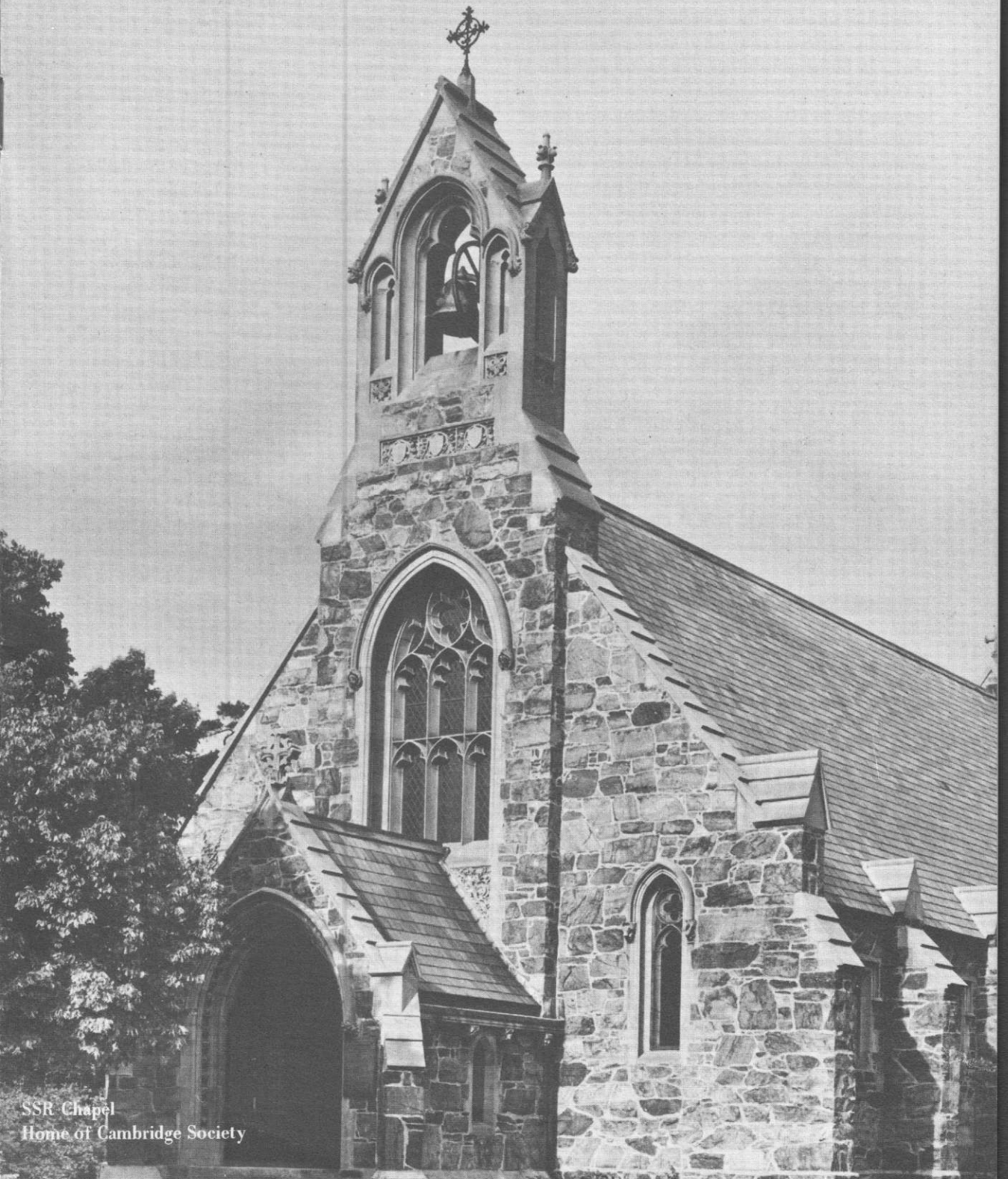


THE MESSENGER

Official Organ of the Swedenborgian Church

MAY 1970



SSR Chapel
Home of Cambridge Society

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

This month's articles on "The Church in the Seventies" and "The Place of Creativity in the New Church," may be seen as part of a spontaneously generated series of articles in recent months in which the future of the church is viewed in a substantially different way than it has been in the past. In broad generalities which must allow for a variety of exceptions, this current mood may be seen as the fourth in a series of stages. First, and not too long ago, there was a stage of uncritical optimism in which the future of the church was seen as naturally and inevitably better than the present—or even the past—for any one of a variety of reasons (some of which were mutually incompatible). Then there was a stage of critical introspection, and agonized gnawing and worrying of the query, "What is wrong with us?" Then, most recently, there has been a period in which specific diagnosis has been de-emphasized in favor of the strongest possible insistence that whatever is wrong with us as a church (either as Christians in general or Swedenborgian Christians in particular), it is very serious indeed: a "sickness unto death" that cannot be cured without the most radical surgery and treatment. Now, the concern seems to be with what the future *can* be like: how it may be better, not inevitably but if we have the insight and the will.

This progression which has been followed to some extent in many segments of the Christian church, and in other institutions of our day, may be a healthy course of development, and perhaps even a necessary one. To say this, means to say at the same time that none of the past moods were intrinsically "wrong" in any way, and that the present is no more "better" than today is better than yesterday or better than tomorrow. To say this is also to say that our church as an institution, or at least as a congregation, is alive, for only life generates change.

This development which I observe in the thinking of individuals within the church has been paralleled in a way by more visible communal developments at the national level of the church itself. For instance, the Urbana Consultation in the summer of 1968 began at the third of the sequence of stages I have just described, but finished its work solidly in the fourth stage—the one that seems characteristic of the present. Association meetings immediately following (and influenced by) the Urbana Consultation displayed the same mood in varying degrees of intensity: the California and Massachusetts Associations afford two examples that I am aware of. The development of the team ministry and new program at Kemper Road Community Church originated at about the same time, and not without connection. A special meeting last Spring of the

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THE CHURCH IN THE SEVENTIES

by Othmar Tobisch

You undoubtedly have heard many forecasts for the 70's by newscasters, commentators, and magazine feature writers.

May I be then pardoned if I take up the subject also, this time on behalf of the Church, and look into the future of our beloved New Church, to see what might be happening to her in the coming decade.

