our natural world that is eventually choking in its own debris. They are products of our materialistic society where "prosperity" has reached an unprecedented level in human development. This very prosperity has led the world's population away from its Churches and away from the teachings of our Lord. Pray with us that we regain a measure of wisdom by stopping war, checking hatred and violence and accepting each other in a spirit of love and brotherhood for all men.

These are our thoughts and we thank you for listening and for being concerned, and for letting us have your reactions.

Roger Dean Paulson

RESOLUTION

We, the delegates of the 123rd Annual Meeting of the Illinois Association of the Swedenborgian Church, meeting in St. Paul, Minnesota, on the 16th day of May, 1970:

- I. deplore the conduct of war as a means of solving national and international problems and being concerned about America's involvement in Indochina urge the prompt and reasonable withdrawal of American forces from Cambodia and Vietnam;
- II. support the constitutional right of students and all citizens to dissent in non-violent ways against our government's policies and actions;
- III. resolve as members of the Christian Church to put into practice the Lord's command to love one another and attempt to unite people everywhere by actions which will replace hatred with love and understanding.

WUNSCH MEMORIAL FUND

As of June 1st, the William Frederick Wunsch Memorial Fund has reached a total of \$1,960.70. On May 20th the Directors of the Corporation of the Theological School contributed \$1,000.00 from available school money to the Fund. The Fund will be kept open and contributions may be made at any time.

A MESSAGE TO THE CHURCHES

From 24 Leaders of NCC Denominations

The 24 signatories to the following statement are officers of 16 denominations, including the Swedenborgian Church's President Martin, and the Deans of 3 of the country's leading seminaries.

In Colonial days, during the Continental Congress, at the time of the Civil War, national days of Fasting and Prayer were observed in times of crisis. Such crises, it was believed, are evidence that God is bringing us under His judgment and calling us to repentance and to those changes of policy that are fruits worthy of repentance. In this present crisis, brought about by the war abroad and tumult at home, we need to discern God's judgment and hear His call to repentance and amendment of our ways.

No man, no nation can finally plan and control the history we are living through. The questions in our minds acknowledge that. Have we become inextricably involved in this war? Have uncontrollable forces been unleashed? In faith we answer: God's purpose in Christ serves the interests and pretensions of no single nation, but the common good of all peoples. He is the Lord in the midst of this tragedy, and the ultimate reality is His will working its mysterious ways in judgment and in mercy. That is the fundamental reason the events of these days give us pause, open our eyes, and stir us to a serious change of heart.

The war in Southeast Asia is fundamentally a human problem. Have we understood that an Asian death is the same as American death? When will enough human beings see through to the human beings on the other side to demand that this suffering stop? When our leaders appeal to honor to justify the continuation and extension of the war, we question whether they are not really asking for more human sacrifices to national pride. Those who appeal to national greatness should be reminded that greatness may now best be shown by restraint and the willingness to admit error in national policy.

A national repentance is required. That means

reexamining and changing basic ideas, positions and policies about this war, beginning in the minds of church members. This urgently means a new seriousness about negotiation. It means repenting of some habitual assumptions: that American power must be used for ideological purposes, that America alone must "keep the peace," that military power is the chief means of keeping the peace, that peace is best served by backing the *status quo*.

For the Christian, repentance is also a turn to new life. "Christ is risen" and is now the living Lord of history. That is the ground of our profoundest hope. In that light, Christians are also to hope all things, and some things quite provisionally, without a ready prospect or necessity for success. Rarely has there been so urgent a need in public life for men and women who can hope concretely. The most deadly poison in this war is its power to paralyze and silence responsibility. The question is: when tempted to despair, can we hope and act again, concretely, provisionally, repeatedly?

Penitence and hope will lead to specific thought and action. The United States has said it seeks political rather than military solutions in Southeast Asia. Yet, by permitting the Paris negotiations to disintegrate, by transferring arms to the Saigon government, we are once again relying upon military power to solve the political problems of Vietnam.

The need, not only for political solutions, but for a new dependence upon political processes, becomes daily more apparent. Congress must assume its clearly defined constitutional responsibilities for the "making" and "ending" of wars. Citizens, as they participate in the electoral process should reflect their abhorrence for an unjust war. Honest penitence will be specific in redirecting national policy, and will emerge as a politics of hope.

