

THE MESSENGER

Official Organ of the Swedenborgian Church

FEBRUARY 1971



GENERAL COUNCIL MEETS IN PHILADELPHIA

The annual winter meeting of the General Council of the Swedenborgian Church was held in Philadelphia at the Franklin Motor Inn, January 22nd through the 24th. The meetings of General Council—in January and at Convention—attend to most of the business and financial dealings of the Swedenborgian Church, implement the policies of the Convention, study problems and possibilities facing the church, and make recommendations to the Convention.



Since Convention's fiscal year begins April 1st, the January meetings devote considerable time to the multitude of items that make up the budget for the coming year. This past meeting adopted a budget of \$117,132 for fiscal 1971-72.



A special report was heard from the Rev. Jerome Poole, who has arranged Convention's new pension plan with life insurance benefits for ministers. The plan has been in effect since last May. Urbana College President Paul Zehner also visited the meeting to report on the progress of the college, and discuss ways for more and closer ties between the college and the church.



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General Council (for identification this page, opposite, and front cover) top: Stewart Poole, Ernest Martin, Ethel Rice, Chester Cook, Robert Tafel; center: Chester Cook, Robert Tafel, Paul Zacharias, Robert Young, Gus Ebel, Richard Tafel, Randall Laakko; bottom: Ernest Martin, Robert Tafel, Norman Bestor, Ellsworth Seibert, Adolph Liebert, Virginia Branston, Paul Zacharias.



Two committees were established to make fresh studies of Convention operations. One, chaired by Stewart Poole, will evaluate the Central Office that has been serving the church for three years, and advise on its future development. Another com-

mittee will examine the constitutional organization of Convention, looking particularly at the forms of representation and financial support, to see if recommendations for more effective arrangements can be made.



In another action of broad interest in the church, General Council accepted the invitation of the Massachusetts Association to hold Convention in

Boston in 1972. Looking further ahead, Council encouraged the Western Canada Conference to finalize plans to invite Convention for its session in 1974 or '75.



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SWEDENBORG HOUSE



When fire broke out in the building of the Miami Society of the New Jerusalem Church on June 28, 1969, it looked like a tragedy to the small and widely scattered membership. The Rev. Ernest L. Frederick, whose pastorate includes the entire east coast of Florida, and scattered associates through all the south Atlantic states, was on a pastoral tour to these far-flung members, when the fire occurred. As it began in his office adjoining the living quarters at the church, it was he who suffered the greatest loss, his private library, his papers, furniture, and even some clothing were destroyed. There was insurance on the building, which had suffered smoke and water damage to the altar and sanctuary, but there was no coverage for personal property left in the church. As it was summer, when many Floridians go north, it was decided to postpone repairs until after the insurance investigation, and meanwhile to consider whether a restoration of the building, as it was, would be really desirable.

To those unfamiliar with the situation of our churches in Florida, a brief summary may be of use. There are two societies in the state. The one, with a church at St. Petersburg, is under the pastorate of the Rev. Leon C. LeVan. That in Miami, as indicated, includes the rest of Florida and the southeastern states. Those who attended Convention in that city in 1963 may remember the dedication of the church building in question. Both of these societies depend, to some extent, on winter visitors. St. Petersburg has a number of permanent residents from the large population of retirees in that city; but fewer and fewer retired persons are settling in Miami, not only because of its rapid urbanization, but because of the recent influx of Cuban refugees, who, through no fault of their own, overcrowd all facilities, so that persons who can settle elsewhere refrain from adding to the pressure. Even some of the members of the society had withdrawn to less crowded communities. The scattered members were, in many cases, retirees who, in seeking a place to live, had looked first for homes within their means and a way of life to their liking. Cynical though it may seem, it

is a human tendency to think of a home before looking for a church.

The lengthy pastoral tours serving groups already established in West Palm Beach and the Daytona-DeLand area, as well as visits to individuals as far away as the Carolinas, seemed to more and more members an unfair demand on the pastor. The upkeep of the building was also a strain upon the small membership, and its distance to many of the faraway members, made it inaccessible. Valiant efforts had been made to establish contact with their new Spanish-speaking neighborhood in the form of special meetings conducted by a Swedenborgian-oriented Spanish minister from New York, and in other ways that seemed worth trying at the time. Attempts to interest them in discussion groups, and the distribution of selected writings in Spanish, aroused little interest, largely because they were thought of as denominational, and connected with a church that was completely foreign. Even before the fire, thoughtful members had begun to ask if an institutional church which was "just another denomination" was an answer to the needs of the day, or an effective means of sowing the seed which should flower into the New Church.

While all this was being considered, a Retreat was held in a motel at Daytona Beach (Sept. 26-28, 1969), convenient for members in that region and in the north of Florida. Many of the scattered members came from all over the state. In the very



Sunday School in the orange grove. Oranges are visible at left.