Perhaps I should define the term *church*, used in so many meanings and in so many connotations.

1. I do not want to speak of the physical buildings, sanctuaries, parish houses, and parsonages. That is a subject to which our directors and trustees pay painstaking attention in each locality.

2. I do not wish to speak of the *church* as a corporation, a legal entity, as an administrative body even, the care of which is again in the hands of the above-mentioned officers.

3. I do, however, wish to speak of the *church* as the Kingdom of Heaven on earth; also as the Lord used the term: "ON THIS ROCK WILL I BUILD MY CHURCH," to evangelize the secular powers that they may conform more to the ideal of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

4. In particular I would like to speak about our own community of Christians, the New Jerusalem Church, though this name seems to have become less used, except in legal papers.

When we look into the future of the whole CHRISTIAN CHURCH, the Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic bodies, organized in various and sundry communions, we see vast changes taking place.

Most startling, unexpected and gratifying are the changes taking place slowly in the Roman Catholic Church. Started by Pope John XXIII, the RENEWAL virus is working in many directions and finds, alas, also many enemies and countermoves, as typified by the struggle concerning contraception and celibacy of priests. However, what once was started, will continue to ferment in the medi-

eval body of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, and the forecast of Swedenborg; "... that henceforth the Church in matters of faith will be in greater freedom," is verily being fulfilled before our eyes.

In the Protestant Churches many changes are taking place.

a) In the liturgical field many new forms of worship are being tried by different churches. We had a most recent example in the erstwhile staid and traditional morning worship of the Annual Pastoral Conference of the Pacific School of Religion at Berkeley. Last week I was startled to see the whole chancel modified, the ecclesiastical furniture was gone, in place were two high step-ladders and a huge sheet hanging between for slide projection. Text of songs, both folk and traditional, were cast upon the walls of the church. Guitars strummed, crooners crooned.

I attended a seminar: "THE PRESENT LITURGICAL CRISIS AND RENEWAL EFFORTS," leader was Robert E. Luccock, professor of Worship and Preaching, School of Theology of Boston University. The audience contributed liberally with examples of all sorts of innovations being tried, both inside the sanctuary and out on the street. We have seen a similar change at our last General Convention at Claremont, Calif., particularly by the younger ministers.

As there, so also in other churches, there was much criticism and resistance to these changes. Some churches have actually developed two congregations, the traditional worshippers and the innovators. In the San Francisco Society this became a fact two years ago, with resultant confrontation and dialogs, which some of you will remember.

The winds of change are blowing, they say. Some claim it is the holy wind, the *pneuma hagon*, which can be translated either as the holy wind or holy spirit.

Laymen are more and more being asked not only to participate, but also to innovate new liturgical forms. We have evidence of this also in our denomination, particularly among the young people. Now these are outward forms and manifestations of an inner change taking place. What is this inner change?

b) One might be tempted to say that Sweden-

borg foresaw this inner change when he talked about the NEW CHURCH of the LORD. First of all, it was greater freedom in thinking about one's faith, about God, about the salvation of man, about "charitas"—human-love-relationships; second, it was a new honesty demanded of the new Christian. His whole life must conform with his faith. He was not only to confirm his allegiance to the Lord God Jesus Christ by words, but also live a life according to His commandments. I think this is pretty obvious to the reader of our doctrines. Without the corresponding life of love, all faith is DEAD. Something like this is brewing in the evangelical churches, too.

The institutional churches mean less to people. It is said that nothing is happening in the congregations which Sunday after Sunday sing praises to the Lord and asks His protection from all evils. Ministers are getting restless and frustrated in their jobs as parish priests and pastors. This is also obvious in the General Convention, where several of our ministers have entered, or are entering, secular jobs. They say, like one of them, "I can do far more for my church in the contacts which I make selling insurance." The "worker-apostle" is a sign of the times.

Seminarians no longer want to become administrative employees of a congregation. They want to evangelize the secular world, and that they can do only outside the church. "Go ye into all the world and make disciples for me of all nations." This commandment of our Lord is ringing in their ears and forcing them to seek new ways of serving their Lord.

Prof. Dr. John H. Otwell of the Pac. School of Religion, a keen observer of the contemporary scene on the Univ. of Calif. campus and in seminaries says, that the idealism of young men is as high as ever, but the conventional congregation is no longer the channel of their choice to be apostles of the Christ.

"Let us then look into the future and find confidence that in our laity lies the strength and the future of our church."

I picked up a fly-sheet distributed by the

most radical group at PSR. In it is the ominous undertone of a changing ministry. I am quoting:

MINISTERS FOR SEMINARY RENEWAL

"Who are these ministers? They are men and women who see the need for radical renewal of the educational structures of present day seminaries. Reflection, research and action, are a few of the tactics which are seen as necessary in order to initiate significant change in the *seminaries—in the church—and in the world!!!* Radical structural change is seen as necessary in the seminaries if the church is to take seriously the task of providing competent people for the leadership of the church in the world. Anyone who defines his role as *servant* in the attempt to work for the fulfillment of the needs of his brother is welcome."

"What does MSR do? MSR emphasises "Inquiry-Action" as a strategy. "Inquiry" is the attempt to define the way in which the seminary and the church can participate in the ongoing liberation of oppressed people—be they black, red, yellow or white. The attempt is made to identify the economic, political, social and cultural structures which cause the present "reality" of oppressed and possessed people. "Action" is the use of data, gathered through "Inquiry," in order to create a "new" reality of a more humane existence."

"How was MSR formed? A group of seminary students saw how the seminary has not been providing the type of tools which are adequate to allow a person to serve his brother. This is reflected in the emphasis of many seminary curriculums which stress outmoded areas of concern, taught by people who have failed to keep up with the way life is."