Dissent and controversy have helped reveal the truth of our situation. When amid preconceptions and prejudices the pursuit of truth requires controversy, Christians should welcome and conduct it well, for God is Lord in the midst of it.

Constructive controversy requires truth-telling. Language is of God, the means His Word has chosen to make Himself present among men: as such, it is our most precious instrument of community. Cheap rhetoric and half-truths fascinate too many people today, and at a terrible price, for they contaminate the language and deform the community. Name-

calling, especially, polarizes men and confuses issues. We ask Christians and all other men to use language modestly and truthfully; to respect the neighbor's name; to speak the truth in love; to listen, to understand, and to respond.

Constructive controversy requires peace-making. True peace-making is not merely the stilling of conflict, but the achieving of right relations and all that leads to the patient pursuit of justice in social and political structures. Working through to right solutions, the controversies of blue collar worker and student, of black and white will both produce and evoke dissent. The increasing dissent which surrounds these efforts requires in public life men and women of patient endurance who are willing to risk being misunderstood and are respectful of those with whom they deeply disagree. The times call for social and political imagination—about new forms of constructive dissent, as well as new forms

of social order. We observe the sensitivity of many young men and women to the immorality of our actions in Southeast Asia. We need to support them as they seek to change the direction of our involvement through non-violent dissent and political action.

"Be watchful," says the scripture. Violence and chaos are on the prowl, seeking whom they may devour. Sometimes they attack law and order; sometimes they employ what passes for law and order; in both cases the evil consequences quickly outrun the calculations of men. Yet we bear witness that God is Lord even in the midst of violence; He is not a God of confusion but of peace; and men may therefore stand with Him, even before the threat of chaos, bound to serious peace-making. Therefore, in all circumstances, let your vision, your action, and your hoping be worthy of the gospel of Christ.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

On Thursday, May 15, I flew to Chicago. Jaikoo Lee, the minister of our church in LaPorte, Indiana, met me and we drove back to LaPorte. Spring had come to Indiana and the shores of the lakes were dotted with fishermen. I hadn't been to LaPorte since the 1956 convention, and it was good to return.

At 6 o'clock we gathered at the church for a delicious pot-luck supper. Three generations were represented at the table, all vitally concerned about the future of the church in LaPorte. Discussion focused on the leadership that could be drawn on in the absence of a minister. Jay Lee will be leaving the end of June to begin a doctoral program in the sociology of religion at the *New School for Social Research* in New York City.

It is unlikely that the LaPorte church will be able to engage a full-time minister next year. The congregation is small and the financial resources are limited. The people are determined to continue, however, and they plan to rely on lay leadership with monthly visits from ordained ministers in the Ohio-Illinois association areas.

On Friday we drove from LaPorte to St. Paul, a nine-hour drive, most of it through the state of Wisconsin. The St. Paul church was host to the

Illinois Association, including our churches in St. Paul, Chicago, DesPlaines, LaPorte, and St. Louis. Delegates were present from all of these churches and we enjoyed a mini-convention. The St. Paul members, under the leadership of their minister and Association president, Andre Diaconoff, were gracious hosts and planned an excellent program.

Dale Lange, president of the St. Paul church, welcomed us and shared his concern about the crisis in the nation. As a professor at the University of Minnesota, Dale has been closely involved with the protest movement. Others shared Dale's concern, including Roger Paulson, secretary of the Association. (See Roger's letter on page 107 and Dale's address on page 107.) A committee was appointed to draft a resolution for Association action, and the resolution quoted on page 108 was adopted during the afternoon session. I commend the Association members for their willingness to take a stand on a controversial issue. There were sharp differences of opinion, and the decision was not unanimous, but there was a strong feeling that the church must accept the responsibility to bear prophetic witness in times of national crisis.

The executive committee and finance committee had met the day before, reducing the time necessary for the discussion of business by the Association on Saturday. Reports were given by officers,

churches, and committees. A budget was adopted, and new officers elected. Time was also provided for social activities and worship. Meal times gave us opportunities to become better acquainted and to nourish body and soul. Unique talent was demonstrated on Saturday evening as members loosened up by singing and acting out songs. This served as a prelude to "an evening with the President of Convention." We discussed a number of topics, including the small group movement, Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship, experimental worship, and the place of preaching in the life of the church.