Outdoor lunch at the barbecue pit.

successful three day period, certain general opinions emerged. The need of the moment was a more personal approach to religion than that of the traditional church. More effective uses could be performed through intimate, informal discussion than through intellectual arguments. The purchase of a house, or a small motel was suggested where a Swedenborgian Center could be opened as a meeting place, discussion center, library and distribution place for pamphlets, magazines and publications of the Swedenborg Foundation. Even the possibility of a small retirement community, and a stopping place for vacationing Swedenborgians were discussed.

In October, the Miami Church received an advantageous offer for their property from the owners of a Cuban school seeking a permanent place for their institution. This seemed to indicate direct guidance in the very direction they had been thinking about and was quickly accepted. A temporary home for the church and the Fredericks was secured and simultaneously, an organization entitled "Swedenborg House" was set up, with a circulating library, a quarterly publication, *but no "House."*



Members enjoying a meal in the "Family Room," wood panelled.

Throughout the winter of 1969-70, a search for a suitable house continued. It was early agreed that the site should be in the central area, and members living there vied with one another in locating desirable properties in their own neighborhoods. Several which answered the qualifications proved too expensive, others were unsuitable for some other reason. Finally, in March, near DeLand, the ideal property was found.

DeLand, home of Stetson University, is a pleasant, shady little city, population 8,000, on U. S. 17 and 1-4, easily accessible from Orlando, Daytona, St. Augustine and Gainesville, and not impossibly remote from the northern and southern cities. At the southern edge of the Northeast Section, it shares the cooler breezes of summer, yet is warm enough to be well within the citrus belt, its cluster of small lakes usually moderating the frosts sufficiently to prevent the crop damage which has caused the abandonment of groves farther north.

On the shore of such a little lake, known as Lake Louise, about two miles north of DeLand, there is



Youngsters from the Sunday School at the goldfish pool. (Azaleas and camellias in foreground)



Sunday Schoolers toasting marshmallows.

SWEDENBORG HOUSE cont'd. from p. 21

a flourishing small grove, with a fine mansion house and several small tenant houses. Buildings and grove were well cared for and the grove was producing enough revenue to pay the upkeep on the property. The owners were retiring to an apartment in town, and had priced the estate for a quick sale. It was just what we wanted, and within the price limit we had set. The owners became so much interested in the proposed use of their home, that they volunteered to contribute such of their furniture and equipment as they would not need in their new quarters.

On April 12, 1970, the Southeast Association which comprises all the territory served by the two Societies, held its meeting, by permission of the same gracious owners, who were still in residence, in the beautifully proportioned, glass-enclosed "Florida room" at the rear of the house. The principal speaker was the Rev. Ernest O. Martin, President of the Convention. Services were conducted and communion served by the Revs. Frederick and LeVan. A good representation from both societies and many of the scattered members attended. Rain prevented a plan to serve lunch in the garden, but box lunches and coffee, provided for the purpose, were eaten indoors. From the windows one could look out, all around, at the beautiful flowers. The oranges gleamed like chinese lanterns among the dripping leaves of the glossy green-enamel trees. No stained glass windows could have so moved the soul, either with color or with message of Divine Providence. Mr. Martin's sermon was on Dreaming, and many of us felt ourselves caught up in a waking dream that was very good.



Swedenborg House, main building

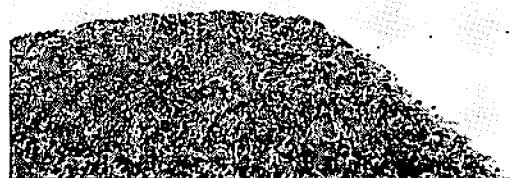
substantial part of this was pledged by individuals at the meeting (at the present writing more than half has been raised). The following week, the purchase was consummated, and on June 20, Mr. and Mrs. Frederick, with their daughter and her two children, moved into the "big house" to begin the task of making the dream come true. The dedication was held over the weekend of July 4th to 6th. Retreats were held over Labor Day and Thanksgiving weekends (26 sat down to turkey dinner). The tenant houses have been in almost continuous occupancy by families and individuals wishing to sample this new way of religious communal life.

On ordinary Sundays religious life has become an all day affair. Sunday School and Church services are held for the small but active local congregation. Sunday School, with fifteen pupils, meets a half-hour earlier than church, so that the teachers can come in for the sermon. Classes are held out of



Sunday afternoon on the front lawn—badminton net in background.