In our survey of the trends visible in the Christian churches, we cannot leave out the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES and its meetings. In the January *Messenger* we have a fine report from five men who represented us there. These were the vital issues with which the COUNCIL was concerned:

1. Issues arising from America's war in Vietnam
2. Alleged massacres of civilians in Vietnam
3. Resolutions calling for an end of Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia

4. Displaced Palestinians
5. Conscientious Objectors
6. Peaceful dissent in protest of the war
7. Endorsed Administration initiatives to end use of chemical and biological war weapons
8. On domestic issues, the Assembly was confronted with vigorous presentations in behalf of the rights and claims of women, youth, the poor, black Americans, American Indians, Hispano Americans and Alaskan natives.
9. Pastoral care for and tangible aid to some 60,000 draft age refugees now in Canada
10. Black Manifesto author James Forman demanded distribution of the organization's assets as reparations to Negroes
11. Population control for the U.S. and also aid to other countries in that field
12. Hunger, full employment, income maintenance and direct feeding for the nation's undernourished poor

Repeatedly during the four-day assembly meeting, the emerging black critique of traditional white institutional and personal style was vigorously expressed in formal presentations and unscheduled floor debate. The "open forum" aspect, increasingly apparent as the assembly moved along, was reinforced by activities of youth, and church-renewal groups, granted or seizing time for dramatic actions before and among the delegates and visitors.

Note in the conclusion the "inaugural" remarks of the new President—a woman (for the first time)—Mrs. Theodore O. Wedel:

"This Assembly has certainly told us—loud and clear—that our old ways of doing things are not adequate. There must be big changes, and they must be made faster than we think possible. I'm quite sure that God—along with the young, the Blacks and others—cares very little for our traditions, our accustomed procedures, or maybe even for Roberts' Rule of Order.

I don't know tonight what these changes will be. But I do know a few things.

1. There is a great vitality in this movement in which we are engaged. The liveliness of this Assembly attests to that.
2. There are great moral dilemmas facing our nation and the world today. The Church must not just "speak" to these. We have to find ways to act!

3. We have in the Churches and in the NCC great reserves of ability, creativity and good will. We can and must mobilize these for bold new thrusts for peace, justice and unity."

I want to call your attention to the characteristic of all these concerns. Theology has moved into the background and "charitas"—love, good works, and the "fruits of Christian faith" are more than ever emphasized. I could go on presenting still more evidence, but this must be enough for today.

"I propose that very sensitive, artistic, creative and spiritually alert groups spend days in retreat in meditation and study, and come up with a worship service that is deeply touching our own subconscious environment of the spiritual world."

Let us now turn our attention to our own churches in the ASSOCIATION. As of now FIVE congregations on the Pacific coast are being served by lay people, with the occasional help of ordained ministers. They seem to do very well. It takes me back to Vienna where, as a twelve year old boy, I was introduced to the New Church in a one-room "house-church" of a Viennese apartment house. Lay people held services every Sunday under police surveillance. Occasionally the New Church minister from Zürich came for a visit. The primitive Christian church was, of course, started by lay people, led by laymen, nurtured and defended by them against the virulent attacks of the mighty Roman State. It thrived.

Let us then look into the future and find confidence that in our laity lies the strength and the future of our church on the Pacific coast and elsewhere. Laymen have carried the DOCTRINES OF THE NEW JERUSALEM in the last century to San Francisco, Los Angeles, Oregon and elsewhere. They have distributed books by Swedenborg, showed them to their friends, extolled the Second Coming in the Word and in the world, rather than in the clouds. These lay forces are our future. We need renewal of enthusiasm in the method of the Seer, who initiated evangelism by the printed word. In the beginning was the Word. The Word was the

light of men. No darkness could overcome the Light from Heaven. The Swedenborg Foundation is doing magnificent work in this respect. It deserves our full support.

There will be renewal in our liturgy, in the mode of worship we find meaningful. It is not a juggling of rubrics, of one element of worship with another. People who worship must feel the presence of the Divine with them, the awe and the thrill that goes with it. In the New Church we have an enormous body of symbolism for which the innovators crave. We say that all natural creation is the symbol of God on earth. "The universe," says Swedenborg, "is the theatre representative of the Lord's Kingdom and of the Lord Himself." A3483 To show this symbolism we made a beginning in the church architecture in San Francisco, and carried it on in the Wayfarers' Chapel. But more must be done.

Houses of worship must change. Do we have to continue to worship in pseudo gothic stone caves?

We have shown in Claremont, Split Mountain Camp, on Mt. Rubidoux, on Pawnee Rock in Kansas, on top of the Palos Verdes Hills, that God is in His holy temple even there, and more so. The sky, the trees, the birds, the flowers, all these declare the glory of God, and why should not we do likewise in His very creation?

I propose that very sensitive, artistic, creative and spiritually alert groups spend days in retreat in meditation and study, and come up with a worship service that is deeply touching our own subconscious environment of the spiritual world. There, in this inner world of ours, angels create a worship environment out of feelings and thoughts of their own personalities. Our subconscious has contact with spirits and angels. How far can we go in this respect on earth? We can establish symbols, give expressions to our thoughts, let our bodies express holy feelings, put our significant dream images on the stage of the chancel and offer them as our burnt-offerings to the Almighty. These ideas are being tried in some churches today already.

A church is, by New Church definition, a communion of like-minded people who are holding a specific doctrine, or set of doctrines, and have by them a spiritual understanding of the Word of God. *Not only that!* They MUST, from this base, go forth and clothe their truths of faith, which is a mere skeleton, with the flesh of their lives. The

key thought is this, somewhat paraphrased:

The Church is the church on this ground that its members lead a LIFE according to the Word—according to its ethical precepts acc. to doctrine derived from the Word,—the doctrine of MUTUAL and MARRIAGE LOVE*,—and this teaching is their rule of life. A6637

So then, the Church is no longer a corporation, or even a congregation, but a *commune of people with certain life-rules* which they ardently pursue together to achieve the happiness of their spiritual selves! It is the heavenly society of the Homo Maximus.

In this all, however, is still the firm structure, the bones of the "Grand Man," without which the flesh would collapse. This bony structure is the DOCTRINES OF THE NEW JERUSALEM. I cannot see any future ahead for our denomination without that distinctive contribution to the theology of the Christian Church as a whole. And the most glorious contribution is this, that we worship the LORD GOD, the glorified humanity of the Divine, the LORD JESUS CHRIST crucified and GLORIFIED. The Christian Church, any Christian Church, worthy of this name, is committed to put HIM into the center of its life and worship. From the Godhead flows the life of the Church. From the Godhead which dwells completely embodied in CHRIST (Col. 2/9) does the Christian Church past, present and future take its life. If our New Church contribution to the ongoing Christian renewal is just that, I am deeply gratified.