On Sunday morning Andre Diaconoff conducted the worship service, Jaikoo Lee preached, and I officiated at the sacrament of communion. Jay's sermon subject was: "Know Your Own Thing." The sermon was excellent and I am hopeful that it can be shared with *Messenger* readers in the near future. Another highlight of the service was the music under the direction of Dale and Sylvia Lange. Dale is choir director and soloist, and his wife Sylvia is the organist. Dale sang an arrangement of the Adoramus accompanied by Sylvia, who had also composed the music.

A lunch was served following the service and delegates then dispersed. Mr. and Mrs. William Boker

drove me to the airport, stopping for a moment at their home on the banks of the Mississippi River. I flew on to Chicago and Dayton and then drove to Urbana College for an all-day meeting of the Board of Education on Monday. My wife, Perry, joined me in Urbana and we enjoyed the hospitality of Roger Paulson at his farm. By midnight Monday I was back at home in Weston, a bit weary but enriched by association with church friends old and new.

June plans include speaking at the Urbana College commencement on June 7, visiting our Cleveland church on June 13-14, meeting with the Augmentation Fund Committee on June 15, and meeting with the General Board of the National Council of Churches in Washington, D.C. on June 20-21. On June 29 we will fly to London for the sessions of the World Assembly. I will be accompanied by my wife, Perry, and our oldest daughter, Ruth. Following the London meetings we plan to visit church members in Paris and Switzerland and to vacation among the Swiss Alps.

It is expected that approximately 200 Convention members will attend the World Assembly. A special issue of *The Messenger* will report all the highlights of this historic gathering in the fall.

Ernest O. Martin



FARTHEST NORTH

The Swedenborgian residing farthest north on this continent undoubtedly is Miss Carol Gilchrist, a teacher at Grise Fjord, within the Arctic Circle. She is the daughter of Jean and Douglas Gilchrist of the Edmonton, Alb. church, whose mother is Mrs. Peter Peters, widow of the Rev. Peter Peters, and secretary of the Gulfport, Miss. church.

Miss Gilchrist's present class consists of twelve Eskimo children who are especially bright and active, and now are "instructing" teacher in their difficult language. In a Christmas letter to her family and friends "down south," Miss Gilchrist writes of the courtesy and geniality of the Eskimo people, and of their sincerity. "They're always good company," she says, "and we're like one big family. Many other children often are at my home."

"Every day seems to be an adventure," writes this

distant New Churchwoman. "Temperatures often will be as low as -30 f., with pitch darkness during December and January." She recounts the shooting of a marauding polar bear just outside their school not long ago. Roaming savage wolves often are seen nearby.

The whole community excitedly awaits the arrival at long intervals of supply ships and occasional planes. It's as much fun for the crews as for the young folks, as all the precious packages are unloaded and opened.

With herself, the entire white population consists of the school principal and wife, an R.N. and little daughter; mechanic and wife, a nurse and young son, and an officer of the Canadian Mounted Police. Altogether there are only ninety adults and children in this lonely, but happy, near to the North Pole settlement.

Leslie Marshall

PROPHECIES OF PEACE

by the Rev. George F. Dole

There is an element of risk in discussing political controversies in the church. Yet unless the Lord and the Word have nothing to do with such controversies, there is a need to try collectively to understand what the Lord's will is in particular situations. If the fear of risk silences us completely, it is a sign that we feel inwardly that the church, or our faith, is too fragile to stand the test of usefulness. Particularly at a time when disagreement is daily in the headlines, it is hard to think of good reasons for the church to avoid the issue.

We may begin with the assumption that all of us, at least intellectually, prefer peace to war. Yet it is necessary to point out that this intellectual preference may exist with many emotional shadings, and may be more or less complete and honest. Some of the people who make the loudest noises about peace may be the ones who inwardly relish a good fight, and find in the ideal of peace a cloak for their desires. We have all met people who said, in effect, "I'm determined to help you, no matter how much it hurts you." Some such people may genuinely want to help; some may secretly want to hurt.

The twenty-eighth chapter of Jeremiah presents a timely picture. Hananiah and Jeremiah both prophesy in the name of the Lord, but their prophecies disagree. Each professes loyalty to the Lord's will, and claims to be pointing to the right course of action.