At the business meeting, the Miami Society volunteered the entire sale price of its former property. The Association agreed to lend \$7,000 which left only \$8,000 of the total price to be raised and a



Driveway and stone gateposts leading to Swedenborg House.

doors except when cold or rainy, and after the lessons the children play quiet games, supervised by the older girls, and within sight of their parents. When the service ends people do not shake hands politely and hurry off to cook Sunday dinner. Dinner has been cooking nicely in the large kitchen just back of us. Women have brought casseroles, pans of meatloaf, stews etc., all prepared and ready to slip into the ovens. Those having gardens have brought salad greens, berries or fruit in season. The excellent bakers bring buns and cakes and pies, while those devoid of culinary skills hunt out the can which holds "coffee money." No one lacks a good dinner, which is eaten wherever one likes and with whom one prefers. Afterward the children clear up, and then go off for games of tree-climbing, while the oldsters gather for informal discussion groups which are sometimes more productive of real inspiration than a dozen formal services. It is all within the framework of a common belief, and a common endeavor for good.

Mr. Frederick still holds periodic services in Miami, and meets with the group in West Palm Beach, but for the membership in East Florida, religious life begins to find its natural home in Swedenborg House, with the fragrance of orange blossoms drifting in through the open windows, the voices of children and mocking birds furnishing background music, pretty little chameleons peeping in from the windowsills, and the homely odor of the communal dinner cooking in the next room.

We hope that vacationing New Church members, and fellow-travellers will list Swedenborg House as one of the sights to be seen, or as a place to stay from which to visit the Atlantic Beaches, Disney World, Silver Springs and the Space Center. We think we have something.

Photos by the Rev. Ernest Frederick, Swedenborg Crest in headline drawn by Johnny Berge, article by Elizabeth Kieffer, all Swedenborg House members.

CONVENTION DEPARTMENT OF PUBLICATION TAKES OVER NCBP

At its January meeting in Philadelphia, Convention's General Council voted to accept the assets and responsibilities of the New Church Board of Publication, assigning them to the Department of Publication. The merger will become final and effective with the beginning of the next fiscal year, April 1st, 1971.

This action marks a milestone in the reorganization of Convention's operations along the lines voted by Convention in 1961. Part of that plan—organization into departments—has developed steadily. Another part—reduction in the number of separate

incorporated bodies related to Convention—made a noticeable step forward with this last move. The New Church Board of Publication was established before the turn of the century to take over the work of Convention's Department of Publication because it seemed desirable at that time to have publication of *The Messenger* and other things handled by a corporation separate from Convention. Since then, however, a variety of developments have cancelled out the advantages of separation, and maintaining the separate corporation has caused some waste of money and the time and effort of people involved.

MESSENGER AND STAFF ENLARGED

Recent decisions by the Department of Publication and General Council have slightly increased the operation of publishing *The Messenger*. Plans for the fiscal year beginning April 1st call for several more "double issues" than have been published in recent years—a one-third increase in the total number of pages for the year.

To handle the increased editorial work, and to allow for certain improvements in style, *The Messenger* staff is also being increased by the addition of two part-time assistants. Mrs. Perry Martin, wife of the

President of Convention, has been appointed Editorial Assistant, to help with copy editing, writing, and other publication chores. Miss Margaret Kirven, daughter of the Editor, will become Production Assistant, with the responsibility for lay-out of the magazine and the precise pasting-up, before pages are photographed.

Mrs. Martin has had professional experience at copy editing, and has been a frequent contributor to *The Messenger* for some time. Miss Kirven has had two years' experience laying-out and pasting-up her high school newspaper which is published by the same process as *The Messenger*.

SOUTH AFRICAN CHAPEL COMMEMORATES OTHMAR TOBISCH

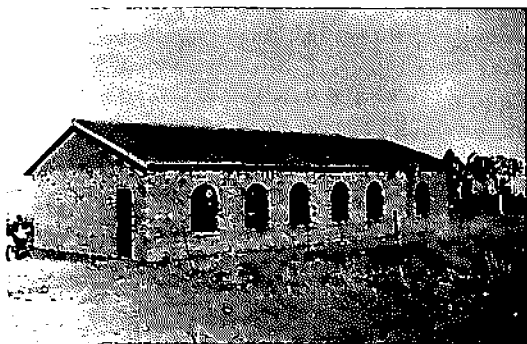
(The following letter, written to Mrs. Tobisch last summer, and the pictures which came later, need no embellishment to tell their story.)

My dear Mrs. Tobisch,

Your letter, written on the 25th July from London, arrived a few days before my wife and I left for Ottosdal, in the Western Transvaal, which is about 150 miles from here. And the purpose of our journey? You cannot guess! But please read the following inscription, written out on the corner stone, in marble, and thereafter you will know what it is all about:



The church takes about 500 seated, and is made of solid brick. The history of this building is a very sorry one, for it was built half-way, abandoned because of lack of funds, and for nearly two years the walls stood like that, in the rain, with no help forthcoming from anywhere. It was Mrs. Mooki's Women's League that gave help in the end, with a donation of £500, and another donation from our Ministers' Stipend Fund of another £500, and I was able to carry on with the walls and the roof.