From the personality of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we strive to understand HIM by reading the Word, by studying the teachings relative to HIM, putting HIS principles into our daily life, we shall experience a veritable renewal. Innovations in liturgy, practices of worship, sacraments, programs, methods, all these externals will spontaneously flow from our regenerated attitudes. We need not worry about them or artificially strive for innovations! The external renewal of the Church MUST be a natural consequence of the internal re-dedication to the LIFE and TEACHINGS of our Lord Jesus Christ. "For apart from ME," he said, "ye can do nothing." *John 15:5*

*Marriage love is the foundation love of all loves. M65-68

WORLD ASSEMBLY WORKSHOPS

I thought it would not be amiss to write a short outline of the purpose and content of the "WORKSHOPS" planned for Convention attendants and for ALL those who wish to participate in them.

Although the "Workshops" do not form a part of the official program of the ASSEMBLY, they have been given a place on the proceedings and, therefore, all attending the ASSEMBLY are cordially invited to participate and share in them.

The purpose of these workshops is to bring out the present status and conditions of certain aspects of the NEW CHURCH life and work. It should bring forth a sharing of experiences, methods, results, and future prospects and plans, by which the life and growth of the Lord's New Church can be enhanced throughout the world.

"COME AND LET US REASON TOGETHER", may be the motto from Isaiah. There are five types of these workshops.

a) WORSHIP and CHURCH MUSIC—Rev. Andre Diaconoff and Miss Jane Sugden

They will present the "sources and approach to worship;" "objects and aims;" "innovations in worship forms in the U.S." Conditions to aid worship: "appropriate music," "singing of the congregation;" "contributions the choir makes;" and "instrumental music."

b) PRAYER AND HEALING—Rev. and Mrs. Brian Kingslake

The chairman writes: "Re our seminar on Prayer and Healing on July 1st. In the morning session we shall have a talk and discussion on the subject, with a panel to answer questions. Jill's Prayer Fellowship is publishing a little booklet with questions and answers, which could be distributed. In the afternoon, we shall have a Prayer Group, and also laying-on-of-Hands for anyone who requests it. Will it be possible to make it clear that there will be nothing spectacular or dramatic, and that we mean "Blessing" just as much as we mean "Healing." Our aim, if not our sole aim, is to help people to draw closer to the Lord in love and faith."

c) MISSION AND OUTREACH—Rev. Rollo Billings and Rev. Chungsun Lee of Korea

The chairman will outline briefly the conditions of the world around us and reflect on past performances, not always effective nor productive. However, new times lie ahead and we must find new means of proclaiming the Gospel that the LORD JESUS CHRIST REIGNS, and that THE AGE OF THE NEW CHURCH IS AHEAD.

d) EDUCATION—Rev. and Mrs. Franklin Blackmer Rev. Martin Pryke of the General Church

I have not received any outline from these leaders, but assume that they will explore the vast possibilities of applying New Church psychology to all phases of pedagogy and the education of all ages.

e) PUBLICATIONS—Mr. Tomas Spiers—Swedenborg Foundation
Rev. Robert S. Junge—of the General Church

I have not received any outline for the deliberations of this group. I assume that they will scan the present and future of the publishing departments and organizations of the Churches, like the Swedenborg Foundation, the Swedenborg Society, the General Church's publishing efforts and, not to forget the immensely successful work of the Rev. Friedemann Horn of the Swedenborg Verlag, Zurich, Switzerland.

This group will meet in another location, outside Victoria Halls. Place will be announced.

I hope that those who expressed interest in these workshops, will think along these lines, and will participate in their choice of workshop with sharing ideas and experiences.

Othmar Tobisch



THE PLACE OF CREATIVITY IN THE NEW CHURCH

Creativity in a church? Could we not imagine all other values more easily than this one, if we think of most churches today? Most religions anywhere are determined by their traditions of the past, by formulated dogmas and doctrines, or at least by the conviction of having been called by God to serve in the way as they do at the present time. Any search for innovation seems easily a threat to the structures, organizations and habits—all this accounts for the fact that easily creativity is regarded with suspicion, at least in a good many cases.

A glance into history.

In most civilizations, religion has been among the more conservative elements. Priestly castes have watched over ceremonies in Egypt for millenniums, in the more familiar history of Israel we recognize a continual tension between prophetic individuals on one side and religious institutions around the temple on the other side. The life of the Lord was especially overshadowed by a clash with the religious establishment of his time, the priesthood, lawyers and pharisees—and we know well, where this struggle has ended.

In the beginning of the Christian church, the "gifts of the spirit," even "speaking in tongues" and other kinds of prophecy seems to have been a frequent experience. Many early movements that were later branded as "gnostic" came amazingly close to Swedenborg.¹ Very soon, though, a strong hierarchy developed, which strangled every deviation with the curse of the "Anathema," and in several instances modern history can show that the basic impetus was a craving for power by cleric individuals and factions.

Again, the creative genius of Swedenborg launched a broad attack against the entrenched ranks of an orthodoxy, which had stifled the living spirit of the Reformation.

In our church today, we are faced with the problem again: Do we have the last word in our present organizations, in our present interpretations of our doctrines, in different countries where our church has obtained organized forms—or is this, maybe, only a stepping-stone, a start for developments that we may hardly imagine today? Maybe the time

has come to examine the meaning and role of creativity from theological, logical and practical aspects in the light of our teachings and our experience, in order to see new functions in a new age.

What is "Creativity"?

The word itself is a modern creation, and as such it does not have the unction of being mentioned in the bible or in the legacy left by Swedenborg, at least not in any explicit form. Any allusion even to a similar concept is missing in traditional creeds of churches, including our own. If we were to define it, we might say that it is the capacity to find new solutions, and new uses in all fields of human activity. Among these fields could be mentioned art, philosophy and technology, but also all fields of human relations, especially teaching and learning, and church activities and worship are no exemption.