How is the layman to resolve this dilemma? Jeremiah offers an answer, "Wait and see." Usually, he says, prophets speak of doom. He implies that the words of a prophet who prophesies peace are inherently suspect simply because peace rarely comes. But he counsels his hearers to suspend judgment until the prophecy has been shown by the events to be true or false. "May the Lord bring peace," he says, but he adds, "I don't believe he will."

At first sight, this is both obvious and unsatisfactory. It is obvious that you can test the truth of a prophecy in this way; it is unsatisfactory because by the time you find out, it is too late.

Yet it has a considerable value, simply by intro-

ducing what we might call a reality factor into the discussion. It shifts the focus from the conflict between the prophets to what both are talking about. This is like judging our actions not by what we intend their results to be, but by what their results actually are. We may judge ourselves by our intentions; we must judge our acts by their effects. Otherwise we can go through life meaning well and leaving disaster behind us; and if we do this, we must of course ask seriously just how genuine our good intentions are.

For example, if a man is driving along and sees a cargo off the road and crash, stops to help and discovers the other driver unconscious and bleeding, sympathy alone is not enough. Strong sympathy may lead to hasty and harmful action. The victim would be better off with someone who cared less and knew more. But if the person who cares actually cares, he will be alert to the effects of his action. He will not be thinking, "See how much I care." If he does something wrong, effects will follow, but he will also learn.

There is a corollary to this which can be quite uncomfortable. Clearly, we cannot afford to learn everything from our own experience. As one person has said, we must learn from the mistakes of others because we don't have time to make all the mistakes ourselves. But we must also learn from the successes of others; and if we would do more than confirm ourselves in our present opinions, we must learn from the mistakes of those who agree with us and the successes of those who disagree with us. If an atheist brings peace where a Christian has failed, we must not minimize this, or explain it away. We must have, in the Biblical image, a single set of weights and measures.

This in no way means that we can have no loyalties whatever. Our government, for example, is predicated on a two-party system, and requires some balance of people loyal to each party. We are susceptible to trouble on two fronts, however. If partisan loyalty ceases to exist, the intermediate structure between the voter and the elected official collapses. If partisan loyalty becomes absolute, we have two groups blind to the virtues of each other, headed inexorably toward war.

The single set of weights and measures means that the individual will have an internal loyalty that will result in and govern external loyalties. He will observe the world, and give his outward loyalty to

whatever body represents the policies he thinks are most needed. He will not first give his loyalty, and then observe in such a way as to justify his decision.

Beyond this, his decision will not be permanent. He will review it because he will want to know whether it was valid in the first place and whether it remains valid now.

To test this, let us picture some person or party "on the other side of the fence." Let us imagine saying to that person or party, "Stop being blinded by the position you have taken. Look at what is succeeding and what is failing. Don't look at me as your enemy, as someone you are obliged to disagree with because of my label; don't assume that I want you to think exactly as I think. Just drop the blinders for a moment and look."

If we can do this in our imaginations, and see the reasonableness of doing this in fact, then we are just one critical step away from allowing others to say such things to us, indeed, from saying such things to ourselves. For it is impossible for us to say this to others until we have found out for ourselves what it means.

"For if ye love them which love you, what reward have you? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?"

This bears very directly on the matter of church and country. Swedenborg quite clearly and repeatedly places the church above the country as the neighbor to be loved. This does not mean that the church should rule the country, any more than the church should rule its members. It means rather that true love of the church inevitably results in true love of the country. It means that love of the country without love of the church is inadequate. It is from this same principle that we believe that love of the Lord, our Neighbor in the highest degree, is absolutely necessary for love of husband or wife.