Another loan from other sources of £250 helped



"Dedication Day! There were more than 500. They came by lorries, motor cars, horse and donkey carts." O.S.D.M.

further, and thus, on Sunday, the Church was dedicated, AT LAST!!! But the work is not quite finished yet, for I asked the builders to do the inside and outside plastering also, and a few minor alterations, and I am quite confident that the members themselves will raise the remaining £750—they gave that full assurance on Sunday. I have told you of the hard ways with this building; and to me there has been a parallel between the hardships confronting that building and those confronting your very able and loving Othmar; and the fact that this Church was ready for dedication about a month after Othmar's death (the opening date was fixed before I came out to England in June) was so significant to me that I did not see any alternative but to name it after him! I consulted with the clergy in the district, and they agreed with me wholeheartedly! And the more than 500 people in the congregation rose up to the man on Sunday, to show full approval, and for about 10 minutes, our thoughts went out to you over the seas, and we asked the Lord Jesus Christ to bless you, and to comfort you, and to stand by you at this very trying time! I wish you were there, when my wife made reference to your letter, where you ask us to pray for you, and also ask our people to do the same, so that you should make right decisions. Over 500 prayed for you, and thought of you, and that was at about 1 p.m. S. A. time on Sunday.

Our love to you and your daughter. God bless you.

Obed S. D. Mooki

EDITOR'S NOTE:

In lieu of flowers at the Memorial Service for the Rev. Othmar Tobisch in San Francisco, friends contributed over \$600 for the chapel—approximately £250 of the £750 still needed.

THE WEST REVISITED

by Roger Dean Paulson

The Boeing 707 was way out over San Francisco Bay preparing to land before anyone knew we had arrived in California. I was being met by my friend Dr. Esther Perry who would bring me to her snug retirement home she's dubbed "Perryville," in Berkeley. Shortly, Esther appeared in the waiting crowd and my adventure began. Our first stop was the new home of Erwin and Elsie Reddekopp in Pacifica where we had been invited for luncheon. Erwin has begun a new pastorate at the historic Swedenborgian Church in San Francisco. The Reddekopp's daughter, Sharon, was a student at Urbana before her marriage to Richard Slough—Class of 1969. Erwin later was most helpful in arranging a group meeting of the San Francisco Church young people who were eager to know more about Urbana College.

Later that day, comfortably installed in the guest wing at "Perryville," I made contact by phone with Jan and Ells Seibert in El Cerrito who asked me to join them in a pre-Christmas gathering of friends the next day. David P. Johnson, Jr., Class of 1964, and currently an assistant to the Mayor of Oakland was at the party. Dave met and married his wife, Gay, while in the Peace Corps in India. Gay is currently finishing a masters program in sociology at Fresno.

Esther drove me north to Sebastopol several days later to call on Laurence E. French, retired engineer and apple grower, who lives outside the city. His father, a Swedenborgian minister and scholar, had been connected with the College in its early years as a teacher of science. Mr. French seemed pleased to learn of the great expansion program Urbana has undertaken and the record enrollment of 670 students this winter.

Next day we drove to Mill Valley to call on Dr. and Mrs. Robert Bowie who now live in retirement. At luncheon, Ruth Bowie chatted nostalgically about the building and development of the Garden of Allah, her home on the slopes of Mount Tamalpais near Mill Valley. She was Mrs. Ralston White then, and with her husband created one of California's most beautiful estates. Mrs. Bowie has since given the estate to the uses of the San Francisco Council of Churches as a retreat center. Having visited the

Garden of Allah several years ago, I knew why part of her heart will always remain with that beautiful lofty place. One can see for miles on a clear day from the well cared for lawns of the "Garden."

Mrs. Bowie was most gracious and surprised to learn of the record growth of the College in recent years.



Dinner at Bateman's House. Standing l. to r. Roger Paulson, Margaret Van Boven, Emilie Bateman, Roy Bateman, George Prosser, Bill and Phyllis French. Sitting in front: Jim, Karen and John French.

Back in Berkeley, plans and costume making for the Christmas Pageant at the San Francisco Church were in full swing, under the careful direction of Mrs. Roy (Emilie) Bateman. Roy and Emilie are the parents of Cindy Gutfeldt, wife of Dr. Horand Gutfeldt, a faculty member at Urbana College. Somehow Emilie found time to entertain us all at dinner at her home in Berkeley, appropriately referred to as "Batemanville" by the family. Following a Sunday afternoon rehearsal of the pageant at the San Francisco Church, we gave a pizza party for nearly twenty-five young people of near college age. Esther Perry and Phyllis Bosley arranged for six delicious pizzas to satisfy the mid-afternoon hunger of the young people who might have done in six more after foregoing lunch for pageant practice. The young people listened intently while I told the Urbana College story and invited them to consider coming "East" to college. Several are seriously considering applying for admission. My days were drawing to a close and it was necessary to again board a plane for Ontario, California, where I rented a car to drive to Yucaipa and a group of Church-College friends who live in that area, south of Los Angeles.