If we start with the worldly aspect, we may find that creativity is related to intuition and is often so called.² Most civilizations, religions and churches show a creative phase in their beginning, a period of flowering and development, and a period of imitation and decline.³

This leads to the question, what the deeper causes of creativity might be. This cannot be answered by any science, not by history or psychology, but only by a philosophical analysis, which leads inevitably in the direction of some ultimate causes. As far as human searching can go, the answer might be that the creativity seems to be in proportion to the intensity of the desire for it—in other terms: a love, an interest is the condition for searching, as well as for all other mental activity. This love will determine the direction of efforts and their intensity. Yet, this is not the only condition. In order to develop creativity, a fair amount of freedom must be available. In suppressed nations or individuals we will expect less creativity than in a free society, and this may lead to a new definition of creativity itself: an outreaching activity from freedom. Creativity is proportionate to freedom, as this has been proved by interesting experiments too.⁴

Pursuing our inquiry even to a higher level: here is a specific aspect of the image and likeness of God, who is the only Creator. He shows His power by placing a certain limited amount into the hands of man, individually and collectively. All our creations

are only new combinations of existing elements and substances—only God can create of Himself what has never existed before. His action and influx then is the ultimate cause of the creativity of all life, and we will not go wrong, if we assume that creativity is a quality of the celestial realm, where God can share most intimately His efforts with human spirits.

Of course the human realization of Divine potentials will always be finite and imperfect—yet with infinite new potentialities for advancement and improvement.

Creativity in modern life.

Especially since the time of the last judgment, an increasing freedom has come, as it had been predicted by Swedenborg.⁵ Modern science and technology have brought deep changes, which involve also the forms of society and all ways of thinking. This change seems to be going on in a faster and faster pace—and creativity seems to be the tireless motor of this transformation. The foundations of our morals and all thinking are becoming involved, and there is no way back.

Reflection about creativity itself is rather recent, and amounts to a process of slow discovery, with increasing literature on the subject. (See a selective bibliography at the end of the article). Yet, there are also strong forces which oppose creativity itself. Most schools have great difficulties to acknowledge or incorporate creativity in their programs—not to speak of developing it. Experiments of psychologists have shown that creativity can be developed by special educational techniques,⁶ but the general practice is not favorable to it. As mentioned before, many organizations oppose creative efforts, because it upsets programs and order and weakens discipline. Any routine is challenged, if there are youngsters with different ideas. It is much more easy to call for mediocre plodders—and a good deal of teacher education seems designed to develop just such plodders that are held to imitate the past and the proven old ways. Does not education itself look to the past by necessity, conveying the literature and experiences of times that lie behind us. And yet—education is ideally a preparation for the future! There have been movements that tried to break away from all this: the Dewey and Montessori schools, progressive education etc. Although America has probably more of them than most

other parts of the world, it is not very much that is being done, if the whole picture is contemplated. How often are children discouraged, stifled, punished and ridiculed for “rebellion” or disobedience, when in reality there was a creative and critical effort as the underlying motive. Especially in churches we see at times rigidity, self-righteousness and authoritarianism yet. Some Sunday schools develop role-play with scenes from the Bible, and in business there is high reward for creativity in top management, as well as in certain fields of the arts, in technology and diplomacy. So there is a sensitivity for creative approaches, but it is still rare. Going into the social psychological aspects of creativity, we will find that often there is an anxiety that stands in the way. Something is bound to be threatened by new views and ideas; established functions and values are questioned, and the ego-image is lowered. A desire for power and influence that sleeps deeply in every human being, sometimes even covered up by religious forms, is challenged. A smell of insurrection is perceived, whose causes are not always conscious, and justifying reasons are brought out that exaggerate the dangers. It is a strange blind spot in our civilization, that the desire for power is often not recognized, and constant watchfulness is necessary to keep the doors of freedom open. Swedenborg mentions in his explanation to the 10 commandments that covetousness of our neighbor's property, spiritually speaking, is to desire power over his mental capacities and interests.⁷

Seeing this problem in a broader context, it can be reduced to the relative values of obedience and authority in general. Obedience used to be considered one of the highest virtues, it was included in the vows of all monks and nuns—not only obedience to God, but obedience to the people in charge. Our society, though in some fields advancing beyond these views, supplanting an internal authority to the external one, bears in many areas the footprints of a bygone age, and this applies in a special way to the churches.

Attitudes of the New Church.

In theory we know that freedom and rationality are the highest principles of the Divine Guidance, expressed in His providence.⁸ Swedenborg emphasizes strongly the obedience to God and to His truth. But not always the obedience to men. The necessity and the function of order are outlined,⁹ but on closer view this order is seen as a voluntary

one, for he flails the structures of fear, suppression and revenge, which he describes in their extremes as being represented in hell.¹⁰

The democratic setup of most New-Church organizations tries to give freedom of expression, as much as is possible in an orderly framework. Yet we find it difficult to escape the impact of a culture that is, in many ways, opposed to principles of a new age, and characterizes attitudes of creativity as cocky, self-directed and presumptuous, especially, if it is advocated by the younger generation. Have not our sermons kept emphasizing again and again the values and the need for duty and obedience, putting obligations in the foreground, and forever speaking of "should's." The whole function of the church used to be seen mainly in the preservation and presentation of a body of truths in a certain interpretation. It was too easily overlooked that this interpretation and understanding has to change too. The understanding, what truth is in the first place, may need a critical revision. If truth is in words, as written and pronounced, there can be no creativity in religion, and man is a recipient, who accepts (or rejects, as it may be) in a more passive way. But if truth is the form that internal energies of love are taking, then each insight is a new creation, stimulated and shaped by knowledge, in a unique and personal way. In this light, truth is and must be creative, and any truth accepted upon external authority remains external, unless it is re-created in the individual according to his understanding.¹¹ In the first of his rules of life, Swedenborg reminds to read the Bible and to think about it, which is a strong invitation to creative thinking. Was not his effort directed to break apart the shackles of old authorities, not to set up a complex of dogmas that are more voluminous and more impressive than those of any other church.

Specific implications in the light of the New Church.

Certain aspects of the teachings have found little attention. In Swedenborg's view, each person in the world is created and regenerated in a unique way, according to personal insight. Spiritual growth is thus an individual creative process, that corresponds to creation itself. As a result of regeneration, in its second phase man is said to be led by the good or love, which is given by God. More specifically, the term "perception" is used here, very different from present usage in psychology and philo-

sophy, so it is difficult to render in modern language. It is explained¹² as "a certain internal sensation...as to whether a thing is true and good... and also the quality of any (person)."