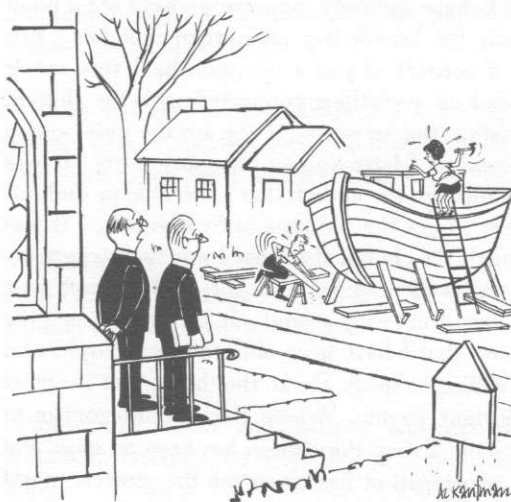
By love of the Lord and love of the church, Swedenborg means most broadly love of goodness and truth, as they exist perfectly in the Lord alone, and as they exist finitely in us. Through the Lord's providence, such love is by no means the sole possession of the organized church. As soon as we restrict it to our church or our country or our party,

we are on the road to restricting it to our individual selves, and only a fear of utter loneliness and insignificance may prevent us from following that road to the end.

Perhaps the highest direct service the church can perform for the nation, then, is to help itself take off the blinders and face the facts that may—or may not—show us to be wrong. It is to exemplify a love of the truth and a trust in the truth rather than to claim possession of the truth. It may particularly be to refuse to endorse even its own versions of political or moral truth so much as to live them and test them.

This can be a thankless task. It will probably displease those whose political convictions are strong, whatever those convictions may be. It will not lead to results that can be measured, so that it will be difficult to answer critics. It will involve uncomfortable times for the individuals who undertake it, for it is hard to question that which one has long cherished.

For these and other reasons, it is not something the church can demand of its members. We can only try to convey how very necessary this work is, and repeat the Lord's promises to sustain and to bless those who leave all, and follow Him. We can promise to give our affection and understanding to those who embark on this path, so that they may gain in friendship something of what they lose in comfort or in self-esteem. And finally, we may trust that as we discover the weakness of our own thought and love, we will discover the nearness and strength of the Lord and live more effectively for Him.



"Do you suppose the Willoughby's know something we don't?"

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir: Re: April *Messenger*, p. 66

Now why didn't they start that when I was young and able to participate?

Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn have long proclaimed and practiced this praise.

Ted Shawn's book, "Gods Who Dance," tells us that dancing was a part of worship in all ancient religions. And still is in parts of Asia: Imperial Theatre, Japan—Dance starts at its true source, religion, and in the Hindu, it still has religious significance—spiritual truths symbolized, etc. We remember that the Ancient Church extended to these regions.

Ted Shawn invited all the Ministers to attend his Worship Service using the Dance. The Ministers found it a reverent and beautiful experience—all except those Ministers who did not attend—they were critical

Marjorie V. Very

Dear Sir:

I have just received my first issue of *The Messenger* and already I must speak out on Mrs. Bateman's article concerning the future of the New Church structure.

If she knew the terror she struck in my heart at the mere thought of what might have happened to me if there had been no church to come to when I accidentally stumbled on the teachings! To those who have grown up with the doctrines, among others who believe similarly, one can perhaps see a good reason for broadening into other churches. For me, a convert of just a few months, I very much depend on everything connected with the church, including the sermons. They are the only source of comfort I have known for many years. It was only through the church that I was able to find out where to get the Writings of Swedenborg. It was through the church also, that I was further instructed in Swedenborgian thought, as I am well past the age of entering school. It is only through the church that I have been able to meet people who are willing to speak about the things that are most important to me. Where there is antagonism in my daily living, the church has been an oasis and the congregation has given me the greatest moral support from the first.

Forgive me for speaking in the subjective, but I also speak for others who may one day find themselves in a situation like mine.

Converts do not seem to be terribly common, but a real convert comes in heart and soul and mind, for ever and ever. None but the Lord's Holy Jerusalem will do. Please don't talk about getting rid of the churches.

June Fine

see also p. 106

Delivered at Urbana Ceremony

GREETINGS FROM THE CHURCH TO DR. ZEHNER

Friends, it is my privilege on this important and significant occasion to bring greetings from the General Convention of the Swedenborgian Church to Urbana College—to its Trustees, its Faculty, its students, its friends—and especially to Dr. Paul Zehner, who is already proving his worth in that office into which he will be officially installed this afternoon.