WHAT'S NEW IN RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

by
Carolyn A. Blackmer

The New Church has talked much about the coming of the new age and the passing away of former things. It seems quite another thing, however, to deal forthrightly with changes that come inevitably when the new is to be welcomed and former things allowed to pass away. Nowhere is this dilemma more evident than in the area of religious instruction.

It is possible that remaining in the generalities of doctrine about childhood and youth may have allowed us to temporize and postpone dealing with the particulars of the problems of education. For as long as any one of us can remember people have temporized by looking hopefully to the next generation for solutions. "They are the future of the church," it is said, as if by the very existence of our children and young people our future as an organization were guaranteed inevitably and unconditionally. Obviously, this attitude leaves much unresolved, for each generation reacts with its own needs to the conditions it finds in the church. If needs for instruction are not met with suitable means there will inevitably be losses.

It is loss that statistics show. There is an increase in the number of churches without programs of instruction for children and young people, and a loss in the total number of children enrolled in established schools. But statistics are unhelpful except as they may stir us out of complacency or send us searching for new ways of meeting the problem. Nor does it help us to see what to do if we assign our losses merely to the changing patterns of family life in modern urban living. Such an observation about a state of things beyond our control only makes it increasingly evident that many of our present organized efforts are not geared to these changes in life patterns.

Innovations in methods and materials have been tried in some of our church schools, but insofar as these have been merely imitative of other churches they have not appealed as "distinctively New Church" to many of our members. But our traditional methods are also imitative by their very generation-after-generation persistence. For some people this approach may kindle faith in the new

doctrine and prepare them for living in the new age, but it is a decreasing number of young people who respond to traditional methods.

Fortunately, these two points of view are not the only alternatives open to us. The very doctrines that our schools are established to teach warn us that staying in *generalities* of doctrine does not provide enough impetus for growth in understanding or in using those doctrines for human needs. It is vitally important, therefore, that we find the *implications* of those "generals" in particulars of doctrine, discovering new meanings and new uses in the process. Former uses, meanings and methods in this way may pass away, and each generation of children and young people may thus discover for themselves, freshly and vitally, new meanings, uses and methods. It will still be possible to borrow "jewels of silver and of gold from Egyptian" knowledge for some of our materials and methods, but the essentials of instruction must be freshly discovered not only by each teacher but by each child and young person according to his needs.

We of the present age should stimulate the generations that follow us, to work again and again in the mines of the same experience, so that they, in their turn, may attain to a deeper insight, and a further progress: in short, that various ages should cultivate various kinds of learning.

These are Swedenborg's words taken from his introduction to *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom*. The various kinds of learning that he refers to are spelled out in great detail in his works, as are the processes of learning and the conditions necessary for stimulating those processes. If we attempt to teach doctrine to the children of the next generation without heed to these processes and conditions, we may impose beliefs at the level of our own present and limited knowledge, but we will do little toward liberating the next generation to discover truths for themselves.

Dorothea Harvey has said it in this way:

Education is essentially liberation from attitudes

or prejudices held blindly, and so without choice or responsibility. This is especially important in religion where trust freely given, without compulsion, and with acceptance of responsibility for the consequences of the trust, is essential.

No one can grow for another person. To attempt it is to make that avenue of growth almost impossible for the other person. To attempt to indoctrinate, to instill patterns of belief or behavior blindly and without awareness, or to protect against knowledge of alternatives is opposed to the growth toward religious maturity, rather than helpful to it. Religious maturity means partly accepting responsibility for continuing to be the person one is, or for opening oneself to change (as opposed to an immature reaction for or against authority.) To provide the freedom which comes from awareness of alternatives is at least a first step in religious education because this freedom means the opportunity for responsibility.

The Board of Education, working with the Sunday School Association, has been devoting efforts for several years toward finding a new approach to religious instruction that is more closely in accord with the spirit of the doctrines, and at the same time more suited to the needs of modern children and young people than traditional methods. Steps have been taken to start the process of rediscovery and renewal, the first of which was a joint session of members of the Board and the Lesson Committee of the Sunday School Association. At this time we tried to take a new look at the revolutionary things Swedenborg has to say about the processes of learning, the possible kinds of learning, and the necessary conditions for encouraging those processes. These things in Swedenborg were not unfamiliar to us, but their implications seen against an honest appraisal of our present needs suggested many new insights about teaching.

The next step was setting up an experiment with the teachers of one of our schools to see if new insights about the learning process within the teachers themselves might effect new attitudes toward children and help develop new approaches. It was useful in many ways if not an unqualified success, and it did encourage us to try another experiment under different conditions. It seemed important to get reactions to a new direction from people representing different areas of the country and different

backgrounds in the church. Accordingly, a seminar was set up at the time of the Claremont (California) Convention in 1969. There was a mixed but lively response that seemed to reveal the need people generally feel for more searching into the doctrines to discover what it means to be "new." Time was too short for the most favorable conditions for learning on the part of the participants, but there was a unanimous request to the Board of Education for continuing this pioneering in different parts of the church.