This phenomenon is described to occur in a number of different levels (celestial, spiritual, and natural.)¹³ In its most perfect form occurring only with persons of an extreme degree of spiritual maturity.¹⁴ In this there is a great creativity: "The celestial manperceives thousands of things which confirm this general....."¹⁵ Yet, this intuition is not confined to them. In another place, Swedenborg states that "perception" is twofold: "One..... is in civil and moral things, and of what is just and right.....and it is called common sense."¹⁶

It seems to me that these statements have been interpreted mainly in a theological framework as some kind of theological judgment, almost inaccessible to ordinary men, a recognition of orthodoxy. Yet, in a more comprehensive view, the idea of perception might be associated with the creative intuition, because religion is doing good. There seems to be a parallel, though not a complete coincidence: not all perception in the mentioned sense is creative, nor is all creativity perceptive. Yet, for the area of the realization of the good there seems to be a great deal of coincidence. Swedenborg describes this "perception" as a joyful experience.¹⁷ "This perceptive faculty. .(is) not only in the perception of what is good and true, but also in the happiness and delight arising from well-doing; without (this it) has no life.....the life of love is in the performance of uses" It proceeds from this that the human capacity of doing right, upon an individual and unique sensation with the accompanying joy might well be related to what we call the joy of the creative experience.¹⁸ This includes all areas of life, a teacher can be creative in finding ways to present his material in a unique way that it becomes a joy to grasp for children, a mother often finds new ways to lead and to help her family and her children in the house, and everybody, especially an inventor is touched by it, when he discovers unique uses for the improvement of work in the world. The striking vision of potential usefulness of a construction or new combination, a scholar who discovers a new truth, everywhere the birth of usefulness is a joy of a very special kind.

The difference between conscience and perception can be demonstrated clearly: the dictate of con-

science is a rigid rational insight embodied in a feeling of duty and self-constraint—on the other side: perception is spontaneous, joyful, intuitive, immediate and creative. At the same time it is not irrational, but only transcends the limited potentialities of reasoning alone. Perception, as mentioned before, is thus the organ of emotion, and the more the emotions (or loves and affections) are developed, the greater capacities for empathy can be opened. The highest celestial emotions come from God and lead to Him. In therapeutical groups, a special effort is made to get away from memory-knowledge, in order to develop an immediate understanding and awareness of the problems and feelings of others, in order to make room for creative insight into possibilities for help that is born of love.

The whole presentation here has emphasized the positive aspect; of course, there is also creativity that produces falsities and evil. A liar is forced continually to spin new yarns of inventions in order to cover up. The hybris of self-elevation is also close, so any evaluation whether creativity is good or bad, depends upon the individual emotional maturity, or his regeneration.¹⁹ If we see in regeneration the rebirth of love, new channels can be opened and dangers can be avoided.

In our church today, there is a desperate need to keep in contact with a changing world. It takes courage to communicate and to make our convictions fruitful in a wider realm beyond our small circles. More than ever we need creative approaches, especially in two areas: in the forms of organizations of the church, and in forms of worship. How far do the present structures promote spiritual maturity and advancement—is it possible to find new ways of interaction? Can we break away from the rigidity of old patterns, while yet maintaining or intensifying the spiritual appeal? There are already a number of interesting attempts, which might be more developed and deepened.

Among other areas of investigation is the contact line between theology and psychology, in order to work towards better creative education in the homes and Sunday schools. Religion and life can be brought closer together in efforts towards mental health, emotional maturity, deeper insight into the self, and elimination of unnecessary weights of guilt and anxiety towards a real deepened self-examination that opens creative potentials.²⁰ In our

present time, we experience a revolution of emotional powers against an over-rationalism of a world that is dominated by a scientific-mechanical materialism—this explains the search for Indian Yoga and Zen Buddhism. There is a healthy feeling in this inquiry, in searching creative freedom by striving for ecstatic oneness with the creative spirit of the universe,²¹ in many ways all this is closer to Swedenborg than many other trends. One of the main aspects of his message was the promise to enter intelligently into the secrets of faith, as this is described in a magnificent vision.²² This has been taken as an inscription over the library of Urbana College, and it is symbolic that a new creative rationality is to be awakened that overcomes old authority and blind faith. It is a great hope that everywhere the creative forces of clergy and laity can be combined to cooperate in the stream of the Divine Providence, of a God who said "Behold, I make all things new."²³ These are the words, which one of our churches on the European continent chose to put as a carving over the altar as a roadmark of a new age.

Horand Gutfeldt

Bibliography: Brewster Ghiselin *The Creative Process* Toronto, London 1952 self-description of many creative geniuses (Mentor)
Taylor & Barron *Scientific Creativity* 1962
M. Wertheimer *Productive Thinking* 1945

¹A new view of the Gnostic movement, based upon newly found documents and translations, mainly from the Coptic, see in R. Haardt: *Die Gnosis*, Salzburg Austria, 1967, see esp. p. 229 a Christpsalm, and many other spiritual passages.

²A survey of creative intuition in history is given by P. Sorokin in *The Ways and Power of Love* Boston 1954 Ch. 6, esp. p. 99. The supra-conscious in man's mental structure, creativity and cognition.

³Also in Sorokin *Social and Cultural Dynamics*

⁴Goodwin Watson...Personality differences in children related to strict or permissive...discipline. Ed. by Haimowitz New York 1966

⁵*Last Judgm. Cont.* No. 7

⁶Exp. b. Maltzmann, *Journal f. exp. Psy.* 1958, p. 392 f.

Covington & Crutchfield *The Creat. Teachg. Progr.* Columbus, Ohio 1969

⁷A.E.1022...coveting...is wishing and desiring to make a man subject to one's power,...ox and ass mean the affection for natural good & truth "

⁸D.P. No. 73

⁹N.J. 311

¹⁰H.H. 587—police-state

¹¹A.C. 8078³...Faith merely natural...of authority because of another..."

¹²A.C. 104

¹³A.C. 2171 and 2831

¹⁴In members of the "most ancient church and high angels."

¹⁵A.C. 865

¹⁶D.M. 4644

¹⁷A.C. 505

¹⁸*Rational Psychology*, § 27... "At these the mind at once feels a pleasure, and therefore its perception does not rest quiescent, but becomes active and calls forth similar ideas..."

¹⁹A.C. 5937 "He who would have perception... must be from good..."