I bring these greetings not as a representative of a parent institution to a daughter institution, for the General Convention did not beget Urbana College. Rather do I bring greetings as the representative of a sister institution to a sister institution. For we both have in common as parents men and women devoted to the Christian teaching of Emanuel Swedenborg. And I venture to say we share a common purpose in seeking in our individual ways to enable those we serve to a more complete fulfillment of themselves and to lives more enriching, both to themselves and to their communities.

In view—as I see it—of our common ancestry and common purpose, I have no hesitation in hoping for and confidently expecting growing cooperation between Urbana College and the General Convention of the Swedenborgian Church. It is gratifying to us of the Church to know that Dr. Zehner desires this. We are glad not as much for ourselves or for Urbana as for those whom we each seek to serve.

Dr. Zehner, again I say, Greetings, and I assure you of whatever cooperation and support we of the Church are capable.

Edwin G. Capon

STATISTICS

BIRTHS

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Judson of the Detroit, Mich. Church, announce the birth of a son on April 6th.

Two babies were born to Edmonton, Alberta families recently. A baby girl, Stephanie, was born to Bill and Linda Moran on January 23rd, and on March 10th a baby girl was also born to Ron and Diane Reddekopp.

A daughter, Wendy Leigh, was born to Wayne and Lona Kendel of Roblin, Manitoba, on March 26th.

Marc Austin was born to Buddy and Jodine Webster on March 30th; and on April 18th Carroll and Donna Lewis became the parents of Michael Wesley, all of the Fryeburg Church.

BAPTISMS

Heather Lynn Thomson, daughter of Alexander and Jacqueline Thomson of the Edmonton Church was baptized on March 1st.

On March 22nd Mr. Wayne Van Wagner was baptized by the Rev. Paul B. Zacharias of the Kitchener, Ontario Church.

Patricia Laurel, infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Slough of Springfield, Ohio, was baptized on Easter Sunday, March 29th, by her grandfather, the Rev. Erwin Reddekopp, of the Detroit Church.

On May 3rd, Karen Lee, Lori Ann, Andrea Lynn, and Tammy Jo, daughters of Roger and Carol Smith were baptized in the Fryeburg Church. Kelly Jean, daughter of Frank and Lilla Parent, was also baptized on the same day.

Wendy Leigh, infant daughter of Wayne and Lona Kendel of Manitoba, Canada, was baptized on April 26th by the Rev. Henry W. Reddekopp.

The Rev. Othmar Tobisch baptized Christopher, baby son of Ronald and Sandra Check of the San Francisco Church, on June 7th.

Gary Crocker Hicks, Jr., son of Gary and Pamela Hicks, was baptized May 10th in Newtonville by the Rev. Robert H. Kirven.

CONFIRMATIONS

Mr. and Mrs. LeRoy Morgan and Mrs. Harold Truax were confirmed on March 29th in the church of the Holy City, Chicago, Ill. At the same Easter Service, Kim, Scott, and Amy Truax were welcomed into membership of the Junior New Church.

The Rev. Paul B. Zacharias of Kitchener, Ont. confirmed the following on Palm Sunday, March 22nd: Mrs. Gloria Bogdon, Miss Patricia Ella Braniff, Miss Deborah Katherine Klassen, Mr. Malcolm Lindsay, Mr. Wayne Van Wagner and Mrs. Wayne Van Wagner.

Peter Abrams of Waldheim, Sask. was received into New Church membership on Good Friday, March 27th.

Gerald Schellenberg of Transcona, Manitoba was also received into New Church membership on Easter Sunday, March 29th. Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiated.

DEATHS

Hubert Schneider of the San Diego Church passed into the spiritual world on April 24th after a long illness. He is survived by his wife, Ann.

Mrs. Virginia Morton passed away on March 13th. She was the former wife of the late Rev. Hoxie Smith, pastor of the San Diego Church in the 1920's.

Resurrection Services were held in the Fryeburg Church on April 15th for James H. Kiesman, Sr.

Mr. John Enright of Manitoba, Canada, passed into eternal life on May 7th.

A memorial service was conducted for Margaret Wilson Moore by the Rev. Othmar Tobisch on May 12th in the San Francisco Church.

MARRIAGES

Paul Pandora and Frances Buswell of the Fryeburg Church were married on May 1st.

Yvonne Haberman and Robert Kuttnick were united in marriage on May 16th at Roblin, Manitoba.

THE MESSENGER

JUNE 1970

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