These preliminaries form the background to the present plan of the Board (which includes the president of the Sunday School Association) to make me available to any church or school requesting help in religious education with most or part of the cost being assumed by the local unit. It is to be neither a training in methods nor an indoctrination session, but rather an opportunity to get at the problems and resources of each parish so as to make a new approach to learning about the processes of learning.

Neither is it to be merely theoretical. Rather, each group will be helped to set up its own best conditions for learning so as to experience the learning process for themselves at first hand. A wide enough variety of methods and materials will be offered for this teacher-as-learner process to accommodate any kind of background and any level of interest in doctrine. Each of these teach-ins will therefore be tailored to the people who take part and to the needs of their individual children, young people or adult students. Questionnaires sent out in advance to those taking part will give me preliminary information about the individual and local needs and resources, and the first session will set up the program as the people themselves want it to be. Thus there will be no imposition, but, hopefully, there will be a drawing on the as-yet-unused potentials of each person for fuller growth of understanding and for greater creativity.

If time allows and schedules can be set up between group meetings, individual counseling can be arranged so that the needs of individual children can be discussed with their teachers or their parents. It may be that in this way some new patterns of instruction can be created for children who cannot attend Sundays or for parents whose children show no interest in traditional instruction.

Certain conditions conducive to learning in these
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RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION cont'd. from p. 26

teach-ins need to be provided: a large enough group to provide stimulating exchange of views, time enough for several long sessions together, and a firm commitment to being present at all times and all meetings. The creating of new methods and activities is a long process and takes a good deal of trial-and-error activity. There will therefore be set up opportunities for periodic reports throughout the months following the seminar, and through the mails I will continue to help with the problems that may arise.

Evaluations will be written by each teacher and superintendent, and these will form the basis for a total evaluation by the Board. This over-all view will allow us to check on some of our assumptions about learning, correcting or developing them as we continue to experiment. If there is a wide enough range of conditions in our parishes and a full enough involvement we should have some very valuable data for future needs of our churches. What is done to use this information for the coming of a new age in the New Church may depend on these two conditions: courage to deal forthrightly with change, and continued searching for what is genuinely new.

WEST REVISITED cont'd. from p. 25

I was hosted there by Jean Heydon-Hoyt. Jean gave a year of her retirement from the New York schools to set up the student health service at Urbana College and maintains a keen interest in the development of the College. A visit with Vida French Bell, at the *Bell Hacienda* in Yucaipa was memorable. The pure Spanish-style hacienda was built in 1911, of adobe brick, on ten beautifully landscaped acres in a valley surrounded by snow-capped mountains. Mrs. Bell has given her home to the California Association of the Church for eventual use as a retreat and conference center to which it is eminently well-suited. She is making architectural changes in the main house that will lend itself better for use by groups of church people.

Mrs. Hoyt entertained for six guests, Rev. John Spiers (Class of 1916), his sisters, Mrs. Eleanor Allen (Class of 1918) and Mr. Alice Sechrist. Mrs. Alice Van Boven and her daughter, Betty, were there as well. Jean provided an attractive refreshment buffet with Christmas punch and coffee while we happily chatted away about the many changes at the College and plans for the national Church Convention on campus, June 23.



Hostess Jean Heydon-Hoyt (l.), Betty Van Boven, Rev. John Spiers, Alice Van Boven

On my way again from Los Angeles to St. Louis, Missouri, where I was met by Miss Marty Mason, we joined Jessie Wheeler and Alfreda Gale after dinner for a social time. Mr. and Mrs. Eldon W. Mason entertained the following evening for Rev. and Mrs. William Woofenden, Dorothy Diephuis, Ida Zibell, Mariada Mathies, Jessie Wheeler. The St. Louis group has been loyal and supportive of Urbana for many years. The small church group has hosted the Urbana College Choir in the past and is considering having the choir again. While in St. Louis, I visited also with Gladys Dickenson who wasn't able to be at the small gathering at the Mason home. We might have a new student at Urbana if plans materialize for David Currall of that congregation. We met and talked with many friends following the Sunday service. All were interested and eager for news of recent developments at Urbana College. The trip began on November 30th and it was now December 14th and time to return to the College. It was great to renew old friendships and make new ones, to be able to talk about the fastest growing private college in Ohio and to invite our church friends and alumni to take an active part in the growth of our College.

REV. BILLINGS RETIRES

The Rev. Rollo K. Billings, pastor of the Garden of Gods Chapel in Colorado Springs since its founding, has retired from the ministry. His new address is P. O. Box 969, Brookings, Oregon 97415

Before his pastorate in Colorado, and a period of service in St. Paul, Mr. Billings led the founding of Church of the Good Shepherd in Des Plaines, Illinois, which began with the relocation of the former Sheridan Road church of the Chicago Society, which he had served for several years.