²⁰TCR 510 "Acts of repentance: all such things that cause..not to will and not to commit evils.." thus: that help him to change.

²¹See Krichnamurti on *Creative Freedom*, Golancz. London 1954

²²TCR 508

²³Rev. 21, 5

LETTER FROM EDITOR— Cont'd. from p. 78

managers, directors and faculty of the Swedenborg School of Religion moved vigorously and creatively into the fourth of these stages (that conference will be described more fully in a forthcoming special issue of *The Messenger* devoted to SSR.) The Research and Development Committee established by General Council at the request of President Ernest Martin, was conceived in and is dedicated to this mood. It also characterized much of the discussion of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers in last January's meeting, and has produced still further concrete organizational results.

Toward the end of this coming August, a small, select group of especially qualified laymen will meet as a Task Force (with a couple of ministers available as resource persons) to make future-oriented recommendations to the Council of Ministers, which will be considered in September or October by a special committee of ministers including the Executive Committee of the Council. Members of the Board of Managers, C.O.M. Executive Committee, and the Research and Development Committee, all have expressed the hope that further meetings before the 1971 General Convention will produce concrete results to be reported, and perhaps call for action at that Convention.

I described this sequence of moods in our church, and organizational events related to it, in a decidedly hopeful frame of mind. I am quite aware that the hope may be self-deluding. It is true that the organizational developments, and the structural changes which may develop from them, might prove in the end to be superficial scurrying about that tends to cover up the seriousness of our malaise identified in "Mood Three" without touching its cause or effecting its cure. While it is true that this may be the case, I am inclined to think that it is not, because it seems to me that most if not all of those involved with the Mood Four developments, have themselves gone through the deepest depths of Mood Three.

It is also true, as one of our most thoughtful ministers has pointed out, that a restructuring of our theology, or of our understanding of our theology, is a necessity that takes complete priority over restructuring of our activities or organization. However, it may be true, and I hope it is, that such restructuring of our understanding is already begun and well advanced, and the formulation of that new understanding may develop most effectively in conjunction with a restructuring of our church practices.

As is evident from the last two paragraphs, my view of the current developments in our church is one of cautious optimism, but it is optimistic nevertheless. Whatever is new is necessarily traumatic to the old, and there is never any guarantee that any organism in transition from old to new is sure to survive the trauma. Every Spring, however, countless organisms survive it again. It may be that this Spring, preceding the 200th anniversary of the New Evangel, our church may be coming out of its trauma, into the realization of what "newness" really will be.

Robert H. Kirven

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION HOLDS ITS SIXTIETH ANNUAL MEETING

Because Convention met in California in 1969, the annual meeting of the Association was postponed to February 15, 1970. The 1971 meeting is planned as usual, for late summer; the first week in September is recommended.

The February 15 meeting was held at Wayfarers' Chapel, in its park-like surroundings at Portuguese Bend. Just to be there is an experience of aesthetic value. The plantings around the chapel, started in 1951, have grown to sizeable proportions. Birds sing in the trees; the cry of a sea gull comes on the wind; the first daffodils brighten the ground. Thus we gathered for the worship of the Lord, a happy throng of spiritual friends and heavenly neighbors. The minister of the chapel, Rev. Robert L. Young, conducted the beautiful New Church service, ably supported by an enlarged choir. The choir sang an anthem, and there was also a special number, a trio by Mrs. Young and two youths, "What is the color of God's skin?" She accompanied on the autoharp. The sermon was by Rev. Othmar Tobisch, on "The Church in the Seventies." Some 135 people attended the worship, which included of course the regular congregation of Wayfarers' Chapel.

After the worship, the New Church friends partook of a beautiful luncheon which had been prepared by the chapel staff in the Visitors' center. As soon as tables were moved away, the business meeting was called to order by the Presiding Minister, Rev. Calvin Turley. Dr. Esther Perry had been appointed as a committee on Credentials, and called the roll. Thirty-four voting members (ministers, officers, delegates) were present, and six absent. Five of our nine ministers were present; these were Rev. Messrs. Tobisch, Cal Turley, Young, and the two retired ones, John Spiers and Henry Peters. Two came from Bellevue, Wash. which was quite a trip; seven came from the San Francisco area, and a goodly number from San Diego, Los Angeles, Temple City and Riverside. Lay Minister John W. Odey was present, also.

The meeting affirmed the annual per capita assessment to remain at six dollars per member. It voted down a recommendation to change the name of the Association to "Pacific Coast Association, the

Swedenborgian Church," and voted instead to change to "Pacific Coast Association of the New Jerusalem (Swedenborgian)."

The elections followed the report of the Nominating Committee, as follows:

For three-year terms: Rev. Othmar Tobisch for Presiding Minister

Mr. J. Allen Hodges of San Diego, for Treasurer

Rev. Calvin Turley, presently of Claremont, on the Board.

For a two-year term on the Board: Mr. Jack Brooker, of San Diego.

At 5:30 we went to dinner in a private dining room in a San Pedro restaurant. Following dinner there was a discussion on the future of our church, spearheaded by the reading of a letter from Rev. Paul Zacharias to the ministers of Convention. A suggestion came from Mareta Saul, to continue such discussions one Sunday afternoon a month at Wayfarers' Chapel, for all who live near enough to come. The meeting closed with an intimate communion service conducted by Rev. Calvin Turley.

Alice Van Boven, Secretary

SOUTHEAST ASSOCIATION

The Southeast Association held its annual meeting in DeLand, Florida on Sunday, April 12. The Rev. Ernest Martin, president of Convention attended the meeting, participated in the worship service and spoke to the members. There was considerable interest in discussing the advisability and feasibility of purchasing property in DeLand as a church headquarters in central Florida. The property being considered is known as "Lake Louise Groves" and consists of ten acres of land, seven in orange groves, about two and one-half acres of cleared land on a lake, and four buildings. The main building would be ideal for meetings, conferences, retreats and services. There is also space for living quarters for a minister and rooms available for visitors. Income from the orange grove would be adequate to cover maintenance costs.

Association members see this property as being ideal for an educational, recreational and worship center. It was agreed to purchase the land contingent upon it being rezoned for church uses. A hearing was set for April 14.

L. E. I. 1970

Young Swedenborgians take out your calendars and mark off the dates from August 27 to September 5; this is the time during which L. E. I. 1970 will be in session at Fryeburg, Maine!