URBANA 'AMBASSADORS' TO VISIT SWEDENBORGIAN CHURCHES

Ambassadors for Urbana College—a group of UC students—has been formed as part of the communications program at the college.

The students, representing a cross-section of the college's undergraduates, will serve as on-campus informants for campus visitors and as off-campus outreach personnel.

The Ambassadors program is an outgrowth of a test project conducted last summer by six UC students. President Paul A. Zehner sent the six around the country to spread the word about Urbana College. The unique recruiting venture resulted in widespread publicity and the recruitment of several students this fall.

Student Senate President Herbert Greer, one of the six who participated in the summer program, is heading the new Ambassadors program. Under the program, the Ambassadors will serve as hosts for visitors to the campus and will inform these visitors about the college and its program.

In addition, the Ambassadors will present programs to off-campus groups. In connection with this, it is hoped that one or two of the Ambassadors will have visited each of the Swedenborgian churches in the country by next May.

President Zehner emphatically pointed out that the new program is not a fund-raising gesture. "We feel that many people, including church members, would like to know more about our college and its program. Who better to represent Urbana than its students?" he said.

URBANA COLLEGE ENROLLMENT UP

Enrollment for winter quarter, which began January 4th showed an increase, the board members were told. A total of 671 students were recorded at the Urbana campus, an increase of 10 students over the autumn quarter enrollment.

Admissions Director William Inskeep explained that several returning armed service veterans enrolled for winter quarter courses.

URBANA COLLEGE ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR FALL

Applications for enrollment at Urbana College for next fall's classes are now being accepted, according to William Inskeep, director of admissions.

Mr. Inskeep explained that students interested in applying for admission to Urbana College should direct that the necessary test scores be sent to the college. The prospective students should write to the College for application forms, informative brochures or to arrange visits to the campus, he said.

The admissions director said that while campus visits are not required of prospective students, it is often advisable for the interested student to visit the campus to familiarize himself with the College and its programs. A student volunteer organization, Ambassadors for Urbana College, will provide tour guides for interested students.

Students interested in obtaining further information about Urbana College should write to Director of Admissions, Urbana College, Urbana, Ohio 43078, or telephone (513) 652-1301. The Admissions Office is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and Saturdays by appointment.

NCA COMMITTEE VISITS URBANA

A diagnostic examining team from the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools visited Urbana College Monday and Tuesday, Dec. 7-8, to review the college's progress toward full accreditation by NCA.

The four-man team huddled with administrators and faculty members during the two days to learn how far the College had progressed since achieving correspondence status. The examiners met also with students to discuss their experiences at UC.

Under review were faculty programs, curriculum development, financial situation and plans for the future.

The four-man team will take their recommendations to the North Central Association. It is expected that the NCA will announce in April if the College has been advanced to candidate status with NCA. Next step—if all goes well—is full accreditation, expected in 1972 or 1973.

Report from Paris

FRENCH VACATION CENTER

By the Rev. Claude Bruley, Paris Pastor

The year 1970 has been rich in events of all kinds for the New Church. The most noteworthy of these—and full of significance—was without doubt the World Assembly which met in London, England on July 1 to 6.

Two hundred years ago, Swedenborg completed the mission he had received from the Lord, by seeing through the press the last of his theological works, *True Christian Religion*, which sums up the New Revelation.

In order to commemorate this major feat, more than 500 members of the New Church came together from the four corners of the earth, to testify by their presence, and speeches, and fraternal togetherness, that **The Lord Jesus Christ Reigns**, and that the truths revealed by his Second Coming are gradually taking hold of the minds of men, and radically transforming the structure of society before chaos swallows us up.

It was in that same spirit, and with the desire to establish on a smaller scale a more fraternal acquaintance between the members of the New Church not only in France, but also throughout the whole world that, with the help of Divine Providence we organized this first Swedenborgian Vacation Center in France.

Everything to make it successful was provided by the Lord. First the frame: an attractive, small castle surrounded by a magnificent park, alongside the Jaudy River which, besides a wide view of rural Brittany, also provided the calm needed by organisms overworked by eleven months of urban living.

All those who attended appreciated also the interior disposition of the building: twelve rooms, occupying two floors, some of them big enough to host four or five people in case it were needed; also two bathrooms, a vast dining-room, with an impressive table around which up to twenty-eight people could sit down; two spacious parlors, a large kitchen. In brief, all that was needed on the material side to provide support to the spiritual side.

Here we must admit, however, that after having rented the castle, we began to worry. Would we have enough participants to meet the expense? Did we set the price of attending high enough in comparison with the local custom? And so on. . . .

Oh, man of little faith! We did not lack participants. We shall come back to this in a moment. The suppliers consented to reasonable costs. The cooks performed miracles. Some of us agreed to pay a little more than the registration, and everything came out all right. Once more we found a thought dear to us to be well-founded: namely the Church cannot and must not use the methods and reasonings of the world. Faith must be lived. Faith is a kind of hope. If one were to bring along by himself all the means needed to realize what is hoped for, what is left to Divine Providence?

We had wished and hoped to meet members of the New Church from all over the world. And what happened? Fifty-two persons actually came to vacation with us at Kerhir during these two months! Twenty-six of them, including the pastor and his family, were from France. There were thirteen guests from England, and thirteen also from the United States.

As the identity of this latter contingent might be of interest to the readers of *The Messenger*, they were: The Rev. Horand Gutfeldt, his wife and their three sons, Ted, Michel and Eric, from Urbana, Ohio; Miss Jill Gallagher, Miss Roberta Thurston and Miss Donnette Ela, all from Fryeburg, Maine; Miss Betty Johnson from Michigan; Miss Ruth Martin from Weston, Mass.; Mr. and Mrs. Heddesheimer of Columbus, Ohio; and Miss Alix Williams of Boston, Mass.

We might mention also that Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Baissac of Tripoli, in Libya, and their four children: Catherine, Veronique, Odile and Claude, participated in the activities of the Center, for one day. Their young child, Claude, was baptized during the worship service on August 9th.

Now, as to the activities which occupied our time: They were many and various. First of all, there was worship. Every morning, seated around the large table in the dining room, we read the Word of God, and studied the teachings of the Second Coming—particularly from the books entitled *The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* and *Divine Providence*. Then every Sunday, in the spa-

cious parlor of the castle we held a religious service with a sermon based on the spiritual meaning of the Scriptures.

Again, every evening we came together in the same parlor, either to pursue a particular study in the Writings, or to discuss certain specific topics. Some of the main subjects treated were: sleep, Greek mythology, the education of children, and – What it Means to be a Woman. Or else, we met to listen to music, or to sing, or to dance, or to play games.

Neither were activities in the great outdoors lacking. There was the beach where we could swim, or climb on the rocks and fish for crabs. There were ball games in the park. Almost every day there were walks to Treguier, where we always found ourselves admiring the architecture of the magnificent cathedral, or the ancient buildings of "Place du Martray," or the architectural ornaments of the cloister. There were also quasi traditional excursions to the Island of Brehat, to Paimpol, Perros-Guirec, St. Quay Portrieux, or St. Brieux, etc. In some of these outings, we even took our picnic lunch with us, which made it possible for us to visit the interior of Brittany with its Menhirs, Dolmens and other parish enclosures, and even the mountains of Aret, which are all that remains of the sharp rocks of the primeval era.

Amidst all those happy moments, we can recall also a late but very animated "Franco-American" evening, on the theme of feminine vocations, when only "Frenglish" could be used. Or again, the fireworks of the French National Day, on July 14th; or the memorable fishing for crabs; or French-English late sessions, listening to musicians with real talent with piano, guitar, flute, or singing, folk-dancing, or playing games, or taking walks alongside the Jaudy; or, the wood-fire crackling in the fireplace of the parlor; or the tall trees in the park; and above all the warm brotherliness of all those who came to add yet another dimension to their knowledge of the neighbor, and whose faces were an authentic portrayal of the New Church of tomorrow.

We cannot close this brief account without expressing our deep thanks to our devoted cooks, Renee Nicolier and Jacqueline Bruley for the month of July, and Germaine de Chazel and Jacqueline Bruley for the month of August, who with consummate artistry, achieved a delicious cuisine, yet allowing us to close the operation without deficit.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS AT URBANA

Dr. C. Wickham Skinner of Weston, Mass., a longtime member of the Urbana College Board of Trustees, submitted his resignation at the January 16th meeting of the board held in the Anderson Memorial Board Room in Oak Hall on UC campus.

Dr. Skinner, a member of the Swedenborgian Church's majority on the board, was first appointed in 1960. In 1965 he was named treasurer of the college and assumed responsibility for investing the College's endowment funds.

Within the past year the treasurer's duties were returned to the campus under the direction of the office of Vice President for Business and Finance. Dr. Skinner's resignation was accepted by the board "with deepest regrets."



Prof. C. Wickham ("Wick") Skinner, Harvard School of Business

Tuition Up

In other action the board approved a \$150 increase in tuition effective with the 1971-72 school year. President Paul A. Zehner told the board that this was the minimum increase that could be recommended in line with increased expenditures facing the College. The president pointed out that the minimum increase will still enable the College to maintain its competitive position with other private colleges in Ohio and the nation. The College's \$1500 annual tuition remains below both the state average and the national average of small colleges.

THE MESSENGER

FEBRUARY 1971

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