To those of you who have been at past Leadership Education Institutes, little needs to be said at this time to encourage you to attend. You have expressed over and over again your devotion for one another and the program as a whole. Those of you who have not attended, yet have heard about L.E.I. and desire to be involved with other people of your age in an experience provided by your church, forward the application request form below. Should you want to correspond with a past L.E.I.er and learn directly what the Institute is all about, do not fail to check the box.

Your minister will have in the next several weeks a brochure which will clearly explain the Leadership Education Institute from the eligibility requirements to the kind of program which is intended for this summer. Bug him for it!

Date _____

Leadership Education Committee
c/o Jerome A. Poole
510 Beneficial Building
1300 Market Street
Wilmington, Delaware 19801

I wish to apply for admission to the 1970 Leadership Education Institute to be held at Fryeburg, Maine from August 27 to September 5. Please send application forms to: (please print)

Name _____

Address _____

Age _____ School grade now in progress _____

I have _____ have not _____ attended a previous L.E.I.
(For those who have attended L.E.I. state which year _____.) Home Phone Number _____

My minister (lay leader) is: _____

I WOULD LIKE TO CORRESPOND WITH AN
L.E.I.ER ☐

At Urbana College

COURSE IN SWEDENBORG DRAWS 24 STUDENTS

A course in philosophical and religious ideas of Emanuel Swedenborg, offered this semester at Urbana College, has attracted 24 students taking it for credit, plus a few visitors. Led by Dr. Dorothea Harvey and Dr. Horand Gutfeldt, the semester features a number of guest speakers with special competence in scientific subjects that Swedenborg worked in, and in particular aspects of Swedenborg's background, philosophy and theology. All but one of the regular students come from outside the Swedenborgian church.

SWEDENBORGIAN REFERENCE BOOKS NEEDED

24 students enrolled in a course on Swedenborg are forced to share Urbana College's one copy of Signe Toksvig's biography, *Swedenborg*, plus a few copies loaned by the faculty and library of SSR. Since this book is now out of print, Urbana College is anxious to borrow, buy, or receive as a gift, several additional copies. Other reference works related to Swedenborg's studies will also be needed. Anyone with books available for this purpose should contact Dr. Dorothea Harvey, Urbana College, Urbana, Ohio, 43078.

URBANA COLLEGE ACTIVITIES

In a communication to the Board of Trustees, Pres. Paul Zehner announced recently that Urbana College has been accepted as a full member of the Ohio College Association. He also reported that the college has been made part of a pilot program supported by the Council for Advancement of Small Colleges which should provide the grounds for the development of a long-range program.

The trustees of the college will meet on Saturday, May 16th and at 3:00 P. M. on Sunday, May 17th and will be a public ceremony at which Dr. Zehner will be installed as President of Urbana College. On Monday, May 18th, Convention's Board of Education will hold an all-day meeting at the college. Faculty members, Dorothea Harvey and Horand Gutfeldt are members of the Board of Education.

STATISTICS

BIRTHS

A baby daughter, Michelle Beryl, was born to Gerry and Carol Andrews of the Fryeburg Church on March 6th.

On April 4th Meridythe was born to Jerry and Phyllis Muth of Vail, Colorado.

BAPTISMS

On March 29th, Eleanor Stevenson and her children, Robin Lee, Donna Marie and Bernard Meredith were baptized in the Philadelphia Church. Rev. Richard H. Tafel officiated.

Terry Lynn, infant son of Jake and Joan Neufeld of Central Butte, Sask., was baptized at the home of his maternal grandparents on March 22nd. Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiated.

The Rev. Othmar Tobisch of the San Francisco Church baptized the following children: March 8th, Kevin Lawrence, son of Joe and Esther Koopman of San Francisco; March 15th, Andrew Walker, son of Thomas and Brenda Hindman of San Rafael; March 15th, Eric Karl, son of Allan and Dorothy Olsen of Daly City.

The following were baptized in the Fryeburg Church by the Rev. Horace Briggs: on February 15th, Russell Alan, baby of Robert Rogers and Christiana Sloan; also Christiana Augusta and Ruby Viola Kimball; on March 22nd Marianne, Michael Lee, and Michele Lee, children of Melvin and Margaret Eastman; Holly Lynn, daughter of Raymond and Iva Hatch; Becky Lynn and Vicky Lynn, daughters of Rodney and Judy Hatch; on April 5th Dorothy Gertrude Libby joined the church by Adult Baptism.

CONFIRMATIONS

On March 22nd Tazwell and Birgit Thompson and Arlene Saul were confirmed by the Rev. Othmar Tobisch.

David J. Fekete of the Detroit Church was confirmed in the faith of the New Church at the Palm Sunday service on March 29th.

On Easter Sunday Julie Rankin and Janet Charles were confirmed in the Fryeburg Church.

MARRIAGES

Janis West of Pretty Prairie, Kansas and James White were married on February 7th in the Agnes Catholic Church at Castleton, Kansas. The Rev. Eric Zacharias and Father Cox officiated in the ceremony.

In the Wayfarers' Chapel in Portuguese Bend, Cal. Jean Lawrence and Deverne Unruh were united in marriage by the Rev. Robert Young on February 28th.

On March 14th Bruce Thibodeau and Martha Sargent of the Fryeburg Church were joined in marriage.

DEATHS

Jacob H. Hamm of Meadow Lake, Sask. passed into eternal life on March 6th. The resurrection service was held on March 10th with Rev. Henry Reddekopp officiating.

Omar F. Hornbaker of Hutchinson, Kansas passed to the higher life on March 5th. The funeral was March 11th at the Elliot Chapel, with Rev. T. J. Bennett of the First Christian Church officiating.

The Rev. Othmar Tobisch conducted a resurrection service in the Sunset View Chapel at Berkeley, Cal. for Maude Susan Pembroke. She is survived by a daughter and several cousins.

Resurrection services were held for Avis E. Glines of the Fryeburg Church on March 30th.

Robert Andrew Oliver of Walton, Ontario, passed away on March 22nd. Funeral services were held on March 26th, the Rev. Paul B. Zacharias officiating. He is survived by his widow, Edna Schneider Oliver.

THE MESSENGER

MAY 1970